# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:** | Russell D. Johnston, Acting Commissioner  |
| **Date:** | February 19, 2025 |
| **Subject:** | **Update on the 193rd Legislative Session Education Related Laws** |

The following laws relating to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department/DESE) have been enacted and approved by Governor Healey during the 193rd Legislative Session (2023-2024). The laws are listed in chronological order of enactment.

**An Act making appropriations for the fiscal year 2023 to provide for supplementing certain existing appropriations and for certain other activities and projects**

[Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2023/Chapter2)

Approved: March 29, 2023

The first FY23 supplemental budget of the Healey–Driscoll Administration included:

* $65 million for universal school meals funding through June 30, 2023
* $40,061,776 in a reserve to supplement school district costs associated with additional student enrollments in communities with increased shelter capacity.
* The establishment of the Youth Development and Achievement Fund to be credited any monies transferred from the Sports Wagering Fund pursuant to MGL Chapter 23N, section 17. Eligible expenditures include after-school and out-of-school activities and matching grants to elementary and secondary youth sports, organizations, clubs and other school groups to attend events, including, but not limited to, academic events and programs, cultural events and award ceremonies both nationally and internationally.
* Provision to make permanent certain remote meeting participation after the Covid-19 State of Emergency ended.

**FY24 General Appropriations Act**

[Chapter 28 of the Acts of 2023](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2023/Chapter28)

Approved: August 9, 2023

On August 9, 2023, the Governor signed the FY24 General Appropriations Act (GAA) into law. The law provides total spending authority of $7.95 billion for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, most of which goes to cities, towns, and school districts through Chapter 70 and other forms of education aid and reimbursements. This total represents 9.7% growth over FY23 spending, an increase of $224.7 million (2.9%) above the Governor’s FY24 request (House 1), $45.7 million less than the House’s recommendation, and $225.8 million above the Senate’s recommendation.

The following summarizes the GAA’s education provisions by program area.

**I. Education Local Aid & Reimbursements**

Chapter 70 aid (inclusive of line items 7061-0008 and 7061-0009) is increased by $594.0 million (9.9%) to $6.592 billion. The FY24 Chapter 70 program reflects the passage in November 2019 of An Act Relative to Educational Opportunity for Students, commonly known as the Student Opportunity Act (SOA). The SOA makes significant changes to the Chapter 70 formula, based in large part on the recommendations of the Foundation Budget Review Commission (FBRC). The updated formula is also codified in Chapter 70 of the general laws.

***Statutory Parameters***

The updated formula includes three parameters to be specified in each year’s general appropriations act. In the FY24 GAA budget, these are specified as follows:

* Total state target local contribution: 59%
* Effort reduction: 100%
* Minimum aid: $60 per pupil

***Foundation Budget Changes***

The SOA establishes new, higher foundation budget rates in five areas: benefits and fixed charges, guidance and psychological services, special education out-of-district tuition, English learners, and low-income students, all to be phased in by FY27. For FY24, the rates have been increased by three-sixths of the gap between the rates in FY21—the base year used in the calculations—and the final goal rates. The SOA also increased the number of tiers used for the low-income increment rates from ten to twelve; districts with higher concentrations of low-income students benefit from higher rates.

In addition to these targeted rate increases, foundation budget categories are also increased to account for inflation. A new employee benefits inflation rate is applied to the employee benefits and fixed charges category. This is based on the enrollment-weighted, three-year average premium increase for all Group Insurance Commission plans; for FY24 the increase is 5.16%. An inflation rate of 4.50% is applied to all other foundation budget rates, based on the U.S. Department of Commerce’s state and local government price deflator and capped at the 4.50% maximum set in the SOA. The SOA does not set a maximum for the employee benefits inflation rate.

Statewide, foundation enrollment increased from 903,751 in FY23 to 905,106 in FY24, an increase of 1,355 or 0.15%. Foundation enrollment decreased for 174 districts, while 13 districts experienced enrollment increases of greater than five percent.

Finally, the formula’s minimum aid provision guarantees all districts receive at least the same amount of aid in FY24 as they did in FY23 plus at least $60 per pupil, funded through line items 7061-0008 and 7061-0009.

