



THE GENERAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS
JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Student Opportunity Act

Fact Sheet

September 19, 2019

The Student Opportunity Act makes an unprecedented \$1.5 billion new investment in Massachusetts public education, ensuring public schools have adequate resources to provide a high-quality education to students across the state, regardless of zip code or income level. Assuming inflation, over time the bill could provide an estimated \$2.2 billion.

The Student Opportunity Act significantly helps school districts that serve high percentages of low-income students. At the same time, school districts across the Commonwealth will benefit from updates to the existing funding formula, along with increased state investment in other vital education aid programs such as transportation, school buildings and special education.

These new investments, coupled with policy updates, are designed to monitor and measure progress, support effective approaches to closing opportunity gaps, and deliver results for all students.

This bill modernizes the K-12 education funding and policy landscape in four areas:

1. **Fully implements the recommendations of the Foundation Budget Review Commission (FBRC) to ensure that the school funding formula provides adequate and equitable funding to all districts across the state.** Provides an estimated \$1.4 billion in new Chapter 70 aid over and above inflation when fully implemented over the next seven years. The foundation budget is updated as follows:
 - Estimates school districts' employee and retiree **health care** costs using up to date health insurance trend data collected by the state's Group Insurance Commission (GIC).
 - **Increases special education** enrollment and cost assumptions to more accurately reflect district enrollment.

Commented [WR1]: Below are a sample of Ribas Associates programs that will assist you with meeting the planning and execution requirements of the Student Opportunity Act.

Commented [WR2]: Three former superintendents and assistant superintendents who have studied the Act and can help you write your plan for submission to ESE.

Experienced consultants to work with district personnel analyzing the assessment data from MCAS and other standardized assessments, student work, and district developed assessments to provide insight into the factors leading to achievement gaps. They can also assist with developing or revising district assessments that provide data on the closing of achievement gaps.

Commented [WR3]: Dr. Paul Ash's closing achievement gaps workshop program for administrators and teacher leaders working on closing the district's achievement gaps. The program includes an alignment with Dr. Ash's 15 steps to closing achievement gaps with the criteria outlined in the new law. Subsequent to the workshop Dr. Ash will work with the district to develop its plan for submission by the April 1 date set by ESE. Where outside training or coaching is needed the plan may include some of the programs noted below.

Consultants who can lead your Student Opportunity Act Committee meetings charged with implementing the components of your plan.

Commented [WR4]: Our six module live or online program in special education has been approved by ESE. Its intent is to train general education teachers to better meet the needs of special needs and 504 students in the regular classroom. It has two objectives. The first is to keep IEP students in class because it is a better service model. The second is to decrease the number of referrals because general educators can better meet the needs of students with mild special needs without putting them on IEPs.

Ribas Associates has developed a module series that builds on the program above and addresses the SEL needs of students as well as their academic needs.

The full special education and ELL series can be provided to a district as a graduate course.

Dr. Brady's co-teaching program (laid out in detail in chapter 10 of our book *Instructional Practices That Maximize Student Achievement*) is an excellent complement to that training and to Dr. Ash's achievement gap training and consulting.

Our *Instructional Practices* book has essays at the end of each chapter explaining how teachers can use the content in the chapter with special education and ELL students. **Chapter 7 is specifically about meeting the needs of low SES students. Chapter 9 is about engaging their parents.** Chapter 10 is about co-teaching to better meet the needs of ELL, SEL, and Low SES students.

Ribas Associates book *Instructional Practices that Maximize Student Achievement* (chapters 4,5,7 and 10) and its **accompanying training programs for addressing the needs of low SES, special education, students of color, and ELL students.**

Experienced consultants to work with district personnel analyzing the assessment data such as MCAS and other standardized assessments, student work, and district developed assessments...

- **Increases funding for English learners (EL)** that is differentiated by grade level to reflect the greater resources required to educate our older EL students.
- Addresses the needs of districts educating high concentrations of **students from low-income households** by:
 - Providing additional funding based on the share of low-income students in each district; districts educating the largest percentage of low-income students will receive an additional increment equal to 100% of the base foundation;
 - Returning the definition of low-income to 185% of the Federal Poverty Level, as opposed to the 133% level that has been used in recent years.

