



General Assembly

Amendment

February Session, 2014

LCO No. 4353

SB0002604353SR0

Offered by:
SEN. LINARES, 33rd Dist.

To: Subst. Senate Bill No. 26

File No. 662

Cal. No. 302

(As Amended by Senate Amendment Schedule "A")

"AN ACT EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION."

1 Strike section 501 in its entirety and insert the following in lieu
2 thereof:

3 "Sec. 501. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2014*) (a) For the fiscal years ending
4 June 30, 2015, to June 30, 2024, inclusive, the Office of Early Childhood,
5 in consultation with the Department of Education, shall design and
6 administer the Connecticut Smart Start competitive grant program to
7 reimburse eligible applicants for capital and operating expenses
8 related to establishing or expanding a preschool program. An eligible
9 applicant may submit an application to the office, in accordance with
10 the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, and may receive (1) a
11 grant for capital expenses in an amount not to exceed seventy-five
12 thousand dollars per classroom for costs related to the renovation of an
13 existing public school to accommodate the establishment or expansion
14 of a preschool program, and (2) an annual grant for operating expenses

15 (A) in an amount not to exceed five thousand dollars per child served
16 by such grant, or (B) in an amount not to exceed seventy-five thousand
17 dollars for each preschool classroom, provided no eligible applicant
18 shall receive a total annual grant for operating expenses greater than
19 three hundred thousand dollars. Each eligible applicant that
20 establishes or expands a preschool program under this section shall be
21 eligible to receive an annual grant for operating expenses for a period
22 of five years, provided such preschool program meets standards
23 established by the Commissioner of Early Childhood. Such eligible
24 applicant may submit an application for renewal of such grant to the
25 office. For purposes of this section, "eligible applicant" means a local or
26 regional board of education, school readiness program provider, as
27 described in section 10-16p of the general statutes, as amended by this
28 act, or a supervisory agent of a nonpublic school.

29 (b) On and after July 1, 2014, eligible applicants, individually or
30 cooperatively, may apply, at such time and in such manner as the
31 commissioner prescribes, to the office for a capital grant and an
32 operating grant for the purposes described in subsection (a) of this
33 section. To be eligible to receive such grants under this section, an
34 eligible applicant shall (1) demonstrate that it has a need for
35 establishing or expanding a preschool program using information
36 requested by the commissioner on a form prescribed by the
37 commissioner, such as data collected from the preschool experience
38 survey, described in section 502 of this act, (2) submit a plan for the
39 expenditure of grant funds received under this section that outlines
40 how such eligible applicant will use such funds to establish or expand
41 a preschool program, including the amount that such eligible applicant
42 will contribute to the operation of such preschool program, and (3)
43 submit a letter of support for establishing or expanding a preschool
44 program by the local or regional school readiness council, described in
45 section 10-16r of the general statutes, if any, for the area in which such
46 eligible applicant is located. The commissioner shall give priority to
47 eligible applicants (A) that demonstrate the greatest need for the
48 establishment or expansion of a preschool program, and (B) whose

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

64 (c) A preschool program created or expanded under this section
65 shall (1) maintain a classroom size and teacher-child ratio that is in
66 compliance with standards established by the National Association for
67 the Education of Young Children, and (2) obtain accreditation, as
68 described in section 10-16p of the general statutes, not later than three
69 years after the creation or expansion of the preschool program.

70 (d) Each eligible applicant receiving a grant under this section shall
71 submit an annual report, on a form and in a manner prescribed by the
72 commissioner, to the Office of Early Childhood regarding the status
73 and operation of the preschool program.

74 (e) An eligible applicant receiving grant funds under this section
75 may implement a sliding fee scale for the cost of services provided to
76 children enrolled in such preschool program."