



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
**OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD**



Connecticut Office of  
Early Childhood

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**Testimony of Pietro Rosato, Chief of Business Operations**  
**Office of Early Childhood**  
**Before the General Bonding Subcommittee**  
**Tuesday, March 15, 2016**

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Good morning Senator Leone, Representative Boukus and members of the General Bonding Subcommittee of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee. I am Pietro Rosato, Chief of Business Operations for the Office of Early Childhood. I am here today to provide information about our bonding activities and to answer any questions. Commissioner Jones-Taylor sends her regrets as she is not available to attend today's hearing.

The OEC administers two bond programs: Minor Capital Improvements and Smart Start.

I will first provide an overview of our Minor Capital Improvement programs. 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, and roof replacement.

The bond funding for Wiring and Technology and Minor Capital Improvements are combined in the OEC's most recent RFP. Examples of uses under wiring and technology include upgrades to network infrastructure, updates to voice technology, cabling to allow for high-speed and secure Internet access and upgrades to electrical systems to support increased technology usage.

The demand for this bonding is high as Early Care and Education providers have a substantial need for improvement to their facilities and technological capabilities. The funding granted to these programs enhances the health and safety of our youngest children. The OEC thanks the General Assembly for establishing this bond program and for approving bond proposals for early care and education programs.

The grantees included the three cohorts as listed in Appendices G, H and I. In addition, the handout provided further outlines the bond funding received in Cohorts 1, 2 and 3 and details the categories that this funding is being used to support.

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The development of a Cohort 4 RFP is underway. The RFP process for this phase is scheduled to begin this summer.

Our other bond program is the Smart Start program. 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.

Funding is authorized over 10 years for capital expenses for the Smart Start program; \$15 million in FY15 and \$10 million annually from FY16 to FY24, with the exception of FY17 that is funded at \$8 million per a change made in section 51 PA 15-244. 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 FY16, 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 FY17 applications were received from 9 districts and are awaiting a bond commission hearing.

Thank you for the opportunity to come before you today.

I would be happy to take any questions.