

“Our goal is school funding equity in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.”-- MASS Promise to Invest: School Funding for Every Child

We believe that it is the responsibility of the Commonwealth to fulfill its promise enshrined into law by the 1993 Education Reform Act in the form of means-based local school aid from the state in the form of chapter 70 aid. The law as interpreted by our state judiciary ***“imposes on the Commonwealth an enforceable duty to provide an education for all its children, rich and poor, in every city and town through the public schools.”***

Under the Commonwealth’s school funding system, there exists a largely unaddressed inequity in school funding:

- For every family that sends a student to a charter school, the public funding for that student follows them to the charter school.
- For every family that sends a student to a different school district, a portion of the public funding for that student follows them to the new public school district.
- The student’s sending school district loses these funds while their costs to operate their school districts remain relatively unchanged.

The current policies take funds from disadvantaged school districts and students and divert them to wealthier school districts and charter schools. These funds are deducted from the state local aid given to these cities and towns by the Commonwealth. This leads to cuts in the sending school budgets and a downward spiral of declining enrollment and funding loss. These two funding policies directly and disproportionately affect our public school districts with the most needs and/or the least means.

To address this inequity, we propose that the Commonwealth underwrite these costs to our cities and towns.

School funding equity is also an explicit goal of the majority political party of our Commonwealth– the Democratic party– who has majority control of the legislature. In the official democratic party platform, under education it states that ***“Democrats want every child – no matter their ZIP code – to have access to a quality public K-12 education”***.

The Commonwealth has the resources to meet the promise to provide a quality education to all its children, rich or poor, and it is in the interest of our Commonwealth’s future to meet the promise.