***Low-income and special education enrollment***

The SOA reinstates the definition of low-income enrollment used prior to FY17, based on 185% of the federal poverty level. It replaces the economically disadvantaged designation (based on 133% of the federal poverty level) used from FY17 through FY23. For FY24, a district’s low-income enrollment is based on three eligibility categories:

Students identified as participating in state public assistance programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC), MassHealth, and foster care; or

Students certified as low-income through the new supplemental data collection process; or Students reported by a district as homeless through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance program application.

Statewide, low-income enrollment for FY24 is 421,305, compared to 407,501 in FY23.

The SOA also increases the assumed in-district special education enrollment to 5% for vocational students and 4% for non-vocational students. In FY24, these assumed rates have been increased by two-sixths of the gap to 4.90% and 3.90% respectively.

***Required Local Contributions***

The aggregate wealth model that has been used to determine local contribution requirements since FY07 and that is now codified in the SOA remains in place. For municipalities with required contributions above their targets, the equity component of the formula sets their contributions at target.

Finally, pursuant to its codification in the SOA, a provision introduced in the FY20 budget specifying a minimum required local contribution of 82.5% of foundation for any city or town with a combined effort yield greater than 175% of foundation is continued in FY24.

***Charter School Tuition***

Foundation tuition rates for Commonwealth charter schools are based on the same foundation budget rates used in Chapter 70. The foundation budget rate increases being implemented in FY24 have been incorporated into our projected FY24 tuition rates. In addition, charter school low-income enrollment for FY24 has been identified using the same eligibility criteria used for districts. The facilities component of the tuition rate is $1,188 per pupil, with this cost fully reimbursed by the state as in prior years.

The reimbursement formula for transitional aid to districts (7061-9010) reflects the change enacted by Section 38 of the FY20 budget, which provides for a reimbursement of 100% of any tuition increase in the first year, 60% in the second year, and 40% in the third year.

Funding for first year reimbursements is prioritized first, followed by funding for second year reimbursements. The SOA requires 75% of the total state obligation to be funded in the first year, 90% in the second, and 100% in subsequent years. The FY24 GAA has $232.7 million appropriated for these reimbursements. This appropriation level is expected to fund 100% of the state’s obligation when tuition assessments are updated to reflect actual enrollments and district spending levels. The projected assessments and reimbursements for charter tuition payments at this point in time can be useful for budget planning but should not be viewed as final numbers.

***Rural Aid***

The account is funded at $15 million, an increase of $9.5 million for Rural Aid (7061-9813).

***Circuit Breaker***

Special Education Circuit Breaker reimbursement (7061-0012) is increased by $57.9 million over the FY23 level to $499 million and accelerates the phase-in of a provision of the SOA to reimburse up to 75% of out-of-district special education transportation costs.

There is $5.6M of unspent funds from FY23 that will roll forward to FY24.

The Governor reduced the account by the amount of funds rolling forward because the amount appropriated for FY24 along with the amount rolling forward would be sufficient to meet projected demand. The administration has separately filed for $75M in a FY23 supplemental budget to further support school districts with escalating out-of-district costs.

***Transportation Reimbursements***

The FY24 GAA provides increased reimbursement of $14.9 million for Regional School Transportation (7035-0006), increased reimbursement of $5.7 million for Homeless Transportation (7035-0008), and increased reimbursement of $750K for Non-Resident Vocational Student Transportation (7061-0007).

**II. Program Changes**

The FY24 GAA includes additional funding for the following accounts:

* $500K increase for the 1595-0116 Genocide Education Trust Fund
* $500K increase for 7010-1193 Civics Education Program to $2.1M
* $1M increase for 7010-0020 Career Technical Partnership Grants (Innovation Pathways) to $5.8M
* $323K increase for 7061-0029 School and District Accountability Reviews to $1.38M
* $1M increase for the 7061-9408 Targeted Assistance account to $16.17M
* $50K increase for 7061-9612 Safe and Supportive Schools to $650K
* $300K increase for 7061-9634 Mentoring Matching Grants to $1.8M
* $2M increase for 7061-9814 Summer Learning to $3M
* $400K increase for 7061-9815 Grants for Hate Crime and Bias Prevention to $800K

**The GAA has added 3 new line items for FY24:**

* $69M for 1596-2422 Universal School Meals (another $102.5M is in the 7053-1925 account)
* $50M for 1596-2424 Green School Works account to install or maintain clean energy infrastructure
* $375K for 7010-1196 to promote the healthy development of young children and their families living in underserved communities of the city of Boston through trauma-informed, multi-generational family support and community engagement.

