



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133

Joint Committee on Education

Rep. Kenneth I. Gordon
House Chair

Sen. Jason M. Lewis
Senate Chair

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Date of Hearing: Tuesday, June 3rd, 2025

Time: 12:00 PM-5:00 PM

Location: B-2 and Virtual

The Joint Committee on Education will be holding a hearing on bills related to College and Career Readiness, Rural schools and Regional Districts, and Transportation.

The Joint Committee on Education will hold a hybrid public hearing to solicit written and oral testimony in-person and remotely on the following bills that pertain to College and Career Readiness, Rural schools and Regional Districts, and Transportation.

To register to testify virtually, you must provide contact information on the form linked [here](#). Individuals who wish to testify virtually at the Joint Committee on Education upcoming hearing must register by completing this form before **1:00 p.m. on Monday, June 2nd, 2025**.

Registration will CLOSE at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, June 2nd. Those wishing to testify in person may register in person at the time of the hearing but are encouraged to register ahead of time using this form. The Chair will limit testimony to two minutes per individual and reserves the right to call public officials out of turn.

Please submit written testimony to Fiona Bruce-Baiden at fiona.brucebaiden@mahouse.gov and Emily Reynolds at emily.reynolds@masenate.gov, or to the Committee on Education at 24 Beacon Street, Room 473G, Boston, MA 02133. The Chairs request that those submitting written testimony include “EDUCATION COMMITTEE TESTIMONY” and the bill number IN THE SUBJECT LINE, and provide the committee with your name, organization, and phone number. **The Committee will accept written testimony until June 10, 2025.**

Bill No	Bill Sponsor	Bill Title
H596	Hawkins, James K. (HOU)	An Act to ensure that all students are prepared for future success
S426	Oliveira, Jacob R. (SEN)	An Act to ensure that all students are prepared for future success

H637	Lipper-Garabedian, Kate (HOU)	An Act to create and expand student pathways to success
H722	Tyler, Chynah (HOU)	An Act to create and expand student pathways to success
S325	Cronin, John J. (SEN)	An Act to create and expand student pathways to success
H686	Roy, Jeffrey N. (HOU)	An Act incentivizing the awarding of industry-recognized credentials
S321	Crighton, Brendan P. (SEN)	An Act incentivizing the awarding of industry-recognized credentials
H727	Tyler, Chynah (HOU)	An Act relative to student access and return on investment of college and career pathways programs
S331	Cronin, John J. (SEN)	An Act relative to student access and return on investment of college and career pathways programs
S458	Velis, John C. (SEN)	An Act expanding high school student access to earn industry recognized credentials
S427	Oliveira, Jacob R. (SEN)	An Act expanding high school student access to earn industry recognized credentials
S459	Velis, John C. (SEN)	An Act to expand dual enrollment for high school students in Gateway Cities
S439	Payano, Pavel (SEN)	An Act to enhance the alignment and career focus of college and career pathway programs
H697	Scarsdale, Margaret R. (HOU)	An Act relative to full funding of regional school district transportation
H538	Davis, Leigh (HOU)	An Act regarding school regionalization
H517	Blais, Natalie M. (HOU)	An Act to provide a sustainable future for rural schools
S407	Mark, Paul W. (SEN)	An Act creating a special commission to examine regional school education finance reform
S328	Cronin, John J. (SEN)	An Act relative to full funding of regional school district transportation
S314	Comerford, Joanne M. (SEN)	An Act to provide a sustainable future for rural schools
H515	Barrett, III, John (HOU)	An Act exempting Hancock schools

H751	Whipps, Susannah M. (HOU)	An Act exempting Warwick Schools
H709	Sousa, Priscila S. (HOU)	An Act increasing efficiency and sustainability of student transportation
H643	Marsi, John J. (HOU)	An Act regional school transportation reimbursement bill
H642	Marsi, John J. (HOU)	An Act changing regional school transportation reimbursement law
H616	Kane, Hannah (HOU)	An Act to allow for school districts to collect a fee associated with nonresident pupil transportation
H597	Hawkins, James K. (HOU)	An Act ensuring full reimbursement for in-district school transportation costs
S348	Edwards, Lydia (SEN)	An Act providing in-district transportation funding
H592	Gregoire, Danielle W. (HOU)	An Act relative to school transportation personnel
H569	Ferguson, Kimberly N. (HOU)	An Act regarding school transportation funding
H567	Farley-Bouvier, Tricia (HOU)	An Act fairly reimbursing local school transportation of foster children
H564	DuBois, Michelle M. (HOU)	An Act relative to improved special needs transportation and student safety, "John's Law"
H531	Consalvo, Rob (HOU)	An Act supporting families of students with disabilities
H513	Badger, Michelle L. (HOU)	An Act requiring equitable funding for non-regional school districts with high transportation costs
H4011	Badger, Michelle L. (HOU)	An Act eliminating predatory transportation pricing of school districts
S416	O'Connor, Patrick M. (SEN)	An Act providing opportunity for youth with substance use disorder

