



V. Education and funding for it

Massachusetts has a history of being a leader in education. However, K-12 education, early education and care, and public higher education are all seriously underfunded today in our Commonwealth. Governor Baker has done nothing to address this significant underfunding of education across the age spectrum. His lack of vision and failed leadership in education policy for Massachusetts, where a highly educated workforce drives our economy, make it clear that he is first and last a Republican whose support for public education is trumped by his low taxes, small government philosophy. Baker is not the leader Massachusetts needs if we are to fulfill our commitment to educating *ALL* our children to lead the economy of the future and to have fulfilling lives.¹

A. Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)

1. **In his 2019 fiscal year budget, Governor Baker proposed that EEC receive \$591 million, a 2.4% increase, just barely keeping up with inflation.** In each of the four budgets that the Governor has prepared, funding for EEC has barely kept up with inflation, **despite a significant waitlist for children (over 19,000 as-of July 2018)** who need financial assistance for early education and care. In addition, **early care and education teachers are paid less than half of what public school kindergarten teachers make**, despite the critical impact they have on young children and growing consensus that they should have the same training and credentials as public school teachers. (Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, 2/2/18, “Analyzing the Governor’s Budget for FY 2019”; Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, 7/26/18, “Highlights of the Legislature’s FY 2019 Budget”)
2. **In 2017, Governor Baker vetoed \$2.7 million of funding for EEC** including all funding (\$1 million) for Reach Out and Read (which provides books to poor children in pediatricians’ offices) and half of the funding (\$1.25 million) for consultation to child care programs to help them serve children with serious behavior problems. The Democratic legislature overrode all of Baker’s vetoes. (Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center,

¹ When state revenues took an unexpected jump, probably due to one-time effects of federal tax changes, the Democratic legislature adjusted the fiscal year 2019 budget increasing EEC funding by \$38 million, DESE funding by \$57 million, and higher education funding by \$28 million. Gov. Baker signed the bill, implicitly acknowledging that public education in the Commonwealth has been (and is) sorely underfunded.

B. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE, K-12 education)

1. **In his 2019 fiscal year budget, Governor Baker proposed that DESE receive \$4.87 billion, a 2.5% increase, just barely keeping up with inflation.** Sixty percent of the state’s school systems would receive an increase of less than 1% for the 2018-2019 school year; Holyoke and Southbridge, which are in state receivership because of poor performance, would get only 0.2% increases. This funding level does next to nothing to address the findings of the Massachusetts Foundation Budget Review Commission 2015 report which documented significant underfunding of K-12 education. In 1993, Massachusetts passed a major, innovative overhaul of its K-12 education system, including a revamped formula for state funding of local school systems. The 2015 report found that the 1993 formula was out-of-date, resulting in significant underfunding of local school systems by the state. An analysis by the MA Budget and Policy Center focused on two specific areas of serious underfunding: a) health insurance and other benefits for teachers and staff, and b) special education. For the 2016-2017 school year, this analysis estimated costs for these two areas were underfunded by \$2.63 billion. This has happened because the formula’s inflation factor for health insurance costs has been too low and because it has underestimated the number children requiring special education services and the severity of their needs. (Vaznis, J., 4/2/18, “Modest state aid increase leaves many school systems strapped,” The Boston Globe; Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, 2/2/18, “Analyzing the Governor’s Budget for FY 2019”; Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, 7/26/18, “Highlights of the Legislature’s FY 2019 Budget”; Jones, C., Berger, N., & Hatch, R., 7/18/18, “Building an education system that works for everyone: Funding reforms to help all our children thrive,” Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center; Barrett, L., “Baker’s budget proposal shortchanges public education,” MTA Today)
2. Moreover,
 - a) Baker eliminated a small grant program (\$250,000) for English Language Learners in Gateway Cities.
 - b) Baker cut the After School and Out-of-School Grants program by 44% to \$2.0 million.
3. **Governor Baker’s budget proposals in each of his previous three budgets had only small increases in funding for K-12 education; they were less than the growth in state revenue and barely kept up with inflation.** Adjusted for inflation, state funding for our schools is below what it was in 2002. Many school systems find the portion of their costs covered by state funding is shrinking each year. Because of this and limitations on local funding, many schools are in budget-cutting mode year after year and many are increasing

class sizes. To limit the damage, schools are having to rely increasingly on parent fees and town-wide votes to override Proposition 2 ½'s property tax limit, a challenging undertaking for any city or town. (Vaznis, J., 4/2/18, "Modest state aid increase leaves many school systems strapped," The Boston Globe)

In 2017, Baker vetoed \$7.3 million including \$2.44 million (17%) from DESE administration, \$1.3 million from After School and Out of School grants (38%), 67% of the College and Career Readiness line item, and 100% of the English Language Learners in Gateway Cities and the Innovation Schools line items. The Democratic legislature overrode all of Baker's vetoes. (Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, 12/6/17, "The State Budget for FY 2018 Including Veto Overrides")

4. **Brockton and Worcester are considering a lawsuit against Baker and the state for underfunding K-12 education.** Urban school districts and schools in low income communities are particularly hard hit by the lack of state funds. Many school systems are having to cut staff, increase class sizes, increase fees for families, and ask voters to increase funding from local property taxes. (Vaznis, J., 4/2/18, "Modest state aid increase leaves many school systems strapped," The Boston Globe)