**The following accounts received a reduction in the FY24 GAA:**

* 1595-0015 Civics Project Trust Fund is reduced by $500K to $1.5M
* 7027-0019 School-To-Work Connecting Activities is reduced by $842K to $7.8M
* 7027-1004 English Language Acquisition is reduced by $968K to $3.6M
* 7035-0035 AP Math and Science Program is reduced by $100K to $3.3M
* 7061-9412 Expanded Learning Time Grants is reduced by $3.6M to $2.4M
* 7061-9650 Supporting Healthy Alliances Reinforcing Education (SHARE) Grant Program is reduced by $1.05M to $1M
* The FY24 GAA eliminates spending for the7061-9805 Educator Scholarship and Loan Repayment Program ($15M reduction).
* In addition, 7061-9812 Child Sexual Abuse Prevention ($2.3M) has been transferred to the Children’s Trust Fund under account 3000-2060.

DESE’s other accounts are level funded in the FY24 GAA with either the addition/removal of legislative earmarks and/or changes in FY24 payroll costs.

**An Act making appropriations for the fiscal year 2023 to provide for supplementing certain existing appropriations and for certain other activities and projects**

[Chapter 77 of the Acts of 2023](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2023/Chapter77)

Approved: December 4, 2023

The December FY23 “close-out” supplemental budget included several provisions related to elementary and secondary education:

* $8,833,222 for student and school assessment
* $75,000,000 for extraordinary relief to school districts relative to increased out-of-district special education costs
* $75,000,000 for supplemental school district costs associated with additional student enrollments related to the emergency housing assistance program
* $14,856,250 for teacher diversity initiatives
* Clarifying technical language relative to the universal school meals program

**An Act preventing abuse and exploitation**

[Chapter 118 of the Acts of 2024](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2024/Chapter118)

Approved: June 30, 2024

Chapter 118 primarily addresses the consequences for the distribution of visual materials (sexting) and also includes the following education related requirements:

* Requires the attorney general, in consultation with the department of elementary and secondary education and others, to develop and implement a comprehensive educational diversion program about the activity commonly known as “sexting.”
* Amends Chapter 71 of the General Laws to direct the department of elementary and secondary education to encourage school districts to implement instruction in age-appropriate media literacy skills at all grade levels, including in any of the core subjects under section 1D of chapter 69, life skills programming or other subjects, to equip students with the knowledge and skills for accessing, analyzing, evaluating and creating all types of media. The instruction shall use content from the educational diversion program. See [General Laws c. 71, s. 100](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/mass-general-laws-c71-ss-100).

**An Act to provide for the future information technology needs of Massachusetts**

[Chapter 139 of the Acts of 2024](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2024/Chapter139)

Approved: July 29, 2024

Chapter 139 provides for the information technology and security needs of the commonwealth and deploy broadband access by allocating $150 million in capital funding for eligible cities, towns, regional organizations, including regional school districts and regional vocational technical high schools, whose membership is exclusively composed of municipal governments, tribes, local governmental agencies, authorities or subdivisions, quasi-state agencies, public authorities and institutions and similar governmental agencies for purposes, including, but not limited to, addressing threats to information systems, managing and reducing systemic risk, improving security of critical technology infrastructure and improving resilience; provided, that investments may include, but shall not be limited to, planning and studies, improvements to government efficiency and effectiveness, preparation of plans and specifications, asset modernization, information technology equipment and technical assistance.