Please be advised that the schedule and agenda are subject to change at the agreement of the Chairs.

All matters filed in the House that are listed above are required to be reported on August 3rd, 2025, subject to extensions consistent with House Rule 27.

The public is invited to participate in this hybrid hearing, which will be livestreamed on the General Court website, <https://malegislature.gov/>. Hearings will be recorded and posted publicly on the Joint Committee on Education page <https://malegislature.gov/Committees/Detail/J14/Hearings>

At the discretion of the Chairs and per committee rules, written testimony received by the committee will be made publicly available. The committee may limit availability or redact testimony that includes sensitive personal information, information about minors, or information that may jeopardize the health, wellness or safety of the testifier or others.

Please be advised that the schedule and agenda are subject to change at the discretion of the chair per committee rules.

You may contact committee staff with any questions at (617) 722-2070 or (617) 722-1206 or email fiona.brucebaiden@mahouse.gov and emily.reynolds@masenate.gov if you have any questions.

Joint Committee on Education

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 596/ Senate, No. 426
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act to ensure that all students are prepared for future success
<u>SPONSOR(S)</u>	Representative James Hawkins, Senator Jacob R. Oliveira
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	N/A
<u>CURRENT LAW</u>	MGL 69 pertains to the powers and duties of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

SUMMARY

This bill would amend Chapter 69 of the General Laws, whose subject matter is the powers and duties of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, to create section 38, establishing a statewide program MassCore. The program will align high school courses with college and workforce expectations and to ensure that all students are prepared to be knowledgeable, empowered and civically engaged adults who can thrive upon high school graduation and throughout their life. It will be a required program of study for all high school students in the commonwealth beginning with students entering ninth grade in the 2027-2028 school year. There will be a fifteen member MassCore advisory council to collaborate with and advise the department on all matters related to MassCore and the implementation.

**Joint Committee on Education
Bill Summary**

**BILL
NUMBER**

House, No. 637 / Senate, No. 325

TITLE

An Act to create and expand student pathways to success

SPONSOR(S)

Representative Kate Lipper-Garabedian

Senator John J. Cronin

**PRIOR
HISTORY**

N/A

**CURRENT
LAW**

MGL 6 pertains to the governor, lieutenant governor, and council; certain officers under the governor and council; and the state library.

MGL 23:26 pertains to a list of occupations in high-demand industries to be provided to department of elementary and secondary education (DESE) and the list being made available to school districts.

MGL 23H:7 pertains to the state workforce development board.

MGL 69 pertains to the powers and duties of the department of elementary and secondary education.

MGL 70:2 pertains to definitions related to school funds and state aid for public schools.

MGL 70:3 pertains to the foundation budget and regulations as well as the calculation of the budget.

MGL 71 pertains to public schools in the Commonwealth.

MGL 71:14B (c) pertains to regional school districts' formation and procedure.

Chapter 179 of the Acts of 2022 pertains to an act driving clean energy and offshore wind

SUMMARY

This bill amends would amend chapter 6 of the General Laws, whose subject matter is the governor, lieutenant governor and council, certain officers under the governor and council, and state library. Specifically, this bill would establish a new workforce skills cabinet will be established within the governor's office to improve workforce skills and college and career readiness in Massachusetts. This cabinet will consist of representatives from various agencies and align efforts across multiple state agencies, provide guidance on developing effective workforce programs, and assess the state's job market needs. The cabinet will hold monthly public meetings and serve three-year terms without compensation. It will focus on expanding career pathway programs for high school students, ensuring they have access to college credits, industry certifications, and work-based learning. The cabinet will also conduct audits, reports, and advise on policies to ensure workforce development meets future economic demands. Additionally, the cabinet will develop strategic goals to enhance access to career programs, ensuring equitable opportunities with regard to economic competitiveness and workforce preparation.