2. Provides additional state financial support to help public schools and communities deliver a high-quality education to every student by:

- Increasing foundation rates for **guidance and psychological services** that will support expanded social-emotional learning **supports** and mental health services.
- Fully funding **charter tuition reimbursements**, which provide transitional aid to help districts when students leave to attend charter schools, within a three year timetable.
- Expanding the **special education circuit breaker**, which reimburses districts for extraordinary special education costs, to include transportation costs in addition to instructional costs, phased in over four years.
- Lifting the annual cap on **Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA)** spending for school building construction/renovation by \$200 million (from \$600 million to \$800 million), enabling more projects across the state to be accepted into the MSBA funding pipeline.

3. Implements policy updates designed to maximize the impact of new funding in improving student outcomes and closing opportunity gaps.

- Establishes the **21st Century Education Trust Fund** to provide flexible funding to districts and schools pursuing creative **approaches** to student learning and district improvement.
- School districts, in collaboration with parents and community stakeholders, must develop and make publicly available **plans for closing opportunity gaps**. These plans will include specific goals and metrics to track success.
- The Secretary of Education will collect and publish data on **student preparedness in each district and high school for post-graduate success** in college and the workforce.

Commented [WR5]: Our five module ELL program approved by ESE. The program is available live or online. This program can also be joined with the SEL program.

The *Instructional Practices* book also has essays at the end of each chapter that explains how to use the content in the chapter with ELL students.

We are an approved provider of the SEI course for both general educators and vocational educators. We have run these courses a total of 9 times making us one of the most experienced providers in the state.

Ribas Associates has an approved program that incorporates ELL, special education, social-emotional learning, and differentiated instruction. It addresses most of the professional development requirements found in the Student Opportunity Act. This program can be taught as a series of workshops spread over more than one year or as a 4 credit graduate course.

All Ribas Associates programs may be taken as **online, blended, or all live**. The programs also may be taught by our instructors or by in-district trainers trained by our instructors.

Commented [WR6]: Our book *Instructional Practices That Maximize Student Achievement* is the only book on research based instruction that contains a full chapter on working with low SES students and another on working with low SES families.

Ribas Associates' book *Social-Emotional Learning in the Home* has been used in school districts to run parent book groups lead by parent leaders. The book is written so no training is needed to run book groups. All the components of successful book groups are ...

Commented [WR7]: Ribas Associates has three books that are endorsed on the CASEL website. One is for teachers and clinicians, one is for parents, and one is for school administrators. CASEL lists them in alphabetical order by author so when you go to the link you need to scroll down to the Rs.
<https://casel.org/resources-books/>

Commented [WR8]: Ribas Associates is the leading provider of social-emotional learning training and coaching in Massachusetts. Seventy school districts and universities in Massachusetts and nearly 150 nationwide use Ribas Associates programs and books to implement SEL.

Commented [WR9]: CALL US ABOUT CUSTOMIZING A PROGRAM TO MEET YOUR SPECIFIC NEEDS- 781-551-9120.

Commented [WR10]: Our **Differentiated Instruction and Social-Emotional Learning course** was funded by ESE for 5 sections a year online for 9 years with federal money (until the federal money was cut). ESE chose our program in a national RFR because the course addresses research based general education strategies, special education, poverty, and ELL in one course with one textbook. Click the link to see why the book was chosen by ESE over the *Skillful Teacher* and other similar books in their national search ...

Commented [WR11]: Our SEL books for teachers and parents have been endorsed by CASEL and are on their website. Our new educator evaluation book has also been endorsed by CASEL because it is the only one that addresses the SEL of the adults in a substantive way. Our supervision and evaluation trainings now incorporate the skills for administrators to assess and develop the SEL skills of adults.

- Establishes a **Data Advisory Commission** to help improve the use of data at the state, district, and school levels to inform strategies that strengthen teaching, learning and resource allocation.

4. **Identifies education policy areas requiring further analysis.**

- The Department of Revenue (DOR) and DESE are directed to analyze the method of **determining required local contributions** in the Chapter 70 formula for the purpose of improving equity, predictability and accuracy.
- Establishes a **Rural Schools Commission** to investigate the unique challenges facing rural and regional school districts with low and declining enrollment. The Commission will make recommendations for further updates to help impacted districts and communities.
- Creates a review of the MSBA program to assess whether or not the program guidelines need to be updated to meet district needs.

Commented [WR12]: Ribas Associates has significant experience with rural school districts. This includes programs funded jointly by several districts for in-district trainers. We have had as many as five districts participate in one program making the cost to each district very small.