



October 21, 2019

Representative Robert A. DeLeo, Speaker  
Massachusetts House of Representatives  
State House, Room 356  
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Aaron Michlewitz, Chairman  
House Committee on Ways and Means  
State House, Room 243  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Speaker DeLeo and Chairman Michlewitz,

I am writing on behalf of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce to urge you to retain and strengthen the accountability measures included in H.4137, the Student Opportunity Act ("SOA"). The Chamber believes strong and transparent accountability measures are necessary to close achievement gaps.

[Throughout ongoing Chapter 70 reform discussions, the Chamber's guiding principles](#) have been the need to close well-documented and persistent achievement gaps and guarantee that any investment will include the proven changes necessary to ensure results. With these principles in mind, the Chamber supports the House Committee on Ways and Means' approach to link necessary accountability measures with increased spending in the SOA.

The Senate's S.2365 severely diluted several accountability measures to the detriment of students across the Commonwealth. Robust accountability measures are essential to supporting underperforming schools and closing achievement gaps. Without guideposts and accountability measures for districts and the state, there is no assurance that the new spending included in the SOA will close achievement gaps.

To remedy this, the Chamber strongly urges you to retain the following accountability measures in H.4137 which were weakened during Senate debate:

- Require district targets to close achievement gaps to align with state targets. With the current language, districts will not set aggressive targets for which they will be held accountable.
- Allow the Commissioner to review the quality of three-year district plans and to require districts to amend plans that are not in compliance with the SOA.
- Require district plans to address each of the best practices listed in the SOA and outline the decision-making process for choosing which practices to use in order to close achievement gaps.

In addition, we urge you to include additional mechanisms to compel districts to make progress toward targets and annual benchmarks for eliminating achievement gaps.

Thank you for your consideration. The Chamber appreciates your continued focus on reforming the state's Chapter 70 education funding program and your steadfast focus on closing student achievement gaps. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James E. Rooney".

James E. Rooney  
President and CEO

cc: Members of the Massachusetts House of Representatives