Joint Committee on Education

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 722
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act to create and expand student pathways to success
<u>SPONSOR(S)</u>	Representative Chynah Tyler
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	N/A
<u>CURRENT LAW</u>	<p>MGL 6 pertains to the governor, lieutenant governor, and council; certain officers under the governor and council; and the state library.</p> <p>MGL 23:26 pertains to a list of occupations in high-demand industries to be provided to department of elementary and secondary education (DESE) and the list being made available to school districts.</p> <p>MGL 23H:7 pertains to the state workforce development board.</p> <p>MGL 69 pertains to the powers and duties of the department of elementary and secondary education.</p> <p>MGL 70:2 pertains to definitions related to school funds and state aid for public schools.</p> <p>MGL 70:3 pertains to the foundation budget and regulations as well as the calculation of the budget.</p> <p>MGL 71 pertains to public schools in the Commonwealth.</p> <p>MGL 71:14B (c) pertains to regional school districts' formation and procedure.</p> <p>Chapter 179 of the Acts of 2022 pertains to an act driving clean energy and offshore wind.</p>

SUMMARY

This bill amends sections of the MGL 6, 23, 69, 70, and 71, whose subject matter cover legislative bodies, public schools, state aid for public schools, the state workforce development board, and the powers and duties of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The bill creates a workforce skills cabinet to oversee cross-agency efforts and requires DESE to fund districts

based on students earning industry certifications. It also supports career technical education programs and requires DESE to develop employability credentials for high school students. The bill expands the definition of foundation enrollment to include early college, and STEM programs and adjusts the funding formula. It allows more collaboration between vocational and regional schools.

Public schools must create individual learning plans for students, offer at least one computer science course, and develop plans to expand college and career pathways. DESE will review and report on programs related to career readiness and study barriers to work-based learning. Districts must submit plans to implement the MassCore curriculum by December 31, 2024. These changes take effect by September 1, 2026.

Joint Committee on Education

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 686
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act incentivizing the awarding of industry-recognized credentials
<u>SPONSOR(S)</u>	Representative Jeffrey N. Roy
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	H.691 of 2021-22 Session; attached to H.4542; reported favorably to HWM. H.564 of 2023-2024 Session; attached to H.4399; reported favorably to HWM.
<u>CURRENT LAW</u>	<p>MGL 23:26 pertains to a list of occupations in high-demand industries to be provided to the department of elementary and secondary education (DESE) and the list being made available to school districts.</p> <p>MGL 69 pertains to the powers and duties of the department of elementary and secondary education.</p> <p>Chapter 179 of the Acts of 2022 pertains to an act driving clean energy and offshore wind.</p>

SUMMARY

This bill amends MGL 69 whose subject matter is the powers and duties of the department of elementary and secondary education. The bill creates a program where the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will provide financial awards to school districts based on the number of students who earn industry-recognized certifications. These certifications must be in high-demand fields or recognized by colleges for academic credit. The amount of the award varies: \$1,000 for certifications with high employment value and \$800 for certifications that meet regional workforce needs. Subject to funding, the bill also allows DESE to consider awards to school districts with students who complete cooperative education programs, internships, or apprenticeships in the amount of \$1,000. School districts must use at least 80% of the awards for the schools where the students earned the certifications, supporting programs, paying instructors, or helping low-income students with certification fees. Additionally, districts can apply for funding to develop programs to help students earn these certifications. Each year, DESE will report on the program's progress, including how many students earned certifications, their backgrounds, and if the funding was enough to cover the program's costs. This new program takes effect immediately.

**Joint Committee on Education
Bill Summary**

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 727
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act relative to student access and return on investment of college and career pathways programs
<u>SPONSOR(S)</u>	Representative Chynah Tyler
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	N/A
<u>CURRENT LAW</u>	MGL 6A pertains to executive offices

SUMMARY

This bill would amend chapter 6A of the General laws, whose subject matter is executive offices. This bill would create a new section, 14B. The bill instructs the secretary of the executive office of education, in collaboration with the secretary of the executive office of labor and workforce development and the secretary of the executive office of housing and economic development to conduct a biennial return on investment audit report of the state's public education high school college and career pathways programs. The report will determine how aligned the existing career pathways offerings, including career technical education and vocational programs are, with state and regional labor market plans, employer demand, postsecondary degree or certificate programs, and industry-valued credentials. Additionally, the report will include an analysis of the equity in access to college and career pathways programs in the state's public high schools and recommendations for improving access to all student groups regardless of student background or geographic location and improvements to the labor market. The report will be made available to the public and presented to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as well as the legislature's joint committee on education.

