

# **HOUSE . . . . . No. 4243**

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, July 9, 2012.

The committee on Ways and Means, to whom was referred the Bill relative to third grade reading proficiency (House, No. 4152), reports recommending that the same ought to pass with an amendment substituting therefor the accompanying bill (House, No. 4243).

For the committee,

BRIAN S. DEMPSEY.

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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In the Year Two Thousand Twelve  
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An Act relative to third grade reading proficiency.

*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. (a) There shall be an Early Literacy Expert Panel to develop recommendations to  
2 have all students in the commonwealth reading proficiently by the end of third grade. The panel  
3 shall consist of 9 members: the secretary of education, who shall serve as co-chair, and 8 persons  
4 appointed by the secretary, in collaboration with the commissioners of early education and care,  
5 elementary and secondary education and higher education, who are experts on children's early  
6 language and literacy development; provided, however, that 4 shall be selected from a list  
7 provided to the secretary from the chairs of the joint committee on education and the chairs of  
8 the joint committee on higher education. Panel members shall each be appointed for a term of 4  
9 years. The panel shall designate a co-chair every new term. No member, with the exception of  
10 the secretary, shall serve for more than 2 consecutive terms. The members of the panel shall  
11 serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for expenses necessarily and reasonably  
12 incurred in the performance of their duties. Panel members shall not, by virtue of their  
13 membership, be deemed state employees under chapter 268A of the general laws.

14 (b) The panel shall conduct its first meeting not more than 60 days after the effective date of this  
15 act. The panel shall meet not less than 4 times annually for the first 4 years following the  
16 effective date of this act. The panel shall then continue to meet for a time period to be  
17 determined by the panel co-chairs.

18 (b) The panel shall advise the departments of early education and care, elementary and secondary  
19 education and higher education and the executive office of education on the refinement and  
20 implementation of plans for early literacy development including, but not limited to, the  
21 Massachusetts Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Plan, the Early Learning Challenge  
22 Plan, and Race to the Top, including the activities and programs offered by the District and  
23 School Assistance Centers and Readiness Centers to support language and literacy acquisition  
24 for children from birth to third grade, inclusive. The panel shall make recommendations to the  
25 secretary and the commissioners of early education and care, elementary and secondary  
26 education, and higher education on the alignment, coordination, and implementation of, but not  
27 limited to, the following areas:

28 (1) comprehensive curricula on language and literacy development for children in early  
29 education and care programs and grades pre-kindergarten to third grade, inclusive, that (i) is  
30 anchored in rich content to be studied through thematic units; (ii) uses a wide variety of types of  
31 text to support content under study; (iii) emphasizes the role of oral language and discussion in  
32 promoting early reading skills; and (iv) contains a balanced instructional design focused on  
33 developing both meaning-based skills, such as comprehension, conceptual knowledge,  
34 vocabulary, and code-based skills, such as letter knowledge, letter sounds and word reading;

35 (2) effective instructional practices to promote children’s language and literacy  
36 development in early education and care programs and grades pre-kindergarten to third grade,  
37 inclusive, including tiered instructional strategies and materials;

38 (3) pre-service and in-service professional development and training for educators on  
39 language and literacy development, the administration of screenings and assessments, and the  
40 analysis of data gained through screenings and assessments to make instructional decisions to  
41 improve language and literacy acquisition in young children;

42 (4) developmentally appropriate screening and assessment to monitor and report on  
43 children’s progress toward achieving benchmarks in language and literacy development across  
44 educational levels prior to third grade and measuring school readiness and children’s reading  
45 proficiency from pre-kindergarten to third grade;

46 (5) family partnership strategies for improving the quality, frequency, and efficacy of  
47 home-school interactions to support children’s literacy and language development, as well as for  
48 building community capacity to support family literacy practices; and

49 (6) action steps to implement the recommendations contained in “Turning the Page:  
50 Refocusing Massachusetts for Reading Success” by Nonie Lesaux.

51 The panel shall also advise on leveraging existing and new federal grant opportunities  
52 and private funding to support language and literacy acquisition for children from birth to third  
53 grade, inclusive. Subject to appropriation, the secretary and commissioners of early education  
54 and care, elementary and secondary education and higher education may appoint personnel  
55 necessary to coordinate the activities of the panel and provide administrative support as needed.

56 SECTION 3. The secretary, in coordination with the panel co-chair and the commissioners of  
57 early education and care, elementary and secondary education and higher education, shall  
58 prepare and submit an annual report on the activities of the expert panel in advising the  
59 departments. The report shall include information on the alignment and collaboration between  
60 the 3 commissioners, as overseen by the secretary, on early language and literacy development  
61 for children from birth to third grade, inclusive, and on teacher training and professional  
62 development on early language and literacy, and all subject areas covered in (b)(1)-(6). The  
63 report shall also include a description of all state and federal funding related to early literacy and  
64 the programs such funding supports. The secretary shall submit the report on or before  
65 December 31 to the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives, who shall forward the  
66 same to the senate and house chairs of the joint committee on education and senate and house  
67 chairs of the joint committee on higher education. The report shall also be made available on the  
68 websites of the departments of early education and care, elementary and secondary education,  
69 and higher education and on the website of the executive office of education.