**FY25 General Appropriations Act**

[Chapter 140 of the Acts of 2025](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2024/Chapter140)

Approved: July 29, 2024

On July 29, 2024, the Governor signed the FY25 General Appropriations Act (GAA) into law. The law provides total spending authority of $8.19 billion for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), most of which goes to cities, towns, and school districts through Chapter 70 and other forms of education aid and reimbursements. This total represents $235 million (3%) growth over FY24 spending, an increase of $80.9 million (1%) above the Governor’s FY25 request (House 2), $3.7 million less than the House’s recommendation, and $10.9 million above the Senate’s recommendation.

The FY25 GAA also includes a new $20 million line-item for the Literacy Launch program to improve early literacy rates in young learners under the Executive Office of Education (1596-2437) to be spent on a multi-year basis in partnership with the Department.

The following summarizes the GAA’s education provisions by program area

1. **Education Local Aid & Reimbursements**

**Chapter 70 aid (7061-0008 and 1596-2438)** is increased by $309.3M (4.7%) to $6.90B. The FY25 Chapter 70 program reflects the passage in November 2019 of An Act Relative to Educational Opportunity for Students, commonly known as the Student Opportunity Act (SOA). The SOA makes significant changes to the Chapter 70 formula, based in large part on the recommendations of the Foundation Budget Review Commission (FBRC). The updated formula is also codified in Chapter 70 of the general laws.

*Statutory parameters*

The updated formula includes three parameters to be specified in each year's general appropriations act. In the FY25 GAA budget, these are specified as follows:

* Total state target local contribution: 59%
* Effort reduction: 100%
* Minimum aid: $104 per pupil funded

*Foundation budget changes*

The SOA establishes new, higher foundation budget rates in five areas: benefits and fixed charges, guidance and psychological services, special education out-of-district tuition, English learners, and low-income students, which are all expected to be phased in by FY27. For FY25, the rates have been increased by 4/6ths of the gap between the rates in FY21—the base year used in the calculations—and the final target rates. The SOA also increased the number of tiers used for the low-income increment rates from ten to twelve; districts with higher concentrations of low-income students benefit from higher rates.

In addition to these targeted rate increases, foundation budget categories are also increased to account for inflation. A new employee benefits inflation rate is applied to the employee benefits and fixed charges category. This is based on the enrollment-weighted, three-year average premium increase for all Group Insurance Commission plans; for FY25 the increase is 5.03%. An inflation rate of 1.35% is applied to all other foundation budget rates, based on the U.S. Department of Commerce's state and local government price deflator.

Statewide, foundation enrollment increased from 905,106 in FY24 to 905,572 in FY25, an increase of 466 students. Foundation enrollment decreased for 165 districts, while 149 districts experienced enrollment increases.

Finally, the formula's minimum aid provision guarantees all districts receive at least the same amount of aid in FY25 as they did in FY24 plus a $104 per pupil increase.

*Low-income and special education enrollment*

The SOA reinstates the definition of low-income enrollment used prior to FY17, based on 185% of the federal poverty level. It replaces the economically disadvantaged designation (based on 133% of the federal poverty level) used from FY17 through FY22. For FY25, a district's low-income enrollment is based on three eligibility categories:

* Students identified as participating in state public assistance programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC), MassHealth, and foster care; or
* Students verified as low income through a supplemental data collection process first used for Chapter 70 in FY23; or
* Students reported by a district as homeless through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance program application.
* Statewide, low-income enrollment for FY25 is 415,821, compared to 421,305 in FY24.

The SOA also provides for a phase-in of increases to the assumed in-district special education enrollment to 5% for vocational students and 4% for non-vocational students. In FY25, these assumed rates have been increased by 4/6ths of the gap to 4.93% and 3.93%, respectively.

***Required Local Contributions***

The aggregate wealth model that has been used to determine target local contribution requirements since FY07 is now codified in Chapter 70 by the SOA. For municipalities with preliminary required contributions above their targets, the effort reduction component of the formula closes 100% of the gap between their preliminary contribution and their contribution target. For municipalities with preliminary required contributions significantly below their targets, the formula continues to apply an additional increment to their required contribution to close a portion of the gap to their contribution target.