Joint Committee on Education

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	Senate, No. 458 / Senate, No. 427
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act expanding high school student access to earn industry recognized credentials
<u>SPONSOR(S)</u>	Senator Jacob R. Oliveira (Hampden, Hampshire and Worcester) Senator John C. Velis (Hampden and Hampshire)
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	S.351 of 2021-22 Session; attached to S.2749; reported favorably to SWM. S.361 of 2023-2024 Session; attached to S.2664; reported favorably to SWM.
<u>CURRENT LAW</u>	MGL 69 pertains to the powers and duties of the department of elementary and secondary education (DESE).

SUMMARY

This bill amends MGL 69 by inserting a new section, Section 37, which requires the executive office of labor and workforce development to provide DESE with a list of high demand occupations that require an industry-recognized certification. The list shall be ranked according to “employment value,” or value based on entry wage, growth rate, and average annual openings for an occupation. It further requires DESE to make the list available to school districts and the public. The bill also requires DESE to pay each district a monetary certification award based upon the number of students that earn industry-recognized certification and to prepare an annual report about the program.

Joint Committee on Education

Bill Summary

BILL NUMBER

House, No. 697

TITLE

An Act relative to full funding of regional school district transportation

SPONSOR(S)

Representative Margaret R. Scarsdale of Pepperell

PRIOR HISTORY

H.3756 of the 2023-2024 session; attached without language to H4422, sent to HWM.

CURRENT LAW

MGL 71:16C pertains to school transportation for regional school districts.

MGL 29:7H pertains to the budget submitted by the governor to general court and the recommended corrective amendments message

SUMMARY

Maintains that DESE, from FY2026 and beyond, shall submit an annual request to the general court for appropriations that comply with the total funding obligations as set forth in MGL 71:16C, which pertains to school transportation for regional school districts and reimbursement eligibility.

**Joint Committee on Education
Bill Summary**

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 538
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act regarding school regionalization
<u>SPONSOR(S)</u>	Representative Leigh Davis of Great Barrington
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	N/A
<u>CURRENT LAW</u>	MGL 15 pertains to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education MGL 70B pertains to the school building assistance program MGL 70B:10 pertains to the facilities grants for approved project and related formula MGL 71:16C pertains to school transportation for regional school districts MGL 71: 16I pertains to severability of sections relating to regional school districts

SUMMARY

This bill would create an office of shared services within DESE, whose director shall be appointed by the commissioner, and whose purpose will be to oversee the formation of regional school districts and superintendent unions. The office will assist school districts that are considering or are in the process of forming regional school districts and superintendent unions with research, development and execution of shared services projects and shared services agreements. This bill would also stipulate that grant percentages for approved school facilities projects in regional school districts shall be at least 90%. This bill would additionally ensure that when a school is closed due to a regionalization effort, the MSBA relieve any debt accrued as a result of the establishment and maintenance of the school's facility owed to the MSBA by the municipality wherein the school is located. The MSBA will also collaborate with the EOED to offer assistance to municipalities in which schools have been closed in order to develop plans for demolition or repurposing of school buildings.

Where former subsection g stipulated that regional bonus aid would be paid for the immediate 5 years following the establishment of a regional school district, and laid out said payment schedule: \$50 per pupil first year, \$40 the second, and so on and so forth: This bill would replace that payment schedule, reducing the timeline of guaranteed aid to three years, but increase the amount per pupil to a constant of \$200 per year per pupil. Additionally, it would

require state aid be given to regional school districts in the first two years of its operation for the purposes of covering the salaries of temporary school district employees. This bill stipulates that vocational schools, independent agricultural and technical schools, and charter schools are not eligible for this funding. Districts receiving funds shall make annual reports about the progress the district has made.

This bill would create the School District Regionalization Grant Fund, the Regional School District Foundational Aid Fund, and the Superintendent Union Formation Grant Fund, all of which would be comprised of state, public, and private funding sources and not be considered as Chapter 70 aid.

