

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 495**

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***James K. Hawkins and Samantha Montaño***

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

**An Act empowering students and schools to thrive.**

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>James K. Hawkins</i>	<i>2nd Bristol</i>	<i>1/20/2023</i>
<i>Samantha Montaño</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>	<i>1/20/2023</i>
<i>David Henry Argosky LeBoeuf</i>	<i>17th Worcester</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Jack Patrick Lewis</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Rodney M. Elliott</i>	<i>16th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>James C. Arena-DeRosa</i>	<i>8th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i>	<i>1st Hampshire</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Patricia A. Duffy</i>	<i>5th Hampden</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Brian W. Murray</i>	<i>10th Worcester</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Christine P. Barber</i>	<i>34th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Carmine Lawrence Gentile</i>	<i>13th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/28/2023</i>
<i>Ryan M. Hamilton</i>	<i>15th Essex</i>	<i>1/30/2023</i>
<i>Erika Uyterhoeven</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/1/2023</i>
<i>Vanna Howard</i>	<i>17th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/1/2023</i>
<i>Tackey Chan</i>	<i>2nd Norfolk</i>	<i>2/1/2023</i>
<i>Steven Owens</i>	<i>29th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/2/2023</i>
<i>Paul McMurtry</i>	<i>11th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/2/2023</i>
<i>Mike Connolly</i>	<i>26th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/2/2023</i>

<i>Carlos González</i>	<i>10th Hampden</i>	<i>2/2/2023</i>
<i>Carol A. Doherty</i>	<i>3rd Bristol</i>	<i>2/2/2023</i>
<i>Margaret R. Scarsdale</i>	<i>1st Middlesex</i>	<i>2/3/2023</i>
<i>Peter Capano</i>	<i>11th Essex</i>	<i>2/6/2023</i>
<i>William C. Galvin</i>	<i>6th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/6/2023</i>
<i>Jon Santiago</i>	<i>9th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/6/2023</i>
<i>Mary S. Keefe</i>	<i>15th Worcester</i>	<i>2/6/2023</i>
<i>Rebecca L. Rausch</i>	<i>Norfolk, Worcester and Middlesex</i>	<i>2/8/2023</i>
<i>Michael D. Brady</i>	<i>Second Plymouth and Norfolk</i>	<i>2/8/2023</i>
<i>Patrick M. O'Connor</i>	<i>First Plymouth and Norfolk</i>	<i>2/8/2023</i>
<i>Adrian C. Madaro</i>	<i>1st Suffolk</i>	<i>2/8/2023</i>
<i>Natalie M. Blais</i>	<i>1st Franklin</i>	<i>2/8/2023</i>
<i>Tricia Farley-Bouvier</i>	<i>2nd Berkshire</i>	<i>2/8/2023</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>	<i>2/13/2023</i>
<i>Smitty Pignatelli</i>	<i>3rd Berkshire</i>	<i>2/14/2023</i>
<i>Natalie M. Higgins</i>	<i>4th Worcester</i>	<i>2/14/2023</i>
<i>Denise C. Garlick</i>	<i>13th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/15/2023</i>
<i>Alan Silvia</i>	<i>7th Bristol</i>	<i>2/17/2023</i>
<i>James J. O'Day</i>	<i>14th Worcester</i>	<i>2/21/2023</i>
<i>Tram T. Nguyen</i>	<i>18th Essex</i>	<i>2/22/2023</i>
<i>Christopher Richard Flanagan</i>	<i>1st Barnstable</i>	<i>2/23/2023</i>
<i>Kate Donaghue</i>	<i>19th Worcester</i>	<i>2/27/2023</i>
<i>Josh S. Cutler</i>	<i>6th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/27/2023</i>
<i>Kathleen R. LaNatra</i>	<i>12th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/27/2023</i>
<i>Joan Meschino</i>	<i>3rd Plymouth</i>	<i>2/27/2023</i>
<i>Patrick Joseph Kearney</i>	<i>4th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/28/2023</i>
<i>Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr.</i>	<i>12th Hampden</i>	<i>3/1/2023</i>
<i>Adam Scanlon</i>	<i>14th Bristol</i>	<i>3/2/2023</i>
<i>Michelle L. Ciccolo</i>	<i>15th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/2/2023</i>
<i>Aaron L. Saunders</i>	<i>7th Hampden</i>	<i>3/3/2023</i>
<i>Michael P. Kushmerek</i>	<i>3rd Worcester</i>	<i>3/6/2023</i>
<i>Antonio F. D. Cabral</i>	<i>13th Bristol</i>	<i>3/8/2023</i>
<i>Joanne M. Comerford</i>	<i>Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester</i>	<i>3/9/2023</i>
<i>Lydia Edwards</i>	<i>Third Suffolk</i>	<i>3/9/2023</i>
<i>Tommy Vitolo</i>	<i>15th Norfolk</i>	<i>3/15/2023</i>
<i>Brian M. Ashe</i>	<i>2nd Hampden</i>	<i>3/20/2023</i>
<i>Rady Mom</i>	<i>18th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/22/2023</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 495**

