



City of Everett
Office of the Mayor
Carlo DeMaria, Jr.
484 Broadway
EVERETT, MASSACHUSETTS 02149

PRESS RELEASE

Monday, May 22, 2017

MAYOR DEMARIA ADVOCATES FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

On May 23rd, Mayor Carlo DeMaria signed onto a letter from the Metro Mayors Coalition supporting a \$12.5 million line item in the FY18 Massachusetts State budget to provide free or reduced lunch to students who are participating in SNAP, TAFDC, foster care or MassHealth. Mayor DeMaria strongly believes this funding is critical to providing all students with the support they need to get the education that they deserve.

Dear Senator Spilka:

*Since 2015, several communities in the Metro Mayors Coalition have suffered significant financial impact due to changes in the methodology used to count low-income students. We are grateful that you allocated \$12.5 million in line item 7061-0008 in the FY18 budget to help with this problem as the Commonwealth continues to search for a long term solution to this issue. **This funding is critical to our communities and will ensure that they receive the funding necessary to provide all of our students with the education they deserve.***

In 2015, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) began the process of changing how it calculated low income students. Instead of having parents or guardians complete a form to determine if their children were eligible for free or reduced lunch, DESE now works with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to find which students are participating in SNAP, TAFDC, foster care or MassHealth. When a student is matched in the database, they are categorized as economically disadvantaged. Unfortunately, this new method misses many students who are in the school system and are economically disadvantaged because it fails to account for those low-income students who are not accessing social services – these are often homeless students and newly arrived immigrants, both legal and undocumented. This current approach to counting low-income students leaves certain of our most financially challenged communities with a significant financial gap.

In FY17, funding was approved to hold the negatively impacted municipalities harmless, and many communities were indeed made whole through this process. However, that funding was included in the Foundation Budget, not in addition to it. We hope that the funding provided by Senate Ways and Means in 7061-0008 to hold these communities

harmless from the change in counting low income students will be endorsed during the Senate's budget debate, but allocated outside of Chapter 70 funding.

The financial impact of this problem is only exacerbated by our Charter School assessments and reimbursements, an issue which affects almost all of the communities in the Metro Mayors Coalition. Our communities' charter school assessments have been growing exponentially in recent years, while at the same time the charter school reimbursement account has been underfunded. We are deeply sensitive to the constrained budget of this fiscal year, and we look forward to partnering with you in the future to develop a long-term solution to the charter school reimbursement issue and to the question of overall school funding.

Before we can get to that long-term solution, however, we hope that you will help to ensure that children in these affected communities do not suffer because of a flawed counting methodology. We urge you to maintain the additional \$12.5 million in funding to hold these affected communities harmless, and to maintain this funding source separate from Chapter 70 funding.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out Lizzi Weyant, MAPC's Government Affairs Manager, at 617-933-0703 or eweyant@mapc.org.

###

For additional press information please contact:

Tom Philbin

Director of Communications

City of Everett

484 Broadway

Everett, MA 02149

617-309-8038

Tom.Philbin@ci.everett.ma.us