

# Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education

June 12, 2019

The Honorable Robert DeLeo  
The State House  
24 Beacon Street, Room 356  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Speaker DeLeo:

Employers across Massachusetts continue to report trouble finding qualified candidates to fill open positions threatening growth in their companies and the state economy. At the same time, students coming up through our public education system graduate unprepared to secure these positions or to succeed in college.

School funding reform legislation presents a unique and rare opportunity to take urgently needed steps to ensure each and every student in the Commonwealth receives the high quality education they need to take their rightful place in our economy and our communities. Increased funding alone will not bring about the kind of improvements in practices and alignment with real world expectations that is needed to meet this goal.

The Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, our partners and affiliates across the state urge you to support a bill that addresses these issues by including the following elements:

1. **Fully implement the recommendations of the Foundation Budget Review Commission through a multi-year, fully-funded revision to the Chapter 70 formula that will achieve adequacy and equity for all students.** Funding provisions should include revisions to the Charter School tuition reimbursement program schedule and percentages, and the creation of a standing FBRC.
2. **Maintain and enhance the state accountability system to ensure new funds go to those students who need them the most and are used effectively to close achievement gaps, set statewide and district targets for closing achievement gaps with annual reporting on progress, and collect and transparently report on data related to college and career readiness and an expanded list of school metrics.** The State should require, at a minimum, creation of a plan, to be made public, as to how and where they will use ELL and low income allotments to serve intended populations, ensure reporting of a robust and user-friendly set of comparable data from school to school that correlate with student post-graduation success, and create a Data Advisory Committee per the FBRC recommendations.
3. **Add a new Chapter 70 enrollment category for Early College and Career Pathways to enable replication and expansion of these promising high school reform strategies, that directly address college and career readiness.** Every effort should be made to incentivize a new approach to preparing students for the future, including the awarding of industry-recognized credentials, work-based learning opportunities, and successful college and career pathway programs.

4. **Provide significant and supplemental funding for innovation and the implementation of best practices in underperforming schools.** It is vital to set aside money to support grants to schools and districts to innovate and create new approaches to closing achievement, opportunity, and skills gaps while also ensuring that the Commissioner and DESE have the ability, with flexible funding at the Commissioner's discretion, to inject funding into schools needing improvement with the scaling up of promising practices.
5. **Enact Innovation Partnership Zone legislation to provide communities with a new tool for empowering schools and educators to address persistent low-performance and encourage innovation.** Allowing for the expansion of autonomy and flexibility for educators, with school and zone level decision-making, these "zones" can create collaborative partnerships for success and should be extended for voluntary use across the state.

We the undersigned, collectively representing over 28,000 employers, across the state stand ready to work with you to enthusiastically support a bill that includes these elements.

Sincerely,



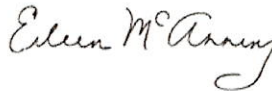
Edward M. Lambert  
Executive Director  
Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education



John Regan  
President & CEO  
Associated Industries of Massachusetts



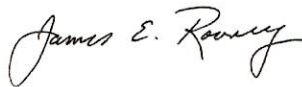
J.D. Chesloff  
Executive Director  
Massachusetts Business Roundtable



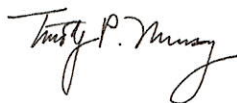
Eileen McAnneny  
President  
Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation



Jay Ash  
President & CEO  
Massachusetts Competitive Partnership



James Rooney  
President & CEO  
Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce



Timothy P. Murray  
President & CEO  
Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce



John Davis  
Principal, Ventry Industries  
Co-Chair, Springfield Business Leaders in Education



Amy A. Pitter  
President & CEO  
Massachusetts Society of CPAs



Jon B. Hurst  
President  
Retailers Association of Massachusetts



Wendy K. Northcross  
CEO  
Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce



Jonathan Butler  
President & CEO  
1Berkshire



Roy M. Nascimento  
President & CEO  
North Central Mass. Chamber of Commerce



Mary Walachy  
Executive Director  
Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation



Amy Naples  
Executive Director  
Plymouth Area Chamber of Commerce



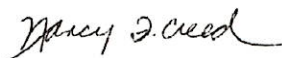
Tom Hopcroft  
President & CEO  
Massachusetts Technology Leadership Council



Rick Kidder  
President & CEO  
SouthCoast Chamber



Tricia Canavan,  
President, United Personnel Services  
Co-Chair, Springfield Business Leaders for Education



Nancy Creed  
President  
Springfield Regional Chamber



Michael O'Sullivan  
President & CEO  
Bristol County Chamber of Commerce



Rick Sullivan  
President & CEO  
Western Mass Economic Development Council



Jeanine Herbert  
President & CEO  
Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce

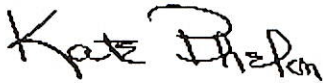




Jack Lank  
President & CEO  
United Regional Chamber of Commerce



Greg Reibman  
President  
Newton-Needham Chamber of Commerce



Kate Phelon  
Executive Director  
Greater Westfield Chamber of Commerce



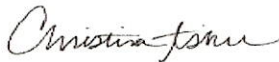
Marie Oliva  
President & CEO  
Cape Cod Canal Region Chamber



Melissa Fetterhoff  
President & CEO  
Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce



Noelle Pina  
Executive Director  
Orleans Chamber of Commerce



Christina Fisher  
Executive Director  
TechNet



Tom O'Rourke  
President & CEO  
Neponset River Regional Chamber



Chris Anderson  
President  
Massachusetts High Technology Council