Finally, pursuant to its codification in Chapter 70 by the SOA, a provision introduced in the FY20 budget specifying a minimum required local contribution of 82.5% of foundation for any city or town with a combined effort yield greater than 175% of foundation is continued in FY25.

***Charter school tuition***

Foundation tuition rates for Commonwealth charter schools are based on the same foundation budget rates used in Chapter 70. The foundation budget rate increases being implemented in FY25 have been incorporated into our projected FY25 tuition rates. In addition, charter school low-income enrollment for FY25 has been identified using the same eligibility criteria used for districts. The facilities component of the tuition rate is $1,188 per pupil, with this cost fully reimbursed by the state as in prior years.

The reimbursement formula for transitional aid to districts reflects the change enacted by Section 38 of the FY20 budget, which provided for a reimbursement of 100% of any tuition increase in the first year, 60% in the second year, and 40% in the third year. Funding for first year reimbursements is prioritized first, followed by funding for second year reimbursements. The SOA required 75% of the total state obligation to be funded in the first year (FY22), 90% in the second (FY23), and 100% in subsequent years (FY24 and beyond). GAA has recommended a $199.0 million appropriation for these reimbursements.

This appropriation level is expected to meet the 100% requirement in FY25. The projected assessments and reimbursements for charter tuition payments at this point can be useful for budget planning but should not be viewed as final numbers, given normal fluctuations in both projected and actual enrollments which occur over the course of the fiscal year.

**Special Education Circuit Breaker reimbursement (7061-0012)** is decreased by $5.8M to $493M. When combined with the $75M Ch.766 reserve fund made available for reimbursement of current year expenses of districts in FY24 (thereby offsetting FY25 reimbursement needs) or otherwise to be available in FY25 to supplement funding in this item (for reimbursement of expenses not reimbursed in FY24 from the reserve) and a lower need projected for traditional Extraordinary Relief in FY25 (returning to the traditional set-aside level of $5M from a one-time need level of $20M in FY24), this funding level is projected to reimburse 100% of the entitlements and traditional earmarks provided for under the Circuit Breaker program.

* This 100% reimbursement projection includes the new, out-of-district transportation costs made eligible under a provision of the Student Opportunity Act (SOA).

The FY25 GAA budget also provides a $2.38M increase for Regional School Transportation (7035-0006) to $99.4M projected to reimburse regions at 80% of the projected entitlement.

1. **Program Changes**

**The FY25 GAA budget includes the following funding increases:**

* 1595-0116 Genocide Education Trust is funded in the GAA budget at $3M which is a $1M increase from the FY24 GAA (General Appropriations Act).
* 1596-2436 for Mental Health Systems and Wraparounds is a new account funded at $5M.
* 1595-0035 21st Century Education Trust Fund is funded with an additional $1M, which is $1M less than the new funding appropriated in FY24.
* 1596-2424 Green School Works is funded with an additional $10M, which will be added to the $40M DESE transferred to the Mass Clean Energy Center in FY24.
* 7010-0012 METCO is increased by $508K to $29.9M.
* 7061-0033 Consolidated Literacy Programs is increased by $972K to $6.3M.
* 7027-0019 Connecting Activities is increased by $836K to $8.1M.
* 7035-0001 Career and Technical Education is increased by $457K to $3.5M.
* 7061-0029 School & District Accountability Reviews is increased by $207K to $1.59M to fund payroll increases and the costs of annual reviews.
* 7061-9805 – Tomorrow’s Teachers is funded at $2.5M in the FY25 GAA.
* 7061-9813 – Rural School Aid is increased by $1M to $16M.
* 7061-9815 Grants for Hate Crime and Bias Prevention is funded at $1M which is a $225K increase from the FY24 GAA.