Joint Committee on Education
Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 517
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act to provide a sustainable future for rural schools
<u>SPONSOR(S)</u>	Representative Blais of Deerfield Senator Joanne M. Comerford (Hampshire, Franklin, and Worcester)
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	H.3567 of the 2023-2024 session; Committee redrafted to H4425 which was sent to HWM.
<u>CURRENT LAW</u>	MGL Chapter 12C pertains to the Center for Health and Information Analysis MGL Chapter 15 pertains to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) MGL 15A:19 pertains to, among other things, a grant program for paraprofessionals in public schools pursuing a bachelor's degree to become a certified teacher MGL Chapter 70 pertains to school funds and state aid for public schools MGL 70B:10 pertains to the MSBA facilities grants for approved projects MGL 71:7A pertains to transportation reimbursement MGL 71:16C pertains to regional school district transportation reimbursement MGL 71 16D pertains to state aid for regional school districts MGL 71B pertains to Children with Special Needs MGL 71B:51 pertains to the special education Circuit Breaker

SUMMARY

This bill provides for extensive changes and additions to several MGL chapters relating to rural school districts and regional school districts, as well as changes to special education financing and transportation reimbursement. The bill amends MGL 12C to require the Center for Health and Information Analysis to assist rural school districts in assessing their health insurance plans. It amends MGL 15 to create a department of shared services within DESE to oversee and assist school district regionalization. The bill also requires DESE to review its special education regulations and create a web page for public review and input. The bill also establishes a Special Education Financing Legislative Commission to make recommendations for a more equitable funding system to provide high quality education to students with disabilities.

Several sections of the bill relate to growing special education workforce, including prioritizing Higher Education grants for paraprofessionals seeking special education licensure, adding a program within DESE to special education educator programs, and requiring DESE to develop special education instructor assessments and other alternatives to the MTEL. The bill also increases the Circuit Breaker reimbursement for approved costs above the threshold from 75% to 100% and allows for the payment of full-time equivalent salaries for highly specialized part-time staff in order to obtain a qualified professionals.

The bill also amends MGL 70B:10 to require MSBA to increase grants for school facilities in regional school districts to 90%, to relieve any municipal debt owed to MSBA on school facilities closed as a result of regionalization, and to assist municipalities in demolition or repurposing of facilities.

The bill provides 100% reimbursement for school transportation costs for students receiving special education outside of their home district and creates the Non-Resident Pupil Transportation Fund which reimburses districts for transportation costs of students who attend school outside of their home district.

For transitional costs, the bill amends MGL 71:16D to provide regional school districts with \$200 per enrolled student in its first 3 years of operation and provides state aid to cover salaries of temporary school district employees in its first 2 years. The bill also establishes the School District Regionalization Grant Fund, the Regional School District Foundational Aid Fund, and the Superintendent Union Formation Grant Fund to assist school districts considering regionalization.

The bill also creates the Rural Schools Aid Fund, not subject to appropriation, allocated with \$60 million per year to support the long-term fiscal health of rural school districts and the Declining Enrollment Fund to support districts with at least a 35% decline in enrollment over 20 years.

Joint Committee on Education

Bill Summary

BILL NUMBER House, No. 515

TITLE An Act exempting Hancock schools

SPONSOR(S) Representative Barrett of North Adams by vote of the town

PRIOR HISTORY H.4637 of the 2023-2024 Session; attached to H4496 and sent to study; DESE decided to approach this issue through updated regulations and the situation was rectified.

CURRENT LAW MGL 76:12B(k) pertains to children attending public schools in a community other than the one in which they reside and permits them to remain in that school system until their high school graduation, unless there is a lack of funding of the program as authorized by said sections.

SUMMARY

This bill exempts public schools in the town of Hancock from MGL 76:12B(k) but allows them to retain their right to participate in the school choice program. This bill will take effect upon its passage.

**Joint Committee on Education
Bill Summary**

BILL NUMBER

House, No. 751

TITLE

An Act exempting Warwick schools

SPONSOR(S)

Representative Susannah Whipps of Athol
Senator Joanne Comerford (Hampshire, Franklin, and Worcester)
by vote of the town

PRIOR HISTORY

N/A.

CURRENT LAW

MGL 76:12B(k) pertains to children attending public schools in a community other than the one in which they reside and permits them to remain in that school system until their high school graduation, unless there is a lack of funding of the program authorized by said sections.

SUMMARY

This bill exempts public schools in the town of Warwick from MGL 76:12B(k) but allows them to retain their right to participate in the school choice program. This bill will take effect upon its passage.

