

By Mr. Merced of Boston, petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers, Nelson Merced and Shirley Owens-Hicks for legislation to provide incentives and resources for school districts for early childhood education. Education, Arts and Humanities.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-One.

AN ACT TO PROVIDE INCENTIVE AND RESOURCES FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO PROVIDE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

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

1 The purpose of this section is to recognize that the early years
2 in the lives of school children present great opportunities for
3 learning, and to provide incentive and resources for school
4 districts to take advantage of these opportunities.

5 Any school committee maintaining a program of instruction at
6 the elementary level may provide a program of instruction for
7 children one year prior to kindergarten. Said program shall be
8 developed and implemented by the school committee with parent
9 and community participation, pursuant to guidelines and
10 regulations promulgated by the board of education under the
11 provisions of this section. Provided, that said program shall be
12 comprised of social and learning activities appropriate to the age
13 level of participating students, and that student enrollment in said
14 program shall be at the option of the parent(s) or guardian(s) of
15 the student.

16 A school committee which chooses to provide a program of
17 instruction pursuant to this section shall notify the commissioner
18 of education of its intentions and request a determination of the
19 level of state assistance to which its district may be entitled to
20 offset the cost of the program. The entitlement for a school district
21 shall be determined by multiplying (a) the amount of which one
22 hundred percent exceeds the product of fifty per cent times the

23 valuation percentage of the city, town or regional school district,
24 as defined in section two of chapter seventy of the General Laws;
25 provided that this amount shall not be less than zero percent, times
26 (b) the state average expenditure per pupil in kindergarten
27 programs in the prior fiscal year, times (c) the sum of weighted
28 full-time equivalent pupils, as defined in said chapter seventy, in
29 the program in such city, town or regional school district.

30 A school committee receiving assistance under this section shall
31 report to the commissioner, in such form as the commissioner may
32 require, all information necessary to compute the amount of state
33 assistance to be paid under this section. Such reports shall be made
34 in accordance with the provisions of section six of chapter seventy-
35 two. The commissioner may request other such reports as he
36 deems necessary and as of such dates as he may require to carry
37 out the purposes of this section.

38 The commissioner shall certify to the comptroller and to the
39 department of revenue the estimated amount of aid to be paid
40 to each city, town and regional school district in each fiscal year.
41 Such aid shall be distributed according to the payment schedule
42 set forth in section eighteen A of chapter fifty-eight of the General
43 Laws. Before the final distributions are made under said section
44 eighteen A, the commissioner shall make a final certification to
45 the comptroller and to said department of revenue of the full
46 amount due to the cities, towns and regional school districts. In
47 the event that state appropriations for the purposes of this section
48 are insufficient to pay the full amounts of aid due to participating
49 cities, towns and regional school districts in any fiscal year, the
50 provisions of section eleven of said chapter seventy shall apply.
51 Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, aid paid
52 to a city, town or regional school district under this section shall
53 be deposited with the treasurer of the city, town or regional school
54 district to be expended by the school committee without further
55 appropriation for the purposes of this section.