**The FY25 GAA budget includes the following funding decreases or account eliminations:**

* 1596-2422 Universal School Meals is funded at $170M which is a $1M decrease from the FY24 GAA (7053-1925 and 1594-2422’s combined value).
* 7010-1194 Financial Literacy Education is not funded in the GAA budget, a $250K reduction from the FY24 GAA.
* 7027-0020 Career and Technical Partnership Grants is funded at $5.38M which is a $360K decrease from the FY24 GAA, post 9C cut.
* 7035-0002 Adult Basic Education is funded at $59.9M which is a $597K decrease from the FY24 GAA.
* 7035-0035 AP Math and Science is funded at $2M which is a $1.3M decrease from the FY24 GAA, post 9C cut.
* 7061-9406 College and Career Readiness is not funded in the GAA budget, a $875K reduction from the FY24 GAA.
* 7061-9412 Expanded Learning Time Grants is not funded in the GAA budget, a $134K reduction from the FY24 GAA, post 9C cut.
* 7061-9611 After-School Grant Program is funded at $8.6M which is a $2.3M decrease from the FY24 GAA.
* 7061-9634 Mentoring Matching Grants is funded at $1.5M which is a $300K decrease from the FY24 GAA.
* 7061-9650 Supporting Healthy Alliances Reinforcing Education Grants is not funded in the GAA budget, a $664K reduction from the FY24 GAA.

**An Act Honoring, Empowering, And Recognizing Our Servicemembers And Veterans (HERO Act)**

[Chapter 178 of the Acts of 2024](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2024/Chapter178)

Approved: August 7, 2024

In August of 2024, Governor Healey signed The HERO Act to further investments and services for veterans and the service members. The legislation includes the following provisions

* Adds “military-connected” students to the advisory council for “comprehensive health education and human service programs” (Section 14 of the HERO Act; M.G.L Section 1G of Chapter 15).
* Section 30 increases support or military connected students when a parent or guardian is called to active duty by requiring school districts to provide support services and information on resources available to military connected students. This section also requires DESE to post information on our website about resources available to military connected students. See [General Laws c. 69, s. 38](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/mass-general-laws-c69-ss-38).

**An Act making appropriations for the fiscal year 2024 to provide for supplementing certain existing appropriations and for certain other activities and projects**

[Chapter 248 of the Acts of 2024](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2024/Chapter248)

Approved: December 4, 2024

Section 18 authorizes the sharing of certain personal data between DESE and BSEA to carry out their respective legal responsibilities. This provision will be added to [General Laws c. 71B, s. 2A](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/mass-general-laws-c71b-ss-2a).

Section 19 authorizes the sharing of certain personal data among DESE, County Houses of Correction, school districts, and educational service providers, to facilitate prompt access to special education services for individuals incarcerated in county houses of correction. This provision will be added to [General Laws c. 71B, s. 11A](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/mass-general-laws-c71b-ss-11a).

**An Act requiring that districts certify that students have mastered the skills, competencies and knowledge of the state standards as a replacement for the MCAS graduation requirement**

[Chapter 251 of the Acts of 2024](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2024/Chapter251)

Approved: Election 2024

Codification of the successful ballot question amending [Section 1D of chapter 69 of the General Laws](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter69/Section1D), as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, which strikes from the first sentence of sub-paragraph (i) the words,", as measured by the assessment instruments described in section one I." and replaces them with the following: "by satisfactorily completing coursework that has been certified by the student's district as showing mastery of the skills, competencies, and knowledge contained in the state academic standards and curriculum frameworks in the areas measured by the MCAS high school tests described in section one I administered in 2023, and in any additional areas determined by the board."

**An Act relative to strengthening Massachusetts’ economic leadership (MassLeads)**

[Chapter 238 0f the Acts of 2024](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2024/Chapter238)

Approved: November 20, 2024

The 2024 economic development bill, MassLeads, includes several K-12 related requirements:

* FAFSA resources requirement (section 215) – The commissioner shall notify students, prior to graduating from high school, of the availability of the free application for federal student aid, known as the FAFSA; provide students with information on federal and state financial aid options for postsecondary education; and provide students with instructions for completing state and federal financial aid applications.
* Educator Diversity Plans (section 216) – Amends M.G.L. chapter 69 with a new section, Section 39, requiring DESE to set measurable educator diversity goals for the commonwealth and shall collect and publicly report statewide educator diversity data in an online report including the hiring and retention of diverse educators; racial and ethnic demographics of educators who complete Massachusetts state educator preparation programs; teacher qualification data; and the racial and ethnic demographics of all persons applying for and completing educator certification in the commonwealth.
* Culturally Responsive Strategies (section 217) – Amends Section 38G of M.G.L. chapter 71 by adding a paragraph requiring the department to incentivize all educators and administrators to be trained in strategies related to evidence-based culturally responsive and linguistically sustaining pedagogy and practices. The department may consider incentives including, but not limited to, certification fee waivers, resources curated and published by the department, professional development opportunities, grants and optional training during the certification and recertification process. Educator Preparation (section 218) – Amends M.G.L. chapter 71 by inserting Section 38G¾ which requires DESE to:
* establish guidelines for plans to increase diversity among teaching, administration and staff positions of districts, and charter schools.
* establish a process for reviewing plans based on clearly defined criteria.
* direct approved educator preparation programs to implement plans to examine and address barriers to equity in program enrollment and completion.
* provide technical assistance to public school districts and charter schools related to their diversity plans.

This section also directs the board of elementary and secondary education to review progress on educator diversity on a regular basis and may provide further recommendations to districts and schools regarding educator diversity.

* Diversity teams (section 219) – Amends M.G.L. chapter 71 to require that public school districts and charter schools appoint or hire a diversity, equity and inclusion officer or establish a diversity team; establish a process for advising the school committee or board of trustees on matters of diversity, equity and inclusion in the school district or charter school; and, ensure that superintendents, school committee members, boards of trustees members, district leaders, principals and school district employees attend diversity and implicit bias training every 5 years.
* CTE educator training (section 220) – Amends M.G.L. chapter 74 to require DESE to establish basic competency-based vocational-technical teacher training standards which shall serve as the fundamental, pedagogical requirements for beginning vocational-technical instructors.
* Hoisting (section 262) – Amends Section 53 of M.G.L. chapter 146 to exempt chapter 74 programs at vocational education schools from age thresholds for student training in hoisting equipment use.
* Alternative Licensure Feasibility Study (section 288) – directs DESE to study the feasibility of establishing a program that allows certain educator candidates to complete the testing requirements pursuant to section 38G of M.G.L. chapter 71 at no cost to candidates.
* Highly effective educator incentive study (section 289) – requires DESE to conduct a study and report on potential initiatives to incentivize diverse and highly effective educators to work in high-needs schools and districts, including incentives to recruit new and diverse teachers to high-needs schools and policies or practices to retain diverse and effective teachers currently teaching in high-needs schools.
* Teacher Apprenticeships (section 290) – Subject to appropriation, DESE shall develop and administer a pilot program for teacher apprenticeships.
* Loan Forgiveness PSA (section 299) – Directs DESE or another agency deemed appropriate by EOE to educate and promote awareness to the public of available state scholarships and loan forgiveness programs for prospective educators.
* Educator Diversity - Licensure (section 300)
* Alternative Licensure Pilot Evaluation (section 300) – Directs DESE to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the pilot program, authorized by 603 CMR 7.04(2)(f).
* Alternative Certification Process (section 300) - Allows for a waiver of not more than 1 of the 2 tests currently required and may include consideration of factors, including, but not limited to, whether a candidate has: (i) obtained certification in another state or territory in the United States, the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, as approved by the department; (ii) completed a satisfactory portfolio of items that may include student feedback or competency-based projects; (iii) obtained a master’s degree or doctorate from an accredited institution; provided that the advanced degree relates to the content area for which the individual is seeking certification, as determined by the department; (iv) successfully completed a department-approved educator preparation program for the role and at the level of the license sought; or (v) successfully completed field-based experience of not less than 2 years in the role and at the level of the license sought.

**An Act further regulating the Lawrence school committee**

[Chapter 314 of the Acts of 2024](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2024/Chapter314)

Approved: January 2, 2025

The City of Lawrence filed a home rule petition to amend its city charter as to the composition of its school committee, which will be comprised of seven members, three of whom shall be elected as “at-large” members and three of whom shall be appointed by the city council. The mayor shall serve as the seventh member of the school committee and as its chair with full power to vote.

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