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By Representatives Hawkins of Attleboro and Montañó of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 495) of James K. Hawkins, Samantha Montañó and others relative to the comprehensive support and improvement of schools. Education.

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court  
(2023-2024)**  
\_\_\_\_\_

An Act empowering students and schools to thrive.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Section 1D of chapter 69 of the General Laws is hereby amended by  
2 striking out subsection (i), as appearing in the XXXX Official Edition, and inserting in place  
3 thereof the following subsection:-

4 (i) The "competency determination" shall be based on the academic standards and  
5 curriculum frameworks for tenth graders in the areas of mathematics, science and technology,  
6 and English, and shall represent a determination that a particular student has demonstrated  
7 mastery of a common core of skills, competencies and knowledge in these areas by satisfactorily  
8 completing coursework that has been certified by the student's district as showing mastery of  
9 such skills, competencies and knowledge. A district also may include history and social science  
10 and foreign languages in the requirements. Satisfaction of the requirements of the competency  
11 determination shall be a condition for high school graduation. Students who fail to satisfy the  
12 requirements of the competency determination or are determined by the district to be at risk of

13 not satisfying such requirements shall be eligible to receive an educational assistance plan  
14 designed within the confines of the foundation budget to impart the skills, competencies and  
15 knowledge required to attain the required level of mastery. The parent, guardian or person acting  
16 as parent of the student shall have the opportunity to review the educational assistance plan with  
17 representatives of the school district. Nothing in this section shall be construed to provide a  
18 parent, guardian, person acting as a parent or student with an entitlement to contest the proposed  
19 plan or with a cause of action for educational malpractice if the student fails to obtain a  
20 competency determination.

21 SECTION 2. Said chapter 69 is hereby further amended by striking out sections 1J and  
22 1K, as so appearing, and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

23

24 Section 1J. (a) The commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall identify  
25 schools for comprehensive support and improvement using a formula developed by the  
26 department that complies with the criteria and processes in federal education law; provided that,  
27 under this formula, student growth shall be given at least as much weight as student  
28 achievement, and provided further that no more than five per cent of all schools statewide shall  
29 be designated as comprehensive support and improvement schools at one time.

30

31 (b) Within 30 days of a school being designated as in need of comprehensive support and  
32 improvement, the superintendent of the district shall convene a local stakeholder group of not  
33 more than 11 individuals to develop a support and improvement plan for the school. The district  
34 should strive to have the group membership represent the racial-ethnic and language diversity of

35 the school. The group shall include: (1) the superintendent, or a designee; (2) a representative  
36 from the school committee selected by a majority of school committee members; (3) the  
37 president of the local teachers union, or a designee; (4) an administrator from the school, who  
38 may be the principal, chosen by the superintendent; (5) two educators (who could be teachers or  
39 education support professionals) from the school, chosen by the school's educators; (6) a parent  
40 from the school, chosen by the local parent organization, provided that if the school or district  
41 does not have a parent organization or if the organization does not select a parent, the  
42 superintendent shall select a volunteer parent of a student from the school; (7) for high schools, a  
43 student selected by the students at the school, and for other schools, an individual selected by the  
44 superintendent who brings the appropriate grade-level perspective to the group (e.g., a  
45 representative from the early childhood or pre-kindergarten sector for an elementary school); (8)  
46 an educator or representative from the social services sector with expertise in students' mental  
47 health and social-emotional development, selected jointly by the group; (9) a member  
48 representing a community organization, selected jointly by the group; and 10) an individual who  
49 has specialized expertise in one or more of the evidence-based programs listed in subsection (c),  
50 selected jointly by the group.

