

Representative Lida E. Harkins
Room 343
State House
Boston, MA 02133

May 20, 2005

Fund The Future:
Restore Support for Education Now!

Dear Honorable Representative Harkins:

As a concerned parent in Dover, Massachusetts, I want to thank you very much for the support you've given us so far in education, particularly the \$50/student in Chapter 70 funding.

In addition, I am asking you to further your education support in the following areas:

- Include the cost of transportation for Special Education students in Circuit Breaker funding. We bear the full burden of paying for SPED student's transportation!
- Provide funds for costs related to MCAS testing – a mandated program outside of our control. Please provide additional funding, or do not mandate MCAS testing into additional grades until the state can provide funding relief.

Did you know?

- The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has reduced Chapter 70 aid to the town of Dover, and the Dover-Sherborn Regional School Districts by 20% since FY03 or by \$500,000; yet insurance and utilities have increased by more than 11%!
- The state is financing only a fraction of their required school foundations budgets, yet towns spend on average 20% more than their required foundation budget to provide adequate funding, while less than 10% of the suburban coalition's school budgets are funded by the state.
- When adjusted for inflation, the Governor's budget proposal for FY06 (House 1) is \$254.3 million below FY02. The amounts proposed for grants and reimbursements are 14% below FY01 levels.
- Massachusetts ranks 44th in the country in spending on elementary and secondary education as a share of personal income.
- The cuts in per pupil state education aid were greater in Massachusetts than anywhere else in the nation between FY02 and FY04 - dropping 14.3% in that time-frame.
- Massachusetts ranks 42nd among all states in the amount the state government contributes to public education.
- SPED costs continue to increase dramatically!

Thank you again for your hard work. I understand how difficult it is to respond to all the concerns of so many different constituents, but I appreciate a legislature who makes education a priority.

Respectfully,