

Joint Committee on Education
In support of *An Act Ensuring High Quality Pre-Kindergarten Education* ([S.319](#)),
lead sponsor Senator Sal DiDomenico
Tuesday, November 23, 2021

Titus DosRemedios, Deputy Director, Strategies for Children

Dear Chairwoman Peisch, Chairman Lewis, and members of the committee.

Exactly one year ago today, I and my fellow preschool advocates and educators in nine communities wrote to the legislative conference committee of the FY21 state budget. We asked that conference committee to continue to invest in high-quality, mixed delivery, and collaborative preschool expansion by continuing to invest \$5 million in the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI, line item 3000-6025).

The conference committee answered our call, and the line item was funded in FY21. Then, in FY22, the Legislature doubled the funding for this line item to \$10 million. We thank you and your colleagues for your increased support for high-quality preschool.

The legislation before you, (S.319) *An Act Ensuring High Quality Pre-Kindergarten Education*, would establish preschool expansion in state law. It would advance **local infrastructure for collaborative and coordinated early education and care** by requiring communities to work together, school district and EEC-licensed programs, on a shared vision for high-quality preschool. This coordination – a true community-wide vision for early education – is unique to S.319, and not included in the other bills before you today.

The CPPI program serves 1,000 preschool-age children annually in full-day, full-year programs. Boston, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, New Bedford, North Adams, Northampton, Somerville, and Springfield are the current grantees. S.319 would help expand this successful approach to prechool expansion statewide, phasing in over time based on community readiness and need. “Need” is defined using DESE’s percentage of high-need students in the local school district. “Readiness” means the community (district administrators and EEC-licensed community partners) must have an implementation plan based on a local needs assessment.

COVID-19 has led to reduced enrollment in early childhood programs from birth through kindergarten. The need for children to experience high-quality, nurturing early learning environments is greater now than when we first filed this legislation in 2015.

We celebrate the pending and historic federal investments in child care and preschool in the Build Back Better Act. And, we know that states will need to provide matching funds and continue – not scale back – their own commitments to early education and care. Pass S.319 this session and help all our young children recover from the pandemic with a strong foundation of high-quality early education and care, and a level playing field for their future success.

Strategies for Children

Sincerely,

Titus DosRemedios, Deputy Director, Strategies for Children

TeeAra Dias, Boston Universal Pre-K Director, Boston Public Schools

Mary Kinsella Scannell, Senior Vice President, Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester

Ben Hires, Chief Executive Officer, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center

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Jennifer Malone, Director of Early Education and Care, Valley Opportunity Council

Maria Gonzalez Moeller, Chief Executive Officer, The Community Group

Lisa Van Thiel, Early Childhood Coordinator, Lowell Public Schools

Lesley Guertin, Early Childhood Manager/CPPI Coordinator, New Bedford Public Schools

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Patrick Roach, Chief Financial & Operations Officer, Springfield Public Schools

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Tabitha Desplaines, Director Early Learning Center, Springfield Partners for Community Action