51 (c) The local stakeholder group shall develop a support and improvement plan for the  
52 school, consistent with federal and state law, a final draft of which shall be submitted to the  
53 school committee within 45 days of its first meeting. Consistent with guidelines developed by  
54 the department, the group shall: (i) research, identify and analyze the root causes of the school's  
55 challenges; (ii) examine the adequacy of resources and equity in the distribution of those  
56 resources, including an assessment of the physical condition of the school building; and (iii)  
57 identify and catalog the school's strengths and assets. The final draft plan submitted to the school

58 committee shall include a guiding vision of learning for the school; goals and objectives; and a  
59 description of the evidence-based programs, supports and interventions that the district shall  
60 employ to address the root causes of the school’s challenges and capitalize on assets consistent  
61 with the guiding vision. Such evidence-based programs, supports and interventions may include:  
62 (1) reduced class sizes and student caseloads; (2) small-group instruction and/or one-on-one  
63 tutoring; (3) increased opportunity for common planning time for teachers; (4) implementation of  
64 a “Community Schools” or “Hub School” model or other strategies for expanding social and  
65 wraparound services to support students’ social-emotional and physical health; (5) additional  
66 hiring, increased compensation, and/or strategic deployment of school personnel (e.g, co-  
67 teaching to facilitate inclusion) to support student learning and to retain highly qualified staff; (6)  
68 increased or improved professional development, which may include mentoring and induction  
69 programs for new teachers, as well as training in trauma-informed and anti-racist best practices  
70 that are designed to limit school exclusion and maximize student engagement; (7) the use of  
71 effective curriculum materials that are culturally responsive and aligned with the statewide  
72 curriculum frameworks; (8) expanded early education and pre-kindergarten programming within  
73 the district in consultation or in partnership with community-based organizations; (9)  
74 diversifying the educator and administrator workforce; (10) developing additional pathways to  
75 strengthen college and career readiness; and (11) any other program determined to be evidence-  
76 based by the group that addresses root causes of challenges identified in its analysis.

77 (d) The local stakeholder group shall make every effort to reach consensus on the final  
78 draft plan and shall submit it to the school committee for review and approval. If consensus  
79 cannot be reached, a majority of the group shall submit its final draft plan to the school  
80 committee for review and approval. Dissenting members of the group may submit an alternative

81 final draft plan to the school committee for consideration, clearly indicating the areas of dissent.  
82 Upon receipt of the final draft plan or plans, the school committee shall hold at least one public  
83 hearing, giving at least 30 days' public notice. The school committee may make modifications to  
84 the final draft plan as necessary, consistent with federal and state law, and shall vote on the final  
85 draft plan within 30 days of the hearing. The final plan shall be shared publicly and filed with the  
86 commissioner. After confirming that the requirements of subsections (b) through (d) were  
87 complied with, the commissioner shall approve the final plan.

88

89 (e) The department shall prioritize comprehensive support and improvement schools for  
90 additional funding above and beyond chapter 70 allocations to support the evidence-based  
91 programs identified in the final approved plan. Before the local stakeholder group commences its  
92 work, the department shall provide the group with an estimate of future Chapter 70 aid for the  
93 district and available funds in excess of Chapter 70 aid for the school that shall support the final  
94 approved plan.

95

96 (f) The support and improvement plan shall be in effect for not more than four years, and  
97 shall be reviewed annually by the superintendent pursuant to guidelines developed by the  
98 department. Such progress reviews shall be shared publicly and filed with the commissioner,  
99 who may comment on the reviews.

100

101 (g) The department shall establish exit criteria for schools in need of comprehensive  
102 support and improvement using a formula that complies with federal education law. Upon  
103 expiration of the final approved plan, the commissioner shall review the school's progress and  
104 determine, based solely on the exit criteria established by the department, whether: (1) the school  
105 is exited from comprehensive support and improvement status; or (2) the status and plan shall  
106 continue for up to four additional years. If the commissioner determines that the status and plan  
107 shall continue, the local stakeholder group shall be reconvened to revise the final approved plan,  
108 consistent with subsections (b) through (d) and subject to approval by the commissioner. If not  
109 approved, the commissioner shall return the plan to the group with a directive to add specific  
110 evidence-based programs, supports and interventions listed in (1) through (10) of subsection (c).  
111 Within 30 days, the group shall submit the plan to the school committee for review and approval.  
112 Within 30 days of receipt of the plan from the group, the school committee shall submit the final  
113 plan to the commissioner.

114 (h) Upon the expiration of any continued or revised plan, the process in subsection (g)  
115 shall be replicated.

