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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE BILL

No. 1109 Session of  
1997

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INTRODUCED BY SCHWARTZ, TARTAGLIONE, COSTA, MUSTO, AFFLERBACH,  
BELAN, KUKOVICH AND RHOADES, SEPTEMBER 23, 1997

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REFERRED TO EDUCATION, SEPTEMBER 23, 1997

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AN ACT

1 Providing for early childhood education improvement grants; and  
2 making an appropriation.

3 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

4 (1) The quality of education children receive in their  
5 earliest years lays a critical foundation for later success  
6 in school and the workplace.

7 (2) Increased investment in the early grades of  
8 kindergarten through third grade can lead to greater student  
9 academic achievement and savings to the public school system  
10 in reduced costs of remedial and special education and  
11 programs for disruptive students.

12 (3) Despite the proven benefits of full-day kindergarten  
13 programs, many school districts have found the costs of such  
14 programs prohibitive.

15 (4) Research and experience have demonstrated that young  
16 children in small classes have higher achievement than young  
17 children in larger classes.

(5) New findings on how young children develop and learn have led to more effective teaching strategies, and public school professionals need access to quality professional development opportunities in order to utilize these new teaching strategies in their classrooms.

(6) While many school districts need financial assistance to invest in early childhood education improvements, they also need flexibility to determine which initiative best meets the needs of their students and families.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Short title.

This act shall be known and may be cited as the Early Childhood Education Improvement Grant Act.

Section 2. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this act shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Aid ratio," The aid ratio as defined in section 2501(14) of the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949.

"Department." The Department of Education of the Commonwealth.

"Eligible district." A school district with an aid ratio equal to or greater than 0.6000.

Section 3. Early childhood education improvement grants.

(a) Full-day kindergarten grants.--Beginning with the 1997-1998 school year and each school year thereafter, an eligible district that operates a full-day kindergarten program with a

1 full-day kindergarten average daily membership of ten or more  
2 students shall receive a grant from the department equal to:  
3 \$1,000 X the full-day kindergarten average daily membership X  
4 the aid ratio for the district.

5 (b) Classroom-based grants.--Beginning with the 1997-1998  
6 school year and each school year thereafter, an eligible  
7 district that has an average daily membership of not more than  
8 22 students for the kindergarten through third grade classrooms,  
9 shall receive a grant from the department equal to:

10 \$1,000 X the average daily membership of the kindergarten  
11 through third grade classrooms X the aid ratio of the  
12 district.

13 (c) Teacher-based grants.--Beginning with the 1997-1998  
14 school year and each school year thereafter, an eligible  
15 district that operates an early childhood education and  
16 professional development program approved by the department for  
17 kindergarten through third grade classroom teachers shall  
18 receive a grant from the department equal to:

19 \$500 X the number of classroom teachers in kindergarten  
20 through third grade X the aid ratio of the district.

21 No eligible district shall receive more than \$500,000 under this  
22 subsection.

23 (d) Multiple grants.--An eligible district may receive any  
24 or all of the grants specified in subsections (a) through (c)  
25 provided that the district meets the requirements set forth in  
26 each subsection as applicable.

27 (e) Effect of grants.--Grants received under this section  
28 shall be in addition to and shall not affect any other payment  
29 that an eligible district may receive from the Commonwealth.

30 Section 4. Appropriation.

1       The sum of \$42,000,000, or as much thereof as may be  
2 necessary, is hereby appropriated to the Department of Education  
3 for the fiscal year July 1, 1997, to June 30, 1998, in order to  
4 provide early childhood education improvement grants under this  
5 act.

6 Section 5. Effective date.

7       This act shall take effect July 1, 1997, or immediately,  
8 whichever is later.