

# legislative bulletin

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To: All School Committee Members and Superintendents

From: Stephen J. Finnegan, Esq.

Date: April 11, 2006

## **Subject: House Ways and Means Budget, H.4900**

### **Chapter 70 Contains a \$91.4 million Increase**

H.4900 contains an increase of \$91.4 million over the fiscal year 2006 Budget, which funds the foundation budget and ensures that every school district will not receive less than the prior fiscal year. The House Ways and Means Budget changes the calculation of local contribution, over a five year period, by using income as well as property wealth. Also, the Ways and Means Budget proposes moving over time towards an aid floor of 15% of the foundation budget for all districts.

H.4900 completely uncaps the lottery aid distribution, thereby adding about \$158 million to local government receipts. Also the Budget proposed by House Ways and Means has level funded the Additional Assistance account, and has increased to \$20 million payments to municipalities in which tracts of land have been taken off the local tax assessments for environmental protection or to host state facilities. You may access your district's local aid through the MASC website.

The House Ways and Means Committee deferred further changes to the Chapter 70 funding formula until the Education Committee issues recommendations based upon the testimony received from their recent state-wide listening tour.

The Budget submitted by the Governor proposed a \$164 million increase to Chapter 70 for fiscal year 2007 and also contained a formula change to aid communities with rapidly rising enrollments. The Governor's Budget would have resulted in some twenty five communities receiving less aid than the prior year.

### **Regional School Transportation**

H.4900 contains a \$5 million proposed increase to funding regional school transportation, which brings the total appropriation to \$50 million. The Budget proposed by the Governor provided the same level of funding.

### **Full Funding of Circuit Breaker**

The Ways and Means Budget fully funds the special education circuit breaker by adding \$1.2 million, which brings the total appropriation to \$202.8 million. This account reimburses local school districts for extraordinary special education costs.

### **Charter school Tuition Reimbursement**

The House Ways and Means Budget proposes adding almost \$20 million to the reimbursement to eligible sending districts for charter school tuition reimbursement, and the per pupil capital needs component included in the charter school tuition amount for Commonwealth charter schools. The total appropriation of almost \$70 million is supposed to fully fund the statutory commitment.

### **School Building Assistance, Extended Learning Time Grants and Increased Kindergarten Expansion Grants**

H.4900 recommends transferring an additional \$83.8 million to the newly established School Building Authority to assist in completing the process of clearing the wait list of school projects.

The Ways and Means Budget establishes a new \$5 million account for extended learning time grants to allow students in underperforming schools additional time on task to meet the demands of the state curriculum guidelines.

H. 4900 has recommended a two million dollar increase in kindergarten expansion grants to increase the number of full day kindergarten opportunities throughout the Commonwealth. The total appropriation recommended for kindergarten expansion will rise to \$27 million.

### **Teacher Content Training, Educational Leadership Training, Restoration of Funds for After School Initiatives and Metco Funding**

The Ways and Means Budget recommends establishing a new \$2 million appropriation for teacher content training in math and science, to begin the task of moving every student to math and science proficiency.

H.4900 proposed a new \$1 million appropriation for principal and superintendent training to improve educational leadership in struggling or underperforming schools.

The proposed Ways and Means Budget restores a \$1 million line item for after school initiatives in districts where the extension of time for the entire school is not necessary, but where significant numbers of children would benefit from such opportunities.

H.4900 recommends an almost \$1 million increase in the Metco Appropriation.

## **English Language Learners, Non-resident Regional Transportation and Certificates of Occupational Proficiency Funding**

H. 4900 proposes the establishment of a new \$500,000 account for English language acquisition, which will support the professional development of teachers working with English language learners.

The Ways and Means Budget recommends increasing the reimbursement of non-resident vocational transportation by \$400,000 which is intended to fully fund this account.

H.4900 proposes the addition of \$200,000 to continue the work of developing occupational proficiency to allow students at vocational schools the opportunity to demonstrate their mastery in their field, as well as earning a competency determination through MCAS.

### **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES: A SPECIAL INVITATION**

The MASC Board of Directors extends a special invitation to all student representatives to their school committees to attend the Day on the Hill program as a learning experience. There is **NO CHARGE** for the student representative to attend, however the student must be registered as an attendee in order to receive a badge. To register, call Jennyfer Cabral at MASC (800)392-6023 or register online at [www.masc.org](http://www.masc.org).

### **Upcoming MASC Events**

April 26 (W)  
**Day on the Hill**  
The State House, Boston

May 5-6 (F-Sa)  
**Charting the Course**  
Heritage House Hotel, Hyannis

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