

HOUSE No. 550

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Alice Hanlon Peisch

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to dropout prevention and re-engagement.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Alice Hanlon Peisch</i>	<i>14th Norfolk</i>
<i>Carmine Lawrence Gentile</i>	<i>13th Middlesex</i>
<i>Louis L. Kafka</i>	<i>8th Norfolk</i>
<i>David Paul Linsky</i>	<i>5th Middlesex</i>
<i>Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr.</i>	<i>12th Hampden</i>
<i>Tommy Vitolo</i>	<i>15th Norfolk</i>
<i>Tricia Farley-Bouvier</i>	<i>3rd Berkshire</i>
<i>Timothy R. Whelan</i>	<i>1st Barnstable</i>
<i>Steven Ultrino</i>	<i>33rd Middlesex</i>
<i>Mary S. Keefe</i>	<i>15th Worcester</i>
<i>Carolyn C. Dykema</i>	<i>8th Middlesex</i>
<i>Kimberly N. Ferguson</i>	<i>1st Worcester</i>
<i>Thomas M. Stanley</i>	<i>9th Middlesex</i>
<i>José F. Tosado</i>	<i>9th Hampden</i>
<i>Carlos Gonzalez</i>	<i>10th Hampden</i>
<i>Kenneth I. Gordon</i>	<i>21st Middlesex</i>
<i>Mathew J. Muratore</i>	<i>1st Plymouth</i>
<i>Brian M. Ashe</i>	<i>2nd Hampden</i>

<i>Frank A. Moran</i>	<i>17th Essex</i>
<i>Russell E. Holmes</i>	<i>6th Suffolk</i>
<i>Antonio F. D. Cabral</i>	<i>13th Bristol</i>
<i>Bud L. Williams</i>	<i>11th Hampden</i>
<i>David T. Vieira</i>	<i>3rd Barnstable</i>
<i>Randy Hunt</i>	<i>5th Barnstable</i>
<i>Daniel M. Donahue</i>	<i>16th Worcester</i>
<i>Stephan Hay</i>	<i>3rd Worcester</i>
<i>Carole A. Fiola</i>	<i>6th Bristol</i>
<i>James M. Kelcourse</i>	<i>1st Essex</i>
<i>Adrian C. Madaro</i>	<i>1st Suffolk</i>
<i>Sal N. DiDomenico</i>	<i>Middlesex and Suffolk</i>
<i>Christine P. Barber</i>	<i>34th Middlesex</i>
<i>Denise C. Garlick</i>	<i>13th Norfolk</i>
<i>David M. Rogers</i>	<i>24th Middlesex</i>
<i>Michael O. Moore</i>	<i>Second Worcester</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>
<i>Shaunna L. O'Connell</i>	<i>3rd Bristol</i>
<i>Tackey Chan</i>	<i>2nd Norfolk</i>
<i>Chynah Tyler</i>	<i>7th Suffolk</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>

HOUSE No. 550

By Ms. Peisch of Wellesley, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 550) of Alice Hanlon Peisch and others relative to school dropout prevention and re-engagement. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)**

An Act relative to dropout prevention and re-engagement.

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. Section 1B of chapter 69 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2016
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking lines 117 to 120, inclusive, and inserting in place
3 thereof the following paragraph:-

4 The board shall promulgate regulations establishing the mandatory ages for school
5 attendance, including the minimum and maximum permissible ages for school attendance,
6 provided that each child shall be required to attend an approved kindergarten program in a public
7 or private setting or in a community-based program licensed by the department of early
8 education and care. Said regulations shall include mandatory attendance guidelines necessary for
9 kindergarten completion. Said regulations shall include a process for school districts or
10 Commonwealth charter schools to provide exemptions for advanced students to attend school
11 beginning in first grade. Said regulations shall establish a policy to ensure that a student who
12 begins an academic year prior to reaching the maximum permissible age for school attendance
13 shall not be required to withdraw from school in the same academic year based solely on the

14 grounds of having reached the maximum permissible age for attendance. Said regulations shall
15 also address the types of alternative education programs or settings that are suitable for
16 individuals who exceed the maximum permissible age of attendance who do not have a high
17 school diploma or the equivalent.

