



Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Inc.

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June 18th, 2026

FY 2027 Conference Committee

Massachusetts State House

Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chair Rodrigues, Chair Michlewitz, and Members of the Conference Committee:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), representing more than 2,400 elected and appointed school committee members across the Commonwealth, thank you for your work reconciling the Fiscal Year 2027 state budget.

We are grateful to both the House and Senate for their continued commitment to public education and, in particular, for fully funding the final year of Student Opportunity Act implementation. We also appreciate both branches increasing minimum Chapter 70 aid to \$160 per pupil. The proposed \$7.66 billion investment in Chapter 70 education aid will provide critical support to school districts as they work to address rising costs while meeting the needs of all students.

As you work toward a final budget agreement, we respectfully urge the Conference Committee to preserve these investments and prioritize the following additional education funding and policy provisions:

Student Transportation Reimbursement (*H.5501, Line Items 7035-0006 and 1596-2451*)

We appreciate the inclusion of \$3 million for transportation reimbursement in the supplemental budget (H.5470, Line Item 1596-2704). For FY27, we urge adoption of at least the House funding level of **\$119,162,494** through line items 7035-0006 and 1596-2451. We further encourage the Conference Committee to continue moving toward the Commonwealth's commitment of reimbursing 100 percent of eligible transportation costs.

Universal Free School Meals (*H.5501, Line Item 1596-2422*)

We urge the Conference Committee to adopt the House funding level of **\$198 million** for Universal Free School Meals. This program has proven to be one of the Commonwealth's most successful investments in student health, well-being, and academic readiness while also reducing financial burdens on families.

Special Education Circuit Breaker (*S.3100, Line Item 7061-0012*)

We appreciate the inclusion of \$152 million for the Special Education Reimbursement Fund in the supplemental budget (H.5470, Line Item 1596-2604). For the FY27 budget, we urge adoption of the Senate funding level of **\$653,894,886** in line item 7061-0012 to help districts manage rapidly increasing special education costs while maintaining services required by law.

Rural School Aid (*S.3100, Line Item 7061-9813*)

Rural school districts continue to face unique financial challenges driven by enrollment trends, transportation costs, and limited economies of scale. While we appreciate the inclusion of \$4 million in the supplemental budget (H.5470), we urge the Conference Committee to adopt the Senate funding level of **\$16 million** for Rural School Aid through line item 7061-9813.

Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (*S.3100, Line Item 3000-6025*)

Early childhood education remains one of the most effective investments the Commonwealth can make. We support the Senate funding level of **\$28.45 million** for the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative through line item 3000-6025.

METCO (*H.5501, Line Item 7010-0012*)

We urge adoption of the House funding level of **\$35 million** for METCO. The program continues to provide valuable educational opportunities while advancing the Commonwealth's commitment to diversity and educational opportunity.

Foundation Budget Review Commission (*S.3100, Outside Sections 27 and 38*)

We strongly support the Senate language establishing a new Foundation Budget Review Commission to evaluate and make recommendations regarding the Commonwealth's K-12 school funding formula. The previous commission was convened in 2015, and significant changes in educational costs, student needs, and district fiscal pressures warrant a comprehensive review of the formula.

School Building Authority Commission (*S.3100, Outside Section 39*)

We also support the Senate language establishing a School Building Authority Commission to examine the Commonwealth's school facilities needs and the financing structure of the Massachusetts School Building Authority program. This review presents an important opportunity to assess how the state can best support districts as they address aging facilities, modernization needs, and future capital investments.

As you finalize the FY27 budget, we respectfully urge the Conference Committee to preserve the Commonwealth's commitment to public education by adopting these funding priorities and policy initiatives that will help school districts meet growing challenges while ensuring all students have the opportunity to succeed. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss these recommendations further, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Glenn Koocher
Executive Director
Massachusetts Association of School Committees



Anthony Andronico
Director of Operations & Public Affairs
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