SENATE DOCKET, NO. 1912 FILED ON: 1/17/2025

SENATE . . . . . No. 400

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Jason M. Lewis

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 to ensure adequate and equitable funding for public education.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
Jason M. Lewis	*Fifth Middlesex*	
Joanne M. Comerford	*Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester*	
Bruce E. Tarr	*First Essex and Middlesex*	*1/23/2025*
Rebecca L. Rausch	*Norfolk, Worcester and Middlesex*	*1/23/2025*
Kimberly N. Ferguson	*1st Worcester*	*2/4/2025*
Christopher M. Markey	*9th Bristol*	*2/7/2025*
James B. Eldridge	*Middlesex and Worcester*	*2/11/2025*
David K. Muradian, Jr.	*9th Worcester*	*2/21/2025*
Colleen M. Garry	*36th Middlesex*	*2/27/2025*
Leigh Davis	*3rd Berkshire*	*2/27/2025*
Margaret R. Scarsdale	*1st Middlesex*	*3/4/2025*
Steven S. Howitt	*4th Bristol*	*3/10/2025*
Michael O. Moore	*Second Worcester*	*3/10/2025*
Barry R. Finegold	*Second Essex and Middlesex*	*3/13/2025*
Paul W. Mark	*Berkshire, Hampden, Franklin and Hampshire*	*3/17/2025*
Lindsay N. Sabadosa	*1st Hampshire*	*3/21/2025*
Peter J. Durant	*Worcester and Hampshire*	*3/21/2025*

Bradley H. Jones, Jr.	*20th Middlesex*	*3/25/2025*
Marcus S. Vaughn	*9th Norfolk*	*4/8/2025*
Hannah Kane	*11th Worcester*	*4/15/2025*
John J. Marsi	*6th Worcester*	*5/12/2025*
Adrianne Pusateri Ramos	*14th Essex*	*6/12/2025*

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By Mr. Lewis, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 400) of Jason M. Lewis, Joanne M. Comerford, Bruce E. Tarr, Rebecca L. Rausch and other members of the General Court that provisions be made for an investigation and study by a special commission (including members of the General Court) to ensure adequate and equitable funding for public education. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act to ensure adequate and equitable funding for public education.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 70 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking section 4 and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

Section 4. (a) There shall be a commission to study and make recommendations for adequately and equitably funding PreK-12 public education in the Commonwealth so that all children may receive a high quality education that prepares them to lead full, productive lives. The scope of the study shall include all aspects of the school funding formula as well as other funding streams for PreK-12 public schools. The study shall include, but not be limited to, the following areas: (i) all components of the foundation budget created pursuant to section 3 of chapter 70 and subsequent changes made to the foundation budget by law; (ii) whether the cap on the foundation inflation index should be removed; (iii) how to appropriately account for and fund the level and acuity of need for special education services; (iv) how to appropriately account for and fund the cost of transporting various types of students; (v) how to best address

13 the impact of low and declining enrollment on districts; (vi) how to best address the unique
14 challenges faced by rural districts; (vii) the impact of the fixed 59 percent local share of the
15 statewide foundation budget on the calculation of combined effort yield for each municipality
16 and whether the local share should be changed; (viii) the extent to which the wealth and income
17 measures in the formula accurately determine a municipality's ability to contribute to its
18 foundation budget costs and whether these measures should be changed; (ix) the impact of the
19 growing number of municipalities that are subject to the 82.5 percent maximum local
20 contribution and whether this cap should be removed or changed; (x) the impact of section 21C
21 of chapter 59 of the General Laws on municipalities and their ability to make their required local
22 contributions; and (xi) any other aspect of the school funding formula or other school funding
23 streams that the commission deems necessary to fulfill its mandate. The commission shall
24 consider and recommend ways that resources can be utilized most efficiently and effectively.

25 (b) The commission shall include: the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on
26 education, who shall serve as co-chairs; 1 member to be appointed by the president of the senate;
27 1 member to be appointed by the speaker of the house; 1 member to be appointed by the minority
28 leader of the senate; 1 member to be appointed by the minority leader of the house; 1 member to
29 be appointed by the chair of the senate committee on ways and means; 1 member to be appointed
30 by the chair of the house committee on ways and means; the secretary of education or a
31 designee; the commissioner of elementary and secondary education or a designee; the
32 commissioner of revenue or a designee; a representative from the Massachusetts Teachers
33 Association; a representative from the American Federation of Teachers-Massachusetts; a
34 representative from the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, Inc.; a representative from the
35 Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators, Inc.; a representative from the

36 Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, Inc.; a representative from the Massachusetts
37 Taxpayers Foundation, Inc.; a representative from the Massachusetts Association of School
38 Superintendents, Inc.; a representative from the Massachusetts Association of School Business
39 Officials, Inc.; a representative from the Massachusetts Municipal Association, Inc.; a
40 representative from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Inc.; a representative
41 from the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools, Inc.; and 5 members to be appointed
42 by the governor who shall have experience in elementary and secondary education finance or
43 municipal finance, at least two of whom shall reside in rural areas of the commonwealth.

44 (c) The commission shall solicit public input and hold not less than 5 public hearings in
45 different geographic areas of the commonwealth; provided that at least 1 hearing shall include an
46 option for remote participation. The department of elementary and secondary education shall
47 assist the commission by furnishing staff support, materials, and fiscal analysis as needed.

48 SECTION 2. Not later than June 30, 2027, the commission shall issue a report with
49 findings and recommendations, including any legislative or regulatory changes that may be
50 necessary to implement these recommendations. The report shall be submitted to the clerks of
51 the house of representatives and senate, the joint committee on education, and the house and
52 senate committees on ways and means.

53 SECTION 3. 7009-XXXX For the operation of the commission established under this
54 act, including, but not limited to, staffing and administrative
55 expenses..... $250,000