

# A BIG STEP FORWARD FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY IN MASSACHUSETTS

As organizations committed to educational equity, we commend Chairman Lewis, Chairwoman Peisch, and all members of the Joint Committee on Education, as well as Senate President Spilka and House Speaker DeLeo for taking a critical step forward for economically disadvantaged students, students of color, English learners, and students with disabilities in Massachusetts. The Committee's proposed Student Opportunity Act sets up our schools and districts to dramatically improve learning experiences and outcomes for all students, but especially for students that have been underserved in our state for too long.

The bill not only addresses long-standing funding inequities between the Commonwealth's highest need and wealthier districts, but prompts all districts to take critical steps to address persistent disparities in opportunity and achievement. Specifically, the bill:

- Increases investment in Massachusetts schools by \$1.5 billion over 7 years and targets that additional funding to the highest need districts
- Requires the Commissioner of Education to set clear goals for reducing disparities in achievement between student groups
- Requires all districts to develop plans, in consultation with parents and community stakeholders, for how they will meet those goals. These plans must describe the evidence-based strategies districts will implement to address achievement disparities and the measures they will use to track progress
- Takes steps to improve transparency and use of data in district and school decision-making.

We urge lawmakers to pass the Student Opportunity Act and look forward to working with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, district leaders, educators, students, families, and advocates to ensure meaningful implementation and continue to advance educational equity.