**Joint Committee on Education
Bill Summary**

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 709
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act increasing efficiency and sustainability of student transportation
<u>SPONSOR(S)</u>	Representative Priscila S. Sousa of Framingham
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	H.584 of 2023-2024 session; attached to committee redrafted H4422: HWM.
<u>CURRENT LAW</u>	MGL 71:7A pertains to transportation of pupils; payment of costs; and limitations. MGL 161A:5 pertains to the limitations, conditions, obligations, and duties of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority.

SUMMARY

Amends MGL 71:7A by adding a sentence to the end of the fourth paragraph that requires school committees to consider purchasing monthly transit passes for student's transportation, in accordance with MGL 161A:5, before the school committee can advertise for or invite bids for a transportation contract.

Joint Committee on Education

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 643
<u>TITLE</u>	An act regional school transportation reimbursement bill.
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	H.642 An Act changing regional school transportation reimbursement law.
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representative John Marsi of 6 th Worcester.
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	N/A
<u>CURRENT LAW</u>	MGL 71:16C pertains to regional school districts and school transportation.

SUMMARY

Amends MGL 71:16C by removing the words “subject to appropriation,” requiring the commonwealth to reimburse a regional district the full amount expended for transportation.

Joint Committee on Education

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 616
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act to allow for school districts to collect a fee associated with nonresident pupil transportation
<u>SPONSOR(S)</u>	Representative Hannah Kane of Shrewsbury
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	H.512 of the 2023-2024 Session; study.
<u>CURRENT LAW</u>	MGL 74:8A pertains to the transportation of non-resident students attending day schools.

SUMMARY

This bill amends MGL 74:8A by replacing the section with language that allows school districts to charge a fee for transportation for students in grades 7-12 who attend an out-of-district vocational or agricultural school, rather than the district providing for the transportation of such students and being reimbursed by the state. This would not apply to families at or below 300% of the federal poverty level.

Joint Committee on Education

Bill Summary

BILL NUMBER

House, No. 597/ Senate, No. 348

TITLE

An Act ensuring full reimbursement for in-district school transportation costs/ An Act providing in-district transportation personnel.

SPONSORS

Representative James K Hawkins of 2nd Bristol

Senator Lydia Edwards (3rd Suffolk)

PRIOR HISTORY

N/A

CURRENT LAW

MGL 71B pertains to children with special needs.

MGL 71B:5A pertains to special education reimbursement programs.

MGL 71:7A pertains to transportation of pupils, payment of the costs of transportation, and limitations on transportation.

SUMMARY

Includes language that add Section 14 to the MGL 71B. This language requires that on or before November 20th the state treasurer reimburse any public school for expenditures incurred the previous year for transportation related to student enrolled in special education programs. There is language for what expenditures would qualify for this reimbursement. Reimbursement cannot exceed 110% of the average excess costs in the schools doing the fiscal year the expenditures are from. Includes language on the funding schedule to be used if MGL 71B:14 and MGL 71:7A is enacted, in which by 2029 100% of transportation spending by school districts will be funded.

Joint Committee on Education

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 592
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act relative to school transportation personnel
<u>SPONSOR(S)</u>	Representative Danielle Gregoire of Marlborough.
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	S.283 of 2023-2024 session; study
<u>CURRENT LAW</u>	MGL 71:55A pertains to sick, injured, or incapacitated pupils; procedure for handling; emergency first aid or transportation; and exemption from civil liability.

SUMMARY

This bill amends MGL 71:55A by inserting language which includes school transportation vehicle drivers and monitors as those protected from being liable for damages, for hospital expenses, or for disciplinary action by the school committee or collaborative board if the person, in good faith, renders emergency first aid or transportation to a student who has become injured or incapacitated. It further amends MGL 71:55A to include school transportation vehicles and school bus stops as locations included in such liability protection.

Joint Committee on Education

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 569
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act regarding school transportation funding
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representative Kimberly Ferguson of 1 st Worcester.
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	H597 An Act ensuring full reimbursement for in-district school transportation costs
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	N/A
<u>CURRENT LAW</u>	MGL 71 pertains to public schools

SUMMARY

Requires that each year before or on November 20th the state treasure reimburses rural school districts in full for extraordinary costs incurred as a result of transportation between school and home of a pupil that are not covered in MGL 71:7A. Language is present to exclude regional school districts are from the school transportation reimbursement in this section. Codifies the existing Non-Resident Pupil Transportation fund into the MGL. Provides a list that the fund will be credited with. Requires that DESE no later than December 1st submit a report detailing the calculations and planned distribution of funds in a school district. Language is present that states these funds cannot be considered in Ch 70 aid calculations. Requires that DESE review the adequacy of the funds every five years.

