

HOUSE No. 5176

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 5, 2026.

The committee on Education, to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 651) of Frank A. Moran, Adam J. Scanlon and others for legislation to provide for a program of capital investments for vocational-technical education programs and regional vocational-technical schools, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 5176) ought to pass.

For the committee,

KENNETH I. GORDON.

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act to improve access, opportunity, and capacity in Massachusetts vocational-technical education.

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. Chapter 69 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition,
2 is hereby amended by adding the following sections:-

3 Section 38. For the purposes of sections 38 and 39, inclusive, the following terms shall
4 have the following meanings, unless the context clearly requires otherwise:-

5 “District of residence”, shall mean the school district of the city or town where a student
6 resides.

7 “School of residence”, shall mean the middle school or junior high school a student
8 attends within their district of residence.

9 Section 39. (a) The department of elementary and secondary education shall develop and
10 implement policies and promulgate regulations to promote, enhance, and expand vocational-
11 technical education programs, as defined in Chapter 74 of the General Laws, in the
12 commonwealth.

13 (b) The department shall:

14 (i) oversee all Chapter 74 approved programs and ensure compliance with M.G.L.

15 Chapter 74 and related regulations;

16 (ii) work to increase awareness of vocational-technical education and career opportunities

17 among students in elementary schools, junior high schools, and middle schools;

18 (iii) ensure that schools offering Chapter 74 programs are provided reasonable access

19 during the school day at schools of residence to meet with all students and distribute information

20 about vocational-technical education and careers to said students, including English language

21 learners,

22 students with disabilities, students of color, and other student populations, to ensure that

23 such information is provided equitably to all learners;

24 (iv) ensure that schools offering Chapter 74 programs are given the opportunity during

25 the school day to host middle school tours, with transportation costs paid by the school hosting

26 the tour, for all middle school students in member communities, including English language

27 learners, students with disabilities, students of color, and other student populations to ensure that

28 such opportunities are provided equitably to all learners; and further ensure that the school of

29 residence may not count middle school student tours of vocational schools or programs during

30 the school day as unexcused absences if the vocational school or program confirms the student's

31 participation, and may not unreasonably withhold student access to tours of vocational schools

32 and programs during the school day.

33 (v) require that schools offering Chapter 74 programs are given the opportunity to
34 provide middle and junior high school students with information about vocational-technical
35 programs and careers through mail and email.

36 (vi) require all middle schools and junior high schools in member communities to
37 establish and implement a Chapter 74 Access Policy, in accordance with state requirements
38 promoting equitable access to Chapter 74 programs, outlining specific ways in which the middle
39 schools will collaborate with regional vocational-technical high schools and agricultural high
40 schools to: provide staff members from Chapter 74 schools with direct school day access to all
41 middle school students, to inform them about opportunities in vocational-technical and
42 agricultural education and to distribute materials about such opportunities to them; provide all
43 middle school students an opportunity to tour, during regular middle school hours, the regional
44 vocational-

45 technical high school and/or county agricultural school of which the middle school's city
46 or town is a member, with the transportation costs of all such tours being borne by the school
47 hosting the tours; provide contact information for all seventh grade and eighth-grade middle
48 school students, including a student's name and mailing address, a student's personal email
49 address, and the parent's/guardian's email address by October 15 of each school year;

50 (vii) establish, in addition to the minimum requirements outlined in the preceding
51 subsections, such additional requirements for Chapter 74 Access Policies as the office deems
52 reasonable and necessary to promote equitable access by all students to information about
53 vocational-technical and agricultural education;

54 (viii) require all sending school districts which are members of a regional-vocational
55 school district or whose community is located in the county or district of an agricultural high
56 school to submit the Chapter 74 Access Policy annually to the department; annually attest in
57 writing that the Chapter 74 Access Policy is being implemented equitably and that all students
58 are being provided with information, access, and tours in accordance with this section and with
59 federal and state civil rights laws, regulations, and policies; and post the Chapter 74 Access
60 Policy on its district website and provide written copies to students and parents, upon request;

61 (ix) create a mechanism to enforce timely implementation of Chapter 74 Access Policies;

62 (x) establish a system to ensure that students who live in communities that are not
63 members of or affiliated with a regional vocational-technical high school district or agricultural
64 high school annually are provided with information about their high school options, including
65 their option to seek an education in a vocational-technical or agricultural high school;

66 (xi) provide technical support to schools seeking to offer Chapter 74 programs that meet
67 regional labor market demands and do not duplicate existing programs in the region;

68 (xii) support the continuation of state grant programs that provide funding for equipment
69 purchases and facility expansion; and

70 (xiii) support the continuation of demonstration programs that provide opportunities in
71 vocational-technical education for students unable to secure a seat in an approved Chapter 74
72 program due to lack of enrollment capacity.

73 SECTION 2. Chapter 70B of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out
74 Section 1A(b), as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, and inserting in place thereof the
75 following:-

76 (b) The authority shall consist of the state treasurer, who shall serve as chairperson, the
77 secretary of administration and finance, the commissioner of education, and 4 additional
78 members appointed by the state treasurer, 2 of whom shall have practical experience in
79 educational facilities planning, school building construction, or architecture and school design, 1
80 of whom shall be a person in the field of education with demonstrated knowledge of
81 Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and other relevant federal and state educational standards,
82 and 1 of whom shall be a person in the field of vocational education with demonstrated
83 knowledge of Massachusetts Chapter 74 vocational education curriculum frameworks and other
84 relevant federal and state vocational educational standards, each of whom shall serve a term of 2
85 years; but, a person appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve only for the unexpired term. An
86 appointed member of the authority shall be eligible for reappointment. The authority shall
87 annually elect 1 of its members to serve as vice-chairperson. Each member of the authority
88 serving ex officio may appoint a designee pursuant to section 6A of chapter 30.

89 SECTION 3. Section 3A of Chapter 70B of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022
90 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking the number “17” and inserting “19” in place
91 thereof, and further by inserting, after “Fire Chiefs' Association of Massachusetts, Inc.” the
92 following:- “,Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators, Inc., Alliance for
93 Vocational Technical Education,”.

94 SECTION 4. Subsection (c) of section 14B of chapter 71 of the General Laws, as
95 appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out the third sentence and
96 inserting in place thereof the following 2 sentences:-

97 “Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, a city or town may
98 simultaneously be a member of a vocational regional school district and any other type of
99 regional school district. A city or town that belongs to a regional vocational school district may
100 offer a vocational technical education program in its municipal high school; provided, however,
101 that the program is approved under section 2 of chapter 74 of the General Laws; provided,
102 further, that a vocational regional school district and any other type of regional school district
103 serving the same town shall collaborate through the office of career technical education in
104 offering reciprocal non-competitive programs under chapter 74 of the General Laws; provided,
105 further, that there is demonstrated student and labor market demand for said program as
106 determined by the Regional Labor Market Blueprint and the regional vocational-technical school
107 district is unable or unwilling to meet said demand.”