

SENATE No.

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 promote student college and career success and civic engagement.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Jason M. Lewis

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Fifth Middlesex

SENATE No.

[Pin Slip]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act to promote student college and career success and civic engagement.

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, as appearing in the 2022
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out subsection (i) and inserting in place thereof
3 the following section:-

4 (i) The “competency determination” shall be based on the academic standards and
5 curriculum frameworks for high school education in the areas of English, mathematics, science
6 and technology, history and social science, foreign languages, and arts, and shall represent a
7 determination that a particular student has demonstrated mastery of a common core of skills,
8 competencies and knowledge in these areas, as measured by the requirements set out in section
9 38. Satisfaction of the requirements of the competency determination shall be a condition for
10 high school graduation.

11 SECTION 2. Chapter 69 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
12 section 37 the following section:-

13 Section 38. High School Education Program of Study

14 (a) The department, with approval from the board and with advice and guidance from the
15 advisory council established pursuant to subsection (d), shall adopt a program of study intended
16 to align high school coursework with college and career expectations and promote civic
17 engagement.

18 (b) The department shall determine, with advice and guidance from the advisory council
19 established pursuant to subsection (d), the requirements and implementation of the program of
20 study in all schools and districts in the Commonwealth. In making requirements and
21 implementation determinations, the department shall include, but not be limited to, the following
22 considerations: (i) establishing a timeline for districts to be in compliance with the program of
23 study and for the program to be implemented as a condition of the competency determination,
24 including gathering data and feedback from schools and districts to determine what resources
25 are needed to become compliant; (ii) ensuring that the content of the program of study and the
26 resulting student skills, knowledge and competencies are comparable in their application and
27 rigor in all schools and districts in the Commonwealth, which may include the use of syllabus
28 review, performance-based assessments or other approaches; (iii) creating a process for schools
29 and districts to request a time limited waiver for compliance with this section based on hardship;
30 (iv) determining any modifications or exceptions for particular sub-groups of students for
31 required coursework in the program of study, including, but not limited to, students with severe
32 cognitive disabilities, newly arrived immigrant students, newly arrived students from other
33 states, English Language Learners, and vocational and technical education students; (v)
34 determining if there should be an appeals process or educational assistance plan for students who
35 have difficulty completing the program of study and a requirement to provide the student's
36 parent or guardian the opportunity to review this plan; (vi) reporting requirements that districts

37 must complete to illustrate compliance with this section, provided that such reporting
38 requirements are consistent with and not duplicative of existing reporting requirements; and (vii)
39 any other requirements that the department deems necessary to ensure that the program of study
40 is equitably and successfully implemented in all schools and districts.

41 (c) The department, with advice and guidance from the advisory council established
42 pursuant to subsection (d), may consider, as a further condition of the competency determination,
43 that students must also complete one or more additional learning experiences or enrichment
44 opportunities, in addition to the program of study. These additional learning experiences or
45 enrichment opportunities may include, but not be limited to, a service-learning project, a
46 capstone project, completing one or more advanced placement courses, meeting certain scores on
47 an SAT or ACT or other exam, taking one or more dual credit or early college courses,
48 participating in one or more internships or other work-based learning, participating in one or
49 more extracurricular activities, completing an innovation pathway, obtaining an industry
50 recognized credential, participating in My Career and Academic Plan or meeting standards on
51 the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery. If the department requires one or more
52 additional learning experiences or enrichment opportunities, (i) the department must offer a
53 range of options for students to choose from to meet this requirement; and (ii) schools and
54 districts must offer their students multiple options, but are not required to offer all department
55 approved options.

56 (d) The department shall establish a competency determination advisory council to advise
57 and assist the department on all aspects of the requirements and implementation of the
58 competency determination as defined in section 1D. The advisory council shall include 1
59 member from each of the following organizations, or a designee: the Massachusetts Association

60 of School Superintendents; the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools; the
61 Massachusetts Teachers Association; the American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts; the
62 Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators Inc.; the Massachusetts Public Charter
63 School Association; the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education; the Massachusetts
64 Association for School Committees; the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation; and
65 Massachusetts School Administrators' Association; and 5 additional members to be appointed by
66 the commissioner representing a range of stakeholders with diversity in geography, backgrounds
67 and experience.

68 (e) The department shall hold not less than 5 public hearings in geographically diverse
69 regions across the commonwealth to solicit public input on requirements and implementation of
70 the program of study.

71 (f) The department shall, subject to appropriation, provide technical assistance and
72 establish a grant program for schools and districts to support implementation of the program of
73 study required by this section.

74 (g) The department shall review and update the program of study and requirements no
75 less frequently than every 10 years.

76 (h) The department shall promulgate regulations for the implementation, administration
77 and enforcement of this section.

78 SECTION 3. (a) There shall be a special commission on the school and district
79 assessment and accountability system.

80 (b) The commission shall review the Commonwealth's current assessment and
81 accountability system, including provisions in sections 1I, 1J and 1K of chapter 69 of the
82 General Laws that affect the performance, efficacy and impact of the school and district
83 assessment and accountability system. The commission shall develop recommendations,
84 including proposed amendments to sections 1I, 1J and 1K of chapter 69 of the General Laws, on
85 ways to improve the Commonwealth's school and district assessment and accountability system.

86 The special commission shall consider (i) changes to the accountability system that
87 include a broader range of measures that align with public values and are less tied to student
88 demography; (ii) the strengths and weaknesses of the current school and district assessment and
89 accountability system; (iii) how this system is contributing to better opportunities and outcomes
90 for all students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds; (iv) the extent that students,
91 educators, families and other stakeholders are being well served or not by this system; (v) what
92 we can learn from new assessment and accountability approaches and models in Massachusetts
93 and other states; (vi) how much flexibility Massachusetts has to make changes given federal laws
94 and regulations; and (vii) any other considerations that the commission deems necessary.

95 (c) Commission members shall include the following: the house and senate chairs of the
96 joint committee on education, who shall serve as co-chairs; 1 member appointed by the speaker
97 of the house of representatives; 1 member appointed by the president of the senate; 1 member
98 appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives; 1 member appointed by the
99 minority leader of the senate; the commissioner of elementary and secondary education or
100 designee; the secretary of education or designee; and 1 member to be appointed by each of the
101 following organizations: Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Inc.; Massachusetts
102 Association of School Superintendents, Inc.; Massachusetts Teachers Association; American

103 Federation of Teachers Massachusetts; Massachusetts Charter Public School Association;
104 Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators; Massachusetts Association of Regional
105 Schools; the Education Commonwealth Project; Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation;
106 Massachusetts School Administrators' Association; and Massachusetts Business Alliance for
107 Education; and 4 additional members to be appointed by the Governor representing a range of
108 stakeholders with diversity in geography, backgrounds and experience.

109 (d) The department shall hold not less than 5 public hearings in geographically diverse
110 regions across the commonwealth to solicit public input on the school and district assessment
111 and accountability system.

112 (e) The commission shall report its findings and recommendations, including drafts of
113 any proposed legislation, to the clerks of the senate and house of representatives and joint
114 committee on education no later than June 30, 2027.

115 (f) While the special commission performs the review as required by this section,
116 subsections (r), (s), (v)(1) and(w)(2)-(3) of section 1J of chapter 69 of the general laws and the
117 second paragraph of subsection (a) and subsection (e) of section 1K of said chapter 69 shall not
118 be in effect.