Joint Committee on Education

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 567
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act fairly reimbursing local school transportation of foster children
<u>SPONSOR(S)</u>	Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier of Pittsfield
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	H.3570 of session 2023-2024; attached to H4422: House ways and means.
<u>CURRENT LAW</u>	MGL 70 pertains to school funds and state aid for public schools.

SUMMARY

Amends MGL 70 by inserting a new section – Section 10A – which requires DESE and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to apply for reimbursement from the United States Department of Education (DOE) for the cost school districts incur from transporting a child in foster care from a foster home to the child’s school of origin. It further requires DESE to create a form that districts will certify and complete for transportation reimbursement. Further requires DESE to reimburse the school district for the balance of certified cost not reimbursed by the U.S. DOE.

Joint Committee on Education

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 564
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act relative to improved special needs transportation and student safety, “John’s Law”
<u>SPONSOR(S)</u>	Representative Michelle M. DuBois
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	H.472 of 2023-24 Session; Attached to H4681; House Ways and Means.
<u>CURRENT LAW</u>	MGL 71B pertains to children with special needs.

SUMMARY

Amends MGL 71B by inserting a new section – Section 8A – that requires any bus driver, monitor, or other attendant of a student with a disability to be trained in CPR and first aid. Additionally requires school districts to provide bus drivers, monitors, or other attendants of a student with disability a report on any health issues the district believes may affect the student while traveling in a special transportation van. A school district is required to provide the report only if the students IEP requires a report, or the school district received written consent from a parent or guardian of the student.

**Joint Committee on Education
Bill Summary**

BILL NUMBER House, No. 531

TITLE An Act supporting families of students with disabilities

SPONSOR(S) Representative Rob Consalvo of Boston

PRIOR HISTORY H.3568 of 2023-2024 session; Attached to H4681: House Ways and Means.

CURRENT LAW MGL 71B:8 pertains to school transportation for students with disabilities and the reimbursement of parents for such costs.

SUMMARY

This bill amends MGL 71B:8 by changing language to require, rather than allow school districts to reimburse parents and guardians who provide transportation to a school age child with a disability. Reimbursement must be at the prevailing rate per mile for state employees and the state minimum wage for the time spent providing the transportation, for no more than the round-trip time and distance between the home and the school for school attendance and school-sponsored extracurricular activities.

Joint Committee on Education

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 513
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act requiring equitable funding for non-regional school districts with high transportation cost.
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representative Michelle L Badger of 1 st Plymouth Representative Kathleen R LaNatra of 12 th Plymouth
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	N/A
<u>CURRENT LAW</u>	MGL 29 pertains to state finance

SUMMARY

Establishes an Extraordinary Routes Relief Fund which will be provided in grants to eligible non-regional school districts for transportation costs. Requires the creation of a 11-member committee appointed by the Commissioner of elementary and secondary education to oversee the fund. The nonregional school district is eligible for grants from the fund if its transportation per pupil cost exceeds 125% of the average of per pupil cost in the commonwealth. Allows the committee to grant a school district up to 40% of the excess between the school district per pupil cost and the average per pupil transportation cost. Requires annually, before July 1st, each school district applying for the grant to submit a report to DESE. Requires DESE to annually conduct a review of the effectiveness and impact of the funds and submit a report to the clerks of the house and senate, and the joint committee on education no later than June 30.

Joint Committee on Education

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 4011
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act eliminating predatory transportation pricing of school districts.
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representative Michelle Badger of 1 st Plymouth, and James Arena-DeRosa of 8 th Middlesex.
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	N/A
<u>CURRENT LAW</u>	MGL 71:7A pertains to transportation of pupils, payments of cost, and limitation for transportation.

SUMMARY

Amends MGL 71:7A by adding a paragraph that requires DESE to establish a pricing structure, which must include a daily price cap, for contracts between private transportation companies and schools' committees. The structure will focus on transportation for students of pupils receiving special education and out-of-district students, and for the transportation of pupils in school districts receiving funds under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Requires a 15-person school transportation commission to be established by DESE to focus on equity and cost transparency in public school transportation for students receiving special education and out-of-district students. The bill includes a list of what the commission must focus on. The commissioner has to conduct a review of the school transportation prior to September 30. DESE must use the results of the review to make necessary adjustment for the pricing structure.