

THE GENERAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

December 12, 2017

His Excellency Charlie Baker
Office of the Governor
State House, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Baker:

We are writing to ask your support for 100% reimbursement of regional school transportation (line item 7035-0006) in Fiscal Year 2019.

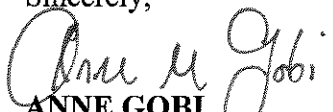
As members of the Regional Schools Caucus, we know firsthand the unique financial issues that plague regional schools. The state currently has 58 academic regional school districts, which enroll approximately 107,000 students in over 170 communities. As was detailed in Auditor Suzanne Bump's report in October, state reimbursement for regional school transportation remains a top concern in districts across the Commonwealth. The report goes on to recommend that the Legislature commit to 100% reimbursement, as it represents an important incentive for school districts to regionalize.

Costs associated with transportation in a regional school district represent a significant portion of a district's budget because of the geographical footprint associated with bus routes across numerous communities, often with low population densities. The mandate that regional school districts are required to transport all students to and from their homes places a significant financial burden on school districts, made especially difficult with reimbursement rates fluctuating from year to year. Committing to 100% reimbursement would allow regional school districts to responsibly plan for upcoming school years.

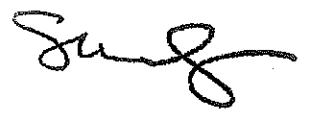
According to estimates from the Department of Early and Secondary Education, the Legislature would need to appropriate \$86 million in FY19 for regional school transportation to reach a 100% reimbursement rate. Although this represents a \$24.5 million increase from FY18, consistently underfunding regional school transportation ultimately leads to additional future costs for the state that could be significantly reduced if we honor the state's commitment to 100% reimbursement.


Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. We appreciate every effort you and your administration have made to invest in our students and we believe this is a crucial next step in supporting the Commonwealth's schools. Please do not hesitate to contact our caucus chairs, Senator Anne Gobi and Representative Kimberly Ferguson, if you have any questions or would like to discuss the matter further.


Sincerely,



ANNE GOBI
State Senator, Co-Chair
Hampden, Hampshire
Worcester & Middlesex



KIMBERLY FERGUSON
State Representative, Co-Chair
1st Worcester District



SUSANNAH WHIPPS
State Representative
2nd Franklin District



CAROLYN DYKEMA
State Representative
8th Middlesex District



STEVEN HOWITT
State Representative
4th Bristol District



JOSEPH MCKENNA
State Representative
18th Worcester District



WILLIAM CROCKER
State Representative
2nd Barnstable District



JOSH CUTLER
State Representative
6th Plymouth District



DANIELLE GREGOIRE
State Representative
4th Middlesex District



PETER KOCOT
State Representative
5th Hampshire District



SMITTY PIGNATELLI
State Representative
4th Berkshire District

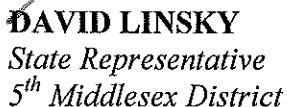

DONALD BERTHIAUME
State Representative
5th Worcester District



JENNIFER BENSON
State Representative
37th Middlesex District


ADAM HINDS
State Senator
Berkshire, Hampshire,
Franklin & Hampden


DAVID MURADIAN
State Representative
9th Worcester District


PATRICIA HADDAD
State Representative
5th Bristol District


DAVID LINSKY
State Representative
5th Middlesex District


TIMOTHY WHELAN
State Representative
1st Barnstable District

TODD SMOLA
State Representative
1st Hampden District

ANGELO PUPPOLO
State Representative
12th Hampden District

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