



Joint Committee on Education

Testimony on School Finance Legislation—March 22, 2019
Submitted by: JD Chesloff, Executive Director

Chairman Lewis, Chairwoman Peisch, and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on H.70 and the other pieces of legislation before you relative to the financing of the state's public schools. The Roundtable, a public policy organization comprised of CEOs and senior executives from large employers across the Commonwealth, is pleased to have signed on to a letter submitted to the Committee by the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education articulating a series of principles for consideration as you craft school finance reform legislation. The purpose of this testimony is to highlight some key messages of importance to our members.

As you know, dating back to the early 1990's, Massachusetts business leaders have been vocal advocates for public education and education reform. Central to that advocacy has been a key tenet: additional funding along with a commitment to standards, assessment, and accountability to ensure we reliably measure student progress. This formula has led to Massachusetts' students outperforming those from around the country. More important, however, is that Massachusetts students are being given the foundational educational tools to help them compete in a global economy. This is of primary concern to employers, and the Roundtable continues to support that tenet in any school finance reform legislation that is reported from Committee.

While Massachusetts continues to lead the nation in educational performance, however, achievement gaps continue to exist, particularly for low income children and those at risk. This threatens both the students as well as the workforce pipeline dependent on graduates with skills and foundational competencies necessary to drive the state's economy. As part of the next phase of school finance reform, the Roundtable urges that the Committee clearly identify the resources necessary to properly address this issue and ensure that a clear plan exists for allocating those resources to proven strategies targeted at closing the achievement gap.

The Roundtable believes that industry, government and education play a critical role in establishing the conditions for regional economic growth, and that partnerships among them is an important and proven strategy for success. Building upon these partnerships and making important investments in education, in a fiscally responsible way, with a continued focus on academic and career outcomes, form the foundation of the state's competitiveness into the future global economy. We remain ready to assist and engage with the Committee, as we have in the past, as you craft this next iteration of school finance reform legislation.