



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

SENATOR EDWARD J. KENNEDY
First Middlesex District

STATE HOUSE
BOSTON, MA 02133-1053
TEL. (617) 722-1630
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March 22, 2019

The Honorable Jason M. Lewis, Senate Chair
The Honorable Alice Hanlon Peisch, House Chair
Joint Committee on Education
Massachusetts State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Lewis and Chairwoman Peisch,

As the Joint Committee on Education convenes to consider various legislative proposals to restructure the Commonwealth's education funding formula, I would like to take this opportunity to express my support of **An Act providing rightful opportunities and meaningful investment for successful and equitable education (S.238/H.586)** and to urge the committee to report favorably on this critical legislation.

My experience as the Mayor of Lowell provided me with an in depth perspective of the fiscal challenges posed to districts by the state's chronic underfunding of public education. In that capacity, I had the dual responsibility of presiding over City Council meetings on Tuesday evenings, and serving as chair of the School Committee meetings on Wednesday evenings. At weekly council meetings, I would hear concerns of increasing school spending eating away at the city's budget and the next evening, I would grapple with apprehensions that the school district was not receiving adequate funding to meet the unique demands of providing a high quality education to our students. The daunting reality in Lowell, and for communities around Massachusetts, is that both sides are correct. That will remain the case until we succeed in enacting reform that implements each of the recommendations of the Foundation Budget Review Commission.

The detriments of the foundation budget in its current form, while impacting every school district in the Commonwealth, are particularly pronounced in Lowell and in other similar Gateway Cities. In Lowell, the foundation budget formula underestimates the actual health insurance costs to the district by more 50 percent which, given the size of the district, translates to an \$18 million annual shortfall that must be made up at the local level. The district's obligations in this area leave no other option but to make difficult cuts that directly impact education quality. Increasing class sizes cannot be mitigated, spending on technology and other instructional material does not approach adequate levels, and the district struggles to keep up with building maintenance.

It must be emphasized that any proposed reform to public education funding cannot be considered sufficient if it fails to address the funding needs of districts serving a high percentage of low-income students. The Foundation Budget Review Commission clearly identified the necessity of providing additional funding to meet the distinct needs of such districts. Lowell's twenty-six schools serve 14,668 students, of which more than 52 percent, over 7,5000 students, are considered economically disadvantaged by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. In order to ensure that these students succeed, critical investments must be made to improve

instruction quality and to implement best practices known to enhance student achievement. The *PROMISE Act* is the only legislation before this committee that fulfills this critical recommendation, and is thereby the only proposal that truly achieves our shared goal of providing a high quality education to every student within the Commonwealth.

While the situation in my hometown starkly illustrates what is at stake as we consider reforming education funding, calls for reform have been pervasive across my district - from Lowell, one of the Commonwealth's largest school districts, to suburban communities including Westford and Tyngsborough, and rural communities served by regional school districts. To reflect the support that this legislation has garnered in my district, I am submitting for the review of the committee resolutions adopted by the following municipal boards: **the Lowell City Council, the Groton Select Board, the Dunstable Board of Selectmen, the Pepperell Board of Selectmen, and the Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee.**

The broad consensus around the need to enact reform to the foundation budget during this legislative session within the legislature and the executive branch provides us with a rare opportunity to finally correct major shortcomings that have jeopardized the futures Massachusetts students for too long. This is a moment that we cannot afford to squander by passing legislation that misses the mark on reforms determined necessary by the FBRC. Once again, on behalf of the thousands of students in my district who could not be guaranteed a high quality education if a partial approach to reform is taken, I urge this committee to support the only legislation that fully implements critical changes required for educating low-income students, and to report favorably on **Senate Bill 238 and House Bill 586.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Kennedy', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Edward J. Kennedy
State Senator
First Middlesex District

Enclosures: - Lowell City Council Resolution
- Groton Select Board Resolution
- Dunstable Board of Selectmen Resolution
- Pepperell Board of Selectmen Resolution
- Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee Resolution

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

CITY OF LOWELL

In City Council

RESOLUTION

The City Council of the City of Lowell wishes to be recorded in support of Senate Docket 101, an act providing rightful opportunities and meaningful investment for successful and equitable education.

The City Council fully supports Senate Docket 101, regarding an Act providing rightful opportunities and meaningful investment for successful and equitable education; and

A copy of Senate Docket 101 is attached and described in Attachment "A".

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LOWELL as follows:

That we, the members of the City Council of the City of Lowell wish to be recorded in support of Senate Docket 101, an act providing rightful opportunities and meaningful investment for successful and equitable education also known as the Education Promise Act.

This Resolution adopted by vote of the City Council of Lowell on the 22 day of January, 2019.

Submitted by:

CITY COUNCIL - CITY OF LOWELL

/s/William Samaras
Mayor William Samaras

/s/Edward J. Kennedy
Edward J. Kennedy

/s/Karen Cirillo
Karen Cirillo

/s/John J. Leahy
John J. Leahy

/s/David Conway
David Conway

/s/Rita M. Mercier
Rita M. Mercier

/s/Rodney M. Elliott
Rodney M. Elliott

/s/James L. Milinazzo
James L. Milinazzo

/s./Vesna Nuon
Vesna Nuon

In City Council January 22, 2019, Read twice and adopted 9 yeas. So Voted./s/Michael Q. Geary, City Clerk

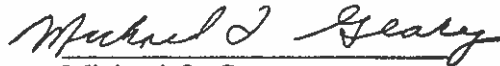
Approved by City Manager Eileen M. Donoghue January 23, 2019.

