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HOUSE No. 4616

Chapter 56 of the Acts of 2020

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

(2019-2020)

AN ACT TO FURTHER ADDRESS CHALLENGES FACED BY MUNICIPALITIES, SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND STATE AUTHORITIES RESULTING FROM COVID-19.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 20 of chapter 161A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 2, the word, “March” and inserting in place thereof the following word:- May.

SECTION 2. Said section 20 of said chapter 161A, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out, in line 4, the word, “April” and inserting in place thereof the following word:- June.

SECTION 3. Item 7004-0202 of section 2 of chapter 41 of the acts of 2019 is hereby amended by inserting after the words “permanent supportive housing” the following words:- ; provided further, that as a result of the outbreak of the 2019 novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, funds may be utilized for the purposes outlined in item 7004-0102.

SECTION 4. Item 7004-9024 of said section 2 of said chapter 41 is hereby amended by inserting after the words “voucher management system” the following words:- ; provided further, that as a result of the outbreak of the 2019 novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, and the governor’s March 10, 2020 declaration of a state of emergency, the department shall, from the governor’s March 10, 2020 declaration of a state of emergency until the termination of said state of emergency, to the maximum extent feasible, suspend, waive, delay or simplify requirements for documentation, third-party verification, notarization, recipient briefings, inspections and other requirements that require administering agencies, landlords or the client to engage in in-person contact or mail delivery and, to the maximum extent feasible, allow for self-certification.

SECTION 5. Item 7004-9316 of said section 2 of said chapter 41 is hereby amended by inserting after the words “not less than annually” the following words:- ; provided further, that as a result of the outbreak of the 2019 novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, and the governor’s March 10, 2020 declaration of a state of emergency, the department shall, from the governor’s March 10, 2020 declaration of a state of emergency until the termination of said state of emergency, to the maximum extent feasible, suspend, waive, delay or simplify requirements for documentation, third-party verification, notarization, recipient briefings, inspections and other requirements that require administering agencies, landlords or the client to engage in in-person contact or mail delivery and, to the maximum extent feasible, allow for self-certification.

SECTION 6. Notwithstanding clause (i) of the fourth paragraph of section 1D of chapter 69 of the General Laws or any other general or special law to the contrary, upon recommendation of the commissioner of elementary and secondary education, the board of elementary and secondary education may modify or waive the requirements of the competency determination for high school graduation, in order to address disruptions caused by the outbreak of the 2019 novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, or the governor’s March 10, 2020 declaration of a state of emergency; provided, that any grade 12 student that is unable to take or otherwise complete any assessment administered in the spring of 2020 as a requirement of the competency determination pursuant to said clause (i) of said fourth paragraph of said section 1D of said chapter 69 shall have the opportunity to take or retake the assessment during subsequent offerings.

SECTION 7. Notwithstanding section 1I of chapter 69 of the General Laws or any other general or special law to the contrary, the requirement for a comprehensive diagnostic assessment of individual students under said section 1I of said chapter 69 is waived for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year in order to address disruptions caused by the outbreak of the 2019 novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, or the governor’s March 10, 2020 declaration of a state of emergency.

SECTION 8. Notwithstanding section 16B of chapter 71 of the General Laws or any other general or special law to the contrary, if a vote on the approval of a fiscal year 2021 regional school district budget by a town or city is delayed beyond June 30, 2020 as a result of

the outbreak of the 2019 novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, and the declaration of a state of emergency issued by the governor on March 10, 2020, the budget approval process described in said section 16B shall be suspended and the district shall notify the department of elementary and secondary education of a lack of a budget and the commissioner, or a designee, shall certify an amount sufficient for the operation of the district commencing July 1, 2020 in an amount not less than 1/12 of the total budget approved for the district in the most recent fiscal year. Similar sums shall be certified for each successive month to ensure the continued provision of services by the district until such time as a budget is adopted and approved by the regional committee and member towns or cities in the manner otherwise provided in said section 16B. The department may issue guidelines or regulations for the implementation of this section.

SECTION 9. Notwithstanding subsection (a) of section 23 of chapter 132 of the acts of 2019, or any other general or special law to the contrary, the commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall set the deadline for each school district to submit its first 3-year plan required pursuant to subsection (d) of section 1S of chapter 69 of the General Laws as May 15, 2020, or such later date as determined by the commissioner, in order to address disruptions caused by the outbreak of the 2019 novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, or the governor’s March 10, 2020 declaration of a state of emergency.

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