

Eliminating the Achievement Gap

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FY2012 House 1 Budget Recommendation: Issues in Brief

Deval L. Patrick, Governor
Timothy P. Murray, Lt. Governor

Legislation

On January 18, 2010 Governor Patrick signed historic education reform legislation to close achievement gaps, increase access to innovation, provide options for intervention and expand successful charter schools. Filed by the Governor in July 2010 and passed by the Legislature in January 2010, an ***Act Relative to the Achievement Gap represents the state's first major action on education policy since*** the landmark Education Reform Act of 1993 that included high standards, rigorous assessment and increased accountability that led to the Commonwealth's reputation as an education leader. The Governor commented that:

"...the Commonwealth of Massachusetts stepped up, in a big way, to the unfinished business of education reform: closing achievement gaps. This historic reform bill passed by the Legislature represents a major step forward for the future of the Commonwealth's nearly one million public school students. This legislation brings us substantially closer to realizing the education vision that I first presented with the Readiness Project – a vision for a transformed education system that meets the needs of every student, helps them reach high standards and fully prepares them for a successful future."

The passage of this legislation will enhance the Commonwealth's ability to improve our education system in many ways, including:

- Creating meaningful intervention tools to address persistent under-performance in schools;
- Promoting locally-inspired and approved innovation; and
- Allowing a highly-targeted increase in the charter school cap, focusing on providers with records of success serving the most challenged students in the most challenged school districts.

Fiscal Year 2012

The fiscal year 2012 budget recommendation supports Governor Patrick's commitment to close the achievement gap through maintaining the commitment to funding Chapter 70's foundation budget, maintaining funding for programs targeted at addressing the achievement gap, and effectively managing new federal funds such as \$250 million of the Race to the Top award to support these initiatives. The House 1 recommendation also provides new investment of \$3 million to target areas that address the achievement gap.

Maintaining a strong investment in education is a crucial component to guaranteeing that Massachusetts students continue to be national and global leaders in educational achievement. The Patrick-Murray Administration will continue to implement its aggressive agenda for education, with the struggling global economy highlighting the essential need to maintain this commitment to education. Some highlights for the fiscal year 2012 budget recommendation include:

- Funding Chapter 70 state education aid at \$3.9 billion, the highest level of state funding in

history, ensuring that all districts are fully funded at foundation.

- Funding for the Special Education Circuit Breaker is \$213 million, an increase of \$80 million over fiscal year 2011.
- Funding of \$500,000 for STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education.
- \$4.8 million increase in funding for programs focused on reducing the Achievement Gap, including Targeted Intervention in Underperforming Schools, MCAS Low Score Support, and School Breakfast Programs.
- Early Education and Care program funding was maintained at fiscal year 2011 levels.

Early Education and Care

Early Education and Care (EEC) is a vital component of addressing the achievement gap, and is level funded from fiscal year 2011 to fiscal year 2012. This budget reflects the commitment to early education and care by continuing to invest in the Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) and Head Start grant programs. It continues to support child care access to quality after school and day care programs for children within the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Transitional Assistance, and other qualified low income eligible families.

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Recognizing that the work of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) is crucial to closing the achievement gap, this budget provides a \$4.8 million increase in funding from fiscal year 2011 to fiscal year 2012, with the below programs receiving additional funding. Included in this \$4.8 million is \$3 million in funding to the Executive Office of Education (EOE) to support all achievement gap programs. This funding at the EOE level will allow flexibility to support interagency efforts coordinated by the Secretary of Education, including, but not limited to:

- Early literacy initiatives jointly administered by the ESE and EEC;
- Initiatives to improve instructional quality for student sub-groups at most risk of low achievement, especially English Language Learners;
- Dropout prevention and alternative education programs;
- Mentoring assistance;
- The quality rating and improvement system initiative administered by EEC; and
- Support for school turnaround efforts.

<i>PROGRAM</i>	FY11 GAA	FY12 H.1
Institutional Schools	7,475,804	7,507,038
School Breakfast Program	4,121,215	4,411,611
MCAS Low-Scoring Student Support	9,094,804	9,655,545
Intervention in Underperforming Schools	6,740,746	7,692,193
EOE Achievement Gap Support	0	3,000,000
Total	27,432,569	32,266,387

In addition to the increased funding for the above programs, all achievement gap focused programs administered through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education received level funding from fiscal year 2011 to fiscal year 2012. In addition to state funded initiatives, in fiscal year 2011, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education was awarded three significant grants from the United States Department of Education that will allow Massachusetts to work to further narrow the achievement gap. These include Race to the Top (\$250 million over 4 years), High School Graduation Initiative grant (\$15 million over 5 years), and the Longitudinal

Data Systems grant (\$12 million). These initiatives are in progress and will be supported by current programs within the state's schools and education departments.

Higher Education

The fiscal year 2012 budget invests more than \$815 million in the public colleges and universities, providing campuses the same level of state supported, non-federal funding as in fiscal year 2011. This funding level accounts for out-of-state tuition that will be retained at campuses. This budget also fully maintains current funding for scholarships, with \$88 million provided through the Office of Student Financial Assistance at the Department of Higher Education.

The Governor's H.1 budget recommendation also establishes a \$7.5 million incentive fund at the DHE to encourage financial and operational efficiency at UMass, the state universities and colleges, and the community colleges. This fund will provide incentives to campuses to encourage these independent agencies to advance the Administration's policy values and to adopt fiscal improvement and accountability measures that will lower costs, encourage collaboration, and increase efficiency.

Prepared by Molly Bench, Executive Office for Administration and Finance ·

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For more information contact: contactanf@massmail.state.ma.us (617) 727-2040