A true copy
ATTEST:

Michael Q. Geary
City Clerk

Resolution/2019-support SD101

A TRUE COPY ATTEST



Michael Q. Geary
City Clerk, Lowell, MA



TOWN OF GROTON

173 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450-1237
Tel: (978) 448-1111
Fax: (978) 448-1115

Select Board

Barry A. Pease, *Chair*
Alison S. Manugian, *Vice Chair*
John R. Giger, *Clerk*
Joshua A. Degen, *Member*
Rebecca H. Pine, *Member*

Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

GROTON SELECT BOARD RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF FULL FUNDING FOR OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WHEREAS, free public schools available to all students without exception are foundational to our democracy and are required by the state constitution; and

WHEREAS, all of our students, no matter where they live, deserve high-quality public schools that teach the whole child and provide them with a rich school experience that addresses their academic, social and emotional needs;

WHEREAS, the state's foundation budget formula, which determines state aid to each district, has been woefully out of date for years, thereby underfunding our districts by more than \$1 billion a year for essential educational services; and

WHEREAS, the state's foundation budget formula underestimates the cost of special education services, insurance benefits and regional transportation, and fails to account for unfunded mandates, charter school reimbursements, and the increasing importance of technology in education; and

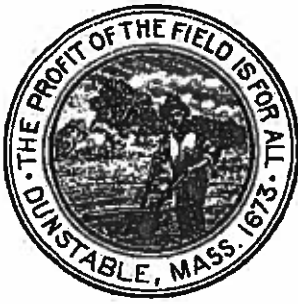
WHEREAS, an updated foundation budget formula could bring Groton-Dunstable Regional School District up to \$563,200 in additional state aid each year, allowing this district to move closer to providing all students with the education to which they are entitled as residents of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature failed to pass any foundation budget legislation in the last session, leaving districts, educators, and students without the funds necessary to support the schools our students deserve in every district in the state;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Groton Select Board urges the Legislature to approve and fully fund a new foundation budget formula by May 1, 2019.

Barry Pease
Groton Select Board Chair
On behalf of the Groton Select Board

February 11, 2019
Date



OFFICE OF THE
Advisory Board
TOWN HALL
511 MAIN STREET
DUNSTABLE, MA 01827-1313
(978) 649-4514 x222 FAX (978) 649-4371
fincom@dunstable-ma.gov

Dunstable Advisory Board Resolution in Support of Full Funding for Our Public Schools

WHEREAS, free public schools available to all students without exception are foundational to our democracy and are required by the state constitution; and

WHEREAS, all of our students, no matter where they live, deserve high-quality public schools that teach the whole child and provide them with a rich school experience that addresses their academic, social and emotional needs;

WHEREAS, the state's foundation budget formula, which determines state aid to each district, has been woefully out of date for years, thereby underfunding our districts by more than \$1 billion a year for essential educational services; and

WHEREAS, the state's foundation budget formula underestimates the cost of special education services, insurance benefits and regional transportation, and fails to account for unfunded mandates, charter school reimbursements, and the increasing importance of technology in education; and

WHEREAS, an updated foundation budget formula could bring Groton-Dunstable Regional School District up to \$563,200 in additional state aid each year, allowing this district to move closer to providing all students with the education to which they are entitled as residents of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature failed to pass any foundation budget legislation in the last session, leaving districts, educators, and students without the funds necessary to support the schools our students deserve in every district in the state;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee urges the Legislature to approve and fully fund a new foundation budget formula by May 1, 2019.

Robert Nelson

2/25/19

Date

Dunstable Advisory Board Chair
On behalf of the Dunstable Advisory Board



Town of Pepperell
Board of Selectmen
One Main Street - Town Hall
Pepperell, Massachusetts 01463
(978) 433-0333 FAX (978) 433-0335
Andrew MacLean, Town Administrator
amaclean@town.pepperell.ma.us

RESOLUTION

The Board of Selectmen of the Town of Pepperell wish to be recorded in support of Senate Docket 101, An act providing rightful opportunities and meaningful investment for successful and equitable education.

The Board of Selectmen of the Town of Pepperell fully supports Senate Docket 101, and

a copy of Senate Docket 101 is attached and described in Attachment "A".

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN OF THE TOWN OF PEPPERELL as follows:

That we, the members of the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Pepperell, wish to be recorded in support of the Senate Docket 101, an act providing rightful opportunities and meaningful investment for successful and equitable education, also known as the Education Promise Act.

This Resolution adopted by vote of the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Pepperell on the 25th day of February, 2019.

Submitted by:

BOARD OF SELECTMEN - TOWN OF PEPPERELL

Roland P. Nutter

Lisa M. Ferolito

William Greathead

TRUE COPY ATTEST

Town Clerk



GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Marlena Gilbert – Chairperson

Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee Resolution in Support of Full Funding for Our Public Schools

WHEREAS, free public schools available to all students without exception are foundational to our democracy and are required by the state constitution; and

WHEREAS, all of our students, no matter where they live, deserve high-quality public schools that teach the whole child and provide them with a rich school experience that addresses their academic, social and emotional needs;

WHEREAS, the state’s foundation budget formula, which determines state aid to each district, has been woefully out of date for years, thereby underfunding our districts by more than \$1 billion a year for essential educational services; and

WHEREAS, the state’s foundation budget formula underestimates the cost of special education services, insurance benefits and regional transportation, and fails to account for unfunded mandates, charter school reimbursements, and the increasing importance of technology in education; and

WHEREAS, an updated foundation budget formula could bring Groton-Dunstable Regional School District up to \$563,200 in additional state aid each year, allowing this district to move closer to providing all students with the education to which they are entitled as residents of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature failed to pass any foundation budget legislation in the last session, leaving districts, educators, and students without the funds necessary to support the schools our students deserve in every district in the state;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee urges the Legislature to approve and fully fund a new foundation budget formula by May 1, 2019.



Marlena Gilbert

Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee Chair

On behalf of the Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee

2/6/19

Date