



General Assembly

Amendment

February Session, 2014

LCO No. 4377

SB0002504377SR0

Offered by:

SEN. FASANO, 34th Dist.

SEN. WITKOS, 8th Dist.

To: Subst. Senate Bill No. 25

File No. 417

Cal. No. 278

(As Amended by Senate Amendment Schedule "A")

"AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD."

1 Strike section 83 in its entirety and insert the following in lieu
2 thereof:

3 "Sec. 83. (NEW) (*Effective on July first of the year following the first fiscal*
4 *year in which the state has fully funded the excess cost grant to towns*
5 *pursuant to section 10-76g of the general statutes*) (a) For the fiscal year of
6 the year of the effective date of this section, and ten fiscal years
7 thereafter, the Office of Early Childhood, in consultation with the
8 Department of Education, shall design and administer the Connecticut
9 Smart Start competitive grant program to reimburse local and regional
10 boards of education for capital and operating expenses related to
11 establishing or expanding a preschool program under the jurisdiction
12 of the board of education for the town. A local or regional board of
13 education may submit an application to the office, in accordance with
14 the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, and may receive (1) a

15 grant for capital expenses in an amount not to exceed seventy-five
16 thousand dollars per classroom for costs related to the renovation of an
17 existing public school to accommodate the establishment or expansion
18 of a preschool program, and (2) an annual grant for operating expenses
19 (A) in an amount not to exceed five thousand dollars per child served
20 by such grant, or (B) in an amount not to exceed seventy-five thousand
21 dollars for each preschool classroom, provided no town shall receive a
22 total annual grant for operating expenses greater than three hundred
23 thousand dollars. Each local or regional board of education that
24 establishes or expands a preschool program under this section shall be
25 eligible to receive an annual grant for operating expenses for a period
26 of five years, provided such preschool program meets standards
27 established by the Commissioner of Early Childhood. Such local or
28 regional board of education may submit an application for renewal of
29 such grant to the office.

30 (b) On and after July 1, 2014, local and regional boards of education,
31 individually or cooperatively, pursuant to section 10-158a of the
32 general statutes, may apply, at such time and in such manner as the
33 commissioner prescribes, to the office for a capital grant and an
34 operating grant for the purposes described in subsection (a) of this
35 section. To be eligible to receive such grants under this section, an
36 applicant board of education shall (1) demonstrate that it has a need
37 for establishing or expanding a preschool program using information
38 requested by the commissioner on a form prescribed by the
39 commissioner, such as data collected from the preschool experience
40 survey, described in section 84 of this act, (2) submit a plan for the
41 expenditure of grant funds received under this section that outlines
42 how such board of education will use such funds to establish or
43 expand a preschool program, including the amount that such board
44 will contribute to the operation of such preschool program, and (3)
45 submit a letter of support for establishing or expanding a preschool
46 program by the local or regional school readiness council, described in
47 section 10-16r of the general statutes, if any, for the school district. The
48 commissioner shall give priority to boards of education (A) that

49 demonstrate the greatest need for the establishment or expansion of a
50 preschool program, and (B) whose plan allocates at least sixty per cent
51 of the spaces in such preschool program to children who are members
52 of families that are at or below seventy-five per cent of the state
53 median income, or fifty per cent of the spaces in such preschool
54 program to children who are eligible for free and reduced price
55 lunches. The commissioner, in reviewing applications submitted under
56 this subsection, shall also take into consideration (i) whether an
57 applicant board of education (I) currently offers a full-day
58 kindergarten program, (II) will be cooperating and coordinating with
59 other governmental and community programs to provide services
60 during periods when the preschool program is not in session, or (III)
61 will collaborate with other boards of education, as part of a
62 cooperative arrangement pursuant to section 10-158a of the general
63 statutes, to offer a regional preschool program, and (ii) current
64 community capacity for preschool programs and current opportunities
65 for preschool for children in the community.

66 (c) A preschool program created or expanded under this section
67 shall (1) contain a classroom with an individual who holds certification
68 pursuant to section 10-145b of the general statutes with an
69 endorsement in early childhood education or early childhood special
70 education and is an employee of the board of education providing a
71 preschool program under this section, (2) maintain a classroom size
72 and teacher-child ratio that is in compliance with standards
73 established by the National Association for the Education of Young
74 Children, (3) obtain accreditation, as described in section 10-16p of the
75 general statutes, not later than three years after the creation or
76 expansion of the preschool program, and (4) be located in a public
77 school or in a space maintained by an early care and education and
78 child development program provider, pursuant to an agreement
79 between a board of education and such early care and education and
80 child development program provider.

81 (d) Each local or regional board of education receiving a grant under
82 this section shall submit an annual report, on a form and in a manner

83 prescribed by the commissioner, to the Office of Early Childhood
84 regarding the status and operation of the preschool program.

85 (e) A local or regional board of education receiving grant funds
86 under this section may implement a sliding fee scale for the cost of
87 services provided to children enrolled in such preschool program."