



S.308

An Act strengthening and investing in our educators, students and communities

Bill Summary

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Michael Rush (D-Boston) | Rep. Marjorie Decker (D-Cambridge)

This bill helps students in all public schools in Massachusetts.

This bill implements the recommendations of the Foundation Budget Review Commission.

- Beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, state overall funding and allotment levels from the state to local school districts will reflect the recommendations of the Foundation Budget Review Commission.
- Provides more resources to local districts to deal with issues such as class size, the cost of special education and other school services.

This bill requires Massachusetts to rethink its high-stakes testing regime.

- Places a three-year moratorium on the use of high-stakes testing for graduation and school and/or district accountability.
- Removes the use of state standardized test scores in evaluating teachers.
- Creates a task force to examine standardized assessments and examine alternative methods for assessing student, teacher, school and district progress.

This bill promotes child development.

- Mandates recess as part of the school day for students in grades K through 5.
- Provides schools with the flexibility needed to implement language acquisition programs that best meet the needs of students.
- Increases parent engagement in school offerings around language acquisition.

This bill promotes community support and involvement in school improvement efforts.

- Shifts focus in school and district improvement efforts from penalization to community-centered support.
- Reduces the number of schools targeted for state intervention from 20 percent to 10 percent (the federal requirement is 5 percent), increasing local autonomy and giving the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education the ability to focus on schools and districts most in need of support.
- Creates a new community-centered support program for schools identified as underperforming or chronically underperforming that will pinpoint barriers to learning for students in school and at home.

This bill promotes workplace fairness.

- Maintains employment rights within districts for teachers with professional status, ensuring that the most experienced and capable educators are involved in school improvement efforts.
- Restores “just cause” standard in termination cases, as intended by the Education Reform Act of 1993.

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