18 SECTION 2. Subject to appropriation, the department of elementary and secondary
19 education shall develop and administer a 3-year pilot program for dropout prevention and re-
20 engagement programs for public high schools with annual dropout rates at or greater than 4
21 percent. The pilot program shall be a competitive grant process. The dropout prevention and re-
22 engagement programs shall target high school students who have dropped out of school or are
23 designated as being “at-risk students”, who shall be identified by high levels of truancy, below
24 grade level performance, are expecting or parenting, or are otherwise at risk of not graduating
25 with a diploma on time, by using at least 1 of the following methods:

26 (a) Alternative education, which shall mean diploma or high school equivalency
27 programs that use evidence-based instruction and student support strategies designed to meet the
28 needs of the target population and prepare them for postsecondary education or training. These
29 evidence-based instruction and student support strategies may include, but are not limited to,
30 smaller class size, competency-based learning, project-based learning, work-based learning,
31 community service learning, success mentoring, case management, family engagement,
32 wraparound support, restorative justice and social service referrals.

33 (b) Success mentors, who shall be professionals with youth development and
34 academic support expertise whose responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to:

- 35 i. motivating students to focus on a graduation plan or an alternative option, which
36 shall include, at a minimum, academic, career and postsecondary goals;
- 37 ii. serving as a representative for students in any disciplinary hearings or actions;
- 38 iii. providing academic as well as social-emotional student supports;
- 39 iv. assisting in the reenrollment of students who have already withdrawn from
40 school;
- 41 v. encouraging parent and community involvement in the school setting; and
- 42 vi. identifying and addressing barriers to learning resulting from specific risk factors,
43 including trauma, homelessness, food insecurity, disability and health issues.

44 All success mentors shall be provided with professional development opportunities and
45 administrative and technical support services. Adults serving in this role shall be trained in
46 trauma-informed practices, cultural responsiveness, and creating and sustaining healthy youth-
47 adult relationships in a school setting. Schools may partner together to provide professional
48 development opportunities and administrative and technical support services.

49 (c) Dropout outreach and re-engagement programs, which shall mean targeted
50 outreach and transition support for students who have dropped out of school. Such programs
51 shall, at a minimum, reach out to students, determine their academic status and personal
52 circumstances, assist students in enrolling in a high school or high school equivalency program,
53 provide transitional support and track students' academic progress. Adults serving in this role
54 shall be trained in trauma-informed practices, cultural responsiveness, and creating and
55 sustaining healthy youth-adult relationships in a school setting.

56 (d) Expectant and parenting student support, which may include, but is not limited to,
57 the development and implementation of school policies that set high academic expectations,
58 establish procedures for maternity and paternity leave, and provide flexible scheduling; expectant
59 and parenting student liaisons who shall work with students to develop graduation plans that
60 include, at a minimum, academic, career and postsecondary goals and who provide follow-up
61 support to complete the graduation plans, navigate academic requirements, engage families,
62 overcome socio-emotional barriers and secure appropriate social services; and, annual data
63 collection that shall include, but not be limited to, the number of parenting students in the
64 district, any supports or interventions provided to the parenting students, and parenting student
65 progress toward and completion of secondary school.

66 The department shall develop guidelines for an annual review of the progress being made
67 by each district and local community agency participating in the pilot program. Each district and
68 agency in the pilot program shall participate in any evaluation or accountability process
69 implemented by or authorized by the department. The department shall prepare and submit an
70 annual report describing and analyzing the implementation of the pilot program in all
71 participating districts. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the number of participating
72 school districts, schools and local community agencies; the number of students served and the
73 type and duration of those services; the progress made by those students toward attaining a high
74 school diploma or equivalency, which may include improvement in attendance or academic
75 standing; and the number of students served who have attained a high school diploma or passed
76 the high school equivalency exam. The department shall file its annual report no later than
77 September 1 of each year by filing the same with the clerks of the house of representatives and
78 the senate who shall forward a copy of the report to the joint committee on education. The

79 department shall file a final report within 6 months of the conclusion of the 3 year pilot period
80 that shall include an analysis of all relevant data so as to determine the effectiveness of the
81 program and specific legislative recommendations, including whether the program should be
82 expanded, maintained or discontinued, by filing the same with the clerks of the house of
83 representatives and the senate who shall forward a copy of the report to the joint committee on
84 education.