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OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Connecticut Office of
 Early Childhood

Linda Goodman
Acting Commissioner

**Testimony of Linda Goodman, Acting Commissioner
 Office of Early Childhood
 Before the General Government Bonding Subcommittee
 Thursday, March 16, 2017**

Good morning Representative Miller, Senator Fonfara, Senator McLachlan, Representative Floren and distinguished members of the General Government Bonding Subcommittee. I am Linda Goodman, Acting Commissioner of the Office of Early Childhood (OEC). I am here today to provide information about our bonding activities and to answer any questions.

The OEC supports the Governor’s budget proposal for bond funding for the biennium. I would like to provide you with information about our two bond programs: Smart Start and Minor Capital Improvements.

The Smart Start program was established in the 2014 legislative session. This is a competitive grant program for public schools that demonstrate an unmet need to provide preschool for eligible 3- and 4-year-olds.

The Smart Start bond funds can be used for making minor facility improvements and to ensure the Smart Start classrooms meet National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation standards to ensure high-quality early learning programs for 3- and 4-year-old children.

For FY15, 22 public school districts applied for Smart Start funding for both capital and operating support and of those district, 14 of them received awards. For FY 2016, 9 public school districts applied for both capital operating support and all received awards. For FY 2017, 10 applications were received from public school districts and 9 are recommending for funding and are awaiting a Bond Commission hearing. Below is a chart of the 9 communities recommended for funding.

Smart Start Program – Current Cohort

	Classrooms	Children	Operations Funding (Tobacco Settlement Fund)	Capital Improvement Funding (State Bond Funds, one-time only)
Andover	1	13	\$65,000	\$75,000
Cheshire	2	30	\$150,000	\$150,000

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Cromwell	1	15	\$75,000	\$75,000
East Hampton	1	15	\$75,000	\$75,000
Enfield	1	13	\$65,000	\$75,000
North Branford	1	15	\$75,000	\$65,689
Plymouth	1	15	\$75,000	\$75,000
Somers	1	15	\$75,000	\$48,000
Thomaston	1	15	\$75,000	\$75,000
Total	10 Classrooms	146 Children	\$730,000	\$713,689

The following is an update on the status of the Minor Capital Improvements program. This program provides grants-in-aid to sponsors of school readiness programs and state-funded day care centers for facility improvements and minor capital repairs to that portion of facilities that house school readiness programs and state-funded day care centers. The grants are capped at \$95,000.

Examples of minor capital improvements include security system upgrades, playground surfacing, ADA compliance, cooling and air ventilation, door and window replacement, roof replacement, cabling to allow for high-speed and secure Internet access and upgrades to electrical systems to support increased technology usage.

The grantees for FY 14 through FY16 are included in Appendices G, H and I.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.