

SENATE No. 255

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Jennifer L. Flanagan

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to early education funding.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Jennifer L. Flanagan

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Worcester and Middlesex

SENATE No. 255

By Ms. Flanagan, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 255) of Jennifer L. Flanagan for legislation relative to early education funding. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court
(2017-2018)**

An Act relative to early education funding.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 2 of chapter 64H of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following paragraphs:-

3 The excise shall not be reduced below the rate of 6.25 per cent for the fiscal year ending
4 June 30, 2018.

5 One and three-quarters per cent of the collections of the excise imposed at a rate of 6.25
6 per cent shall be distributed to the department of early education and care (DEEC) for the
7 purpose of investing in compensation commensurate with qualifications for early childhood
8 educators and providers. This program shall be known as the early educator rewards program.

9 SECTION 2. Section 2 of chapter 15D of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
10 amended by inserting after subsection (q), the following subsection:-

11 (q ½) (a) For purposes of this section, the following words shall have the following
12 meanings:

13 “Provider”, any private, non-profit or for-profit preschool, nursery school or child care
14 facility.

15 “QRIS”, Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System as determined by the
16 department of early education and care.

17 (b) The department shall distribute the 1.75 per cent of the excise collected pursuant to
18 the second paragraph of section 2 of chapter 64H to providers deemed eligible to receive
19 compensation under this section.

20 (c) Eligible providers shall receive compensation under the early educator rewards
21 program for the purpose of making high-quality early education and care programs and services
22 for preschool-aged children universally accessible to all children in the commonwealth.

23 The department shall determine provider eligibility based on the following criteria
24 pursuant to the workforce development system at section 5 of this chapter:

25 (1) core competencies, a common and shared body of knowledge, for all those working in
26 the early education and care fields;

27 (2) a range of professional development and educational opportunities that provide
28 appropriate coursework and degree pathways for family child care as well as center-based
29 providers at all levels of the career ladder that are available in locations, days and times that are
30 accessible;

31 (3) credit for prior learning experiences, development of equivalencies to 2- and 4-year
32 degrees, and the inclusion of strategies for multiple pathways for entry into the field of early
33 education and care;

34 (4) recruitment and retention of individuals into the early education and care workforce
35 who reflect the ethnic, racial, linguistic and cultural diversity of Massachusetts families based on
36 current census data;

37 (5) incentives and supports for early education and care professionals to seek additional
38 training and education, such as scholarships, stipends, loan forgiveness connected to a term of
39 service in the field, career counseling and mentoring, release time and substitutes;

40 (6) guidelines for a career ladder or career lattice representing salaries and benefits that
41 suitably compensate professionals for increases in educational attainment and with incentives for
42 advancement, including a salary enhancement program;

43 (7) a data collection and evaluation system to determine whether the workforce and
44 professional development activities established pursuant to this chapter are achieving
45 recruitment, retention and quality of the workforce goals;

46 (8) ways to recognize and honor advancement in educational attainment among early
47 educational and care professionals;

48 (9) professional development opportunities that are provided in languages other than
49 English, and incorporation of these multilingual opportunities into any broader, articulated
50 system that is developed;

51 (10) alignment of the core competencies, course offerings and other professional
52 development opportunities, where appropriate, with the program quality standards established
53 under section 11 of this chapter; and.

54 (11) training to identify and address infant, toddler and early childhood behavioral health
55 needs.

56 If the department determines, pursuant to section 12 of this chapter, that a provider has
57 failed to meet certain performance measures or comply with applicable laws, standards and
58 requirements, such provider shall not be eligible to receive compensation through the early
59 educator rewards program.

60 The department shall compensate eligible providers that have achieved QRIS level 4 or 5
61 at a greater rate than providers that have not achieved such levels. Providers that have achieved
62 QRIS level 3 shall be compensated at a greater rate than providers that have achieved QRIS level
63 2 or 1.

64 (d) For purposes of attracting and retaining competent teachers, the department shall
65 award grants to providers that have achieved QRIS levels 3, 4 or 5. All compensation awarded to
66 providers pursuant to this subsection shall be used by providers to compensate teachers that have
67 earned their bachelor's or master's degrees.

68 (e) The department shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary to implement the
69 provisions of this section.