C. Charter Schools

1. **Governor Baker supports the expansion of K-12 charter schools** and actively worked to expand the number of charter schools in Massachusetts by passing Question 2 on the ballot in November 2016. Question 2 **was defeated with 62% of MA voters voting against it.** It would have allowed up to 12 new charter schools per year in perpetuity. In 2016, \$450 million per year of state funding for public schools was being diverted to charter schools and this amount is growing each year. Increasing the number of charter schools as the ballot question proposed would have allowed this figure to grow by an additional \$100 million each year. Local public schools lose funding for each student that leaves the district schools to attend a charter school. The average cost of a student in the district goes to the charter school, but any savings from having a student leave are minimal. For example, if two students leave from each of the 12 grades, the school system can't reduce the number of teachers or classrooms. But with 24 students gone, it will lose roughly \$264,000 - \$300,000 of funding (\$11,000 - \$12,500 per student). Charter schools serve a smaller percentage of English language learners and special needs students than the public schools of the local district. The special needs students the charters do serve typically have less severe needs than those in the public schools. This means the public schools, with reduced resources, are left to serve a more challenged, more expensive to educate population than the charter schools. **Governor Baker should make increased funding for our public schools, as**

identified by the Foundation Budget Review Commission, his priority rather than increasing the number of charter schools, which divert funding from our public schools. (Schuster, L., 4/6/16, “Charter school funding, explained,” MA Budget and Policy Center)

2. **Governor Baker’s budget underfunds by an estimated \$73.4 million reimbursements to public schools that lose students and funding to charter schools.** Fiscal year 2019 projections from the Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) find that the state’s funding only provides a little over half of the amount called for by the state’s reimbursement formula. This shortfall is an increase from the \$56.1 million shortage in FY17. The shortfall is likely to grow as Baker level funds the reimbursements while the number of charter school students is growing. (MA Budget and Policy Center, 2/2/18, “Analyzing the Governor's Budget for FY 2019”)

Boston will receive \$21 million in reimbursement for funding lost to charter schools under Governor Baker’s FY19 budget proposal. This is \$27 million less than it should receive under the state’s formula. Boston’s reimbursement has been under-funded by \$100 million over the previous five years. Boston is paying \$175 million to charter schools in the 2017-2018 school year and projects that will grow to \$195 million next year, while the state’s reimbursement under Governor Baker’s proposal will decrease by \$4 million. (Crimaldi, L., 2/7/18, “Walsh says state not giving enough aid to Boston Schools,” The Boston Globe)

D. Higher Education

1. **In his 2019 fiscal year budget, Governor Baker proposed that higher education receive \$1.19 billion, a 0.6% increase, well below the rate of inflation.** Meanwhile, average tuition increases for the 2017-2018 academic year were 5% at four-year schools and 4% at community colleges. Students are graduating with increasing amounts of student debt because of the lack of state funding. (Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, 2/2/18, “Analyzing the Governor’s Budget for FY 2019”; Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, 7/26/18, “Highlights of the Legislature’s FY 2019 Budget”; Barrett, L., Winter 2018, “Baker’s budget proposal shortchanges public education,” MTA Today)
2. **In 2017, Baker vetoed \$7.7 million** including over 50% of the department’s \$4 million administration line item. The Democratic legislature overrode all Baker’s vetoes. (Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, 12/6/17, “The State Budget for FY 2018 Including Veto Overrides”)

3. **College affordability, even at public colleges and universities in Massachusetts, is a stumbling block for many students and parents.** Massachusetts is not adequately addressing this, despite the recognition that its economy is dependent on a highly educated workforce and that graduates of MA public colleges are likely to stay in MA and contribute to its economy. State higher education funding has fallen by 15 percent since 2001, from \$1.4 billion to \$1.2 billion in fiscal year 2019 (adjusted for inflation), even as enrollment has increased. This **reduction in state funding has led to deep cuts in scholarships and increases in tuition and fees.** As a result, between 2004 and 2016, the **average student loan debt for graduates of Massachusetts' public four-year colleges and universities rose by 77 percent, faster than in any other state in the country except Delaware.** Graduates of state universities start their careers saddled with an average of \$30,250 in debt, just 7% less than the \$32,355 owed by graduates of private colleges in Massachusetts. Today, many students must both work and borrow the maximum amount in federal student loans to afford public universities in Massachusetts. (Fernandes, D., 3/1/18, "Mass. students borrowing more to attend public universities," The Boston Globe; Thompson, J., 3/1/18, "Educated and encumbered: Student debt is rising with higher education funding falling in Massachusetts," Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center)

4. **The Baker administration's failure of leadership and accountability was on display again in the sudden closing of Mount Ida College and the \$75 million purchase of its campus by the University of Massachusetts (UMass) at Amherst.** The University of Massachusetts Board of Trustees approved the deal that left Mount Ida students suddenly adrift and provided UMass Amherst a valuable outpost just a few miles from the financially challenged UMass Boston campus. No one has explained why the UMass Boston campus couldn't have served the needs of UMass Amherst for a location near Boston or why the \$75 million would not have been better used to support UMass Boston's needs. The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education denied any responsibility and pointed its finger at the leadership of UMass and Mount Ida. (Vennoch, J., 4/25/18, "Being 'shocked' isn't enough. Baker needs to fix Mount Ida mess," The Boston Globe; Guerra, C., 5/18/18, "UMass Amherst closes deal on acquisition of Mount Ida College," The Boston Globe)