116

117 (i) The board shall adopt regulations to implement this section, including provisions that  
118 allow features of a support and improvement plan to continue for up to two years after a school is  
119 exited from comprehensive support and improvement status. The department shall also make  
120 every effort to continue additional funding during any transitional period.

121 SECTION 3. The school committee of any district in receivership shall develop a  
122 transition plan for ending the receivership and hiring a superintendent. The transition plan shall



123 be implemented and the receivership shall end within 1 year of the effective date of this Act. The  
124 department shall provide the school committee with the necessary funding and technical  
125 assistance to develop and implement the transition plan.

126 SECTION 4. (a) There shall be a special commission to study and make  
127 recommendations for a more authentic and accurate system for assessing students, schools and  
128 school districts. The commission shall examine: (i) the requirements of the Every Student  
129 Succeeds Act of 2015, codified at 20 U.S.C. § 6301 et. seq., and potential waivers; (ii)  
130 alternative assessment and accountability systems in place or being considered nationwide; and  
131 research data on the knowledge and skills that parents, elementary and secondary educators,  
132 higher education educators, and business leaders want students to have upon high school  
133 graduation.

134 Regarding the assessment of students, the special commission shall consider assessments  
135 other than conventional methods, including, but not limited to: work samples, projects and  
136 portfolios, performance assessments and other authentic and direct gauges of student  
137 performance that encourage effective instruction, use strategies for avoiding racial and ethnic  
138 biases, and recognize the strengths of all students.

139 Regarding the assessment of schools and districts, the special commission shall consider  
140 the inclusion of a broader range of measures, beyond standardized test scores, that align with  
141 public values and are less tied to student demography. The commission shall also research best  
142 practices for facilitating stakeholder-driven improvement processes in schools identified under  
143 federal law as needing comprehensive support, such as the creation of community schools.

144           The commission shall recommend strategies for assessing students, schools and districts  
145 that comply with current federal law. The commission also may make recommendations for  
146 changes in or waivers from federal law that would facilitate the implementation of effective  
147 assessment strategies.

148           (b) The commission shall consist of: 1 member who shall be appointed by the president  
149 of the senate, who shall serve as co-chair; 1 member who shall be appointed by the speaker of  
150 the house of representatives, who shall serve as co-chair; 1 member who shall be appointed by  
151 the minority leader of the senate; 1 member who shall be appointed by the minority leader of the  
152 house of representatives; the secretary of education, or a designee; the commissioner of  
153 elementary and secondary education, or a designee; 1 member who shall be appointed by the  
154 Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Inc.; 1 member who shall be appointed by the  
155 Massachusetts Teachers Association; 1 member who shall be appointed by the American  
156 Federation of Teachers, Massachusetts; 1 member who shall be appointed by the Massachusetts  
157 Association of School Superintendents, Inc.; 1 member who shall be appointed by the  
158 Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance (MEJA); 1 member who shall be appointed by the  
159 NAACP; 1 member who shall be appointed by the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee  
160 Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition; 1 member who shall be appointed by Multicultural Education,  
161 Training, and Advocacy, Inc; 1 member who shall be appointed by the Massachusetts  
162 Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment; 1 member who shall be appointed by the  
163 Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts; 1 member who shall be appointed by the  
164 Massachusetts Asian American Educators Association; 1 member who shall be appointed by the  
165 Gaston Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy of the University of  
166 Massachusetts Boston; 1 member who shall be appointed by the Massachusetts Advocates for

167 Children; 1 member who shall be appointed by the Center for Law and Education; 1 member  
168 who shall be appointed by the Center for Antiracist Research at Boston University; 1 of whom  
169 shall be the student representative on the State Board of Education, or a designee; 1 of whom  
170 shall be the parent representative on the State Board of Education, or a designee; 1 member who  
171 shall be appointed by the Rural Policy Advisory Commission; 1 member who shall be appointed  
172 by GLSEN Massachusetts; and 1 member who shall be a researcher from a public university  
173 with expertise in the area of assessment, selected jointly by the members of the commission.  
174 Members shall not receive compensation for their services but may receive reimbursement for  
175 reasonable expenses incurred in carrying out their responsibilities as members of the  
176 commission. The commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall furnish reasonable  
177 staff and other support for the work of the commission.

178 (c) The commission shall hold not less than 5 public meetings across the regions of the  
179 commonwealth and may hold additional hearings and other forums as necessary. The  
180 commission shall file its report and recommendations with the clerks of the senate and the house  
181 of representatives, the chairs of the joint committee on education and the rural policy advisory  
182 commission not later than August 31, 2024.

183