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CITY OF AMESBURY
IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY FIVE

SPONSORED BY: Pamela Gilday **BILL No.** 2025-024
Pamela Gilday, District 1 Councilor

Nicholas Wheeler
Nicholas Wheeler, District 4 Councilor

A Resolution Requesting that the State Legislature Revisit and Revise the Chapter 70 Funding Formula to Improve Its Funding Equity Across All Public School Districts

Summary: This resolution seeks to improve Chapter 70 funding equity across all public school districts in the state of Massachusetts by requesting that the state legislature begin the process of investigating funding deficiencies and flaws in the current Chapter 70 formula, including in the Student Opportunity Act, and revisit and revise the Chapter 70 funding formula to make meaningful, equitable, and positive funding changes to benefit all public school districts state-wide.

WHEREAS, the Chapter 70 funding formula currently favors large municipalities and those with increasing student enrollment, leaving communities such as Amesbury that have static or diminishing enrollment eligible for only the bare minimum of Chapter 70 state funding, including the statutory \$30 per child, which is wholly inadequate to maintain quality school programs; and

WHEREAS, the Chapter 70 hold-harmless provision and current inflation index further erode state funding percentages for Amesbury's ever-increasing annual public school funding needs, placing further burden on the city's tax base at the expense of other critically important municipal funding needs; and

WHEREAS, as 2025-2027 projection plans were submitted last spring for the Student Opportunity Act of 2019 - which has provided no Chapter 70 funding relief to Amesbury - now is the ideal time to revisit and begin the process of revising the Chapter 70 formula to provide real and meaningful across-the-board district funding fairness and equity for ALL Massachusetts public school districts; and

WHEREAS, the pace of inflation and the rate at which public school district costs such as utilities and health insurance have increased, in addition to the fast-growing rate of increase in special needs education and supports for high-need students, the current Chapter 70 formula

– including the 2019 Student Opportunity Act adjustments – has not kept pace with real and actual school budget costs and the financial needs of districts in meeting those costs; and

WHEREAS, without meaningful change in how the state of Massachusetts helps offset the local district costs of public school education, many municipalities including Amesbury, will fall off that fiscal cliff and have a near-impossible way to climb back over it – to the detriment of current and future generations of Massachusetts public school students, their families, and our communities as a whole; now, therefore,

Be it Resolved by the City Council of the City of Amesbury assembled and by the authority of the same, as follows:

That the Amesbury City Council seeks to improve Chapter 70 funding equity across all public school districts in the state of Massachusetts by requesting that the state legislature begin the process of investigating funding deficiencies and flaws in the current Chapter 70 formula, including in the Student Opportunity Act, and revisit and revise the formula to make meaningful and positive state funding changes to benefit all public school districts state-wide.

That the Amesbury City Council requests that such a Chapter 70 formula bill to revisit and revise the Chapter 70 funding formula be sponsored, co-sponsored, and/or otherwise supported by Amesbury's state delegation of State House Representative Adrienne Ramos, State House Representative Dawne Shand, and State House Senator Barry Finegold,

That the Amesbury City Council requests that concerned Amesbury residents contact their state house representatives in support of revising the Chapter 70 formula to make meaningful, and positive funding changes to benefit all public school districts state-wide, especially districts such as Amesbury.

References:

Missing the Mark: How Chapter 70 Education Aid Distribution Benefits Wealthier School Districts and Widens Equity Gaps – Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce – September 10, 2020 - <https://bostonchamber.com/policy-insights/missing-the-mark-how-chapter-70-education-aid-distribution-benefits-wealthier-school-districts-and-widens-equity-gaps/>

Resolution Supporting an Enduring Fiscal Partnership Between Cities and Towns and the Commonwealth in Fiscal 2025 and Beyond (2024) – MMA – January 22, 2024 - <https://www.mma.org/advocacy/resolution-supporting-an-enduring-fiscal-partnership-between-cities-and-towns-and-the-commonwealth-in-fiscal-2025-and-beyond-2024/>

Chapter 70: Understanding the Funding Formula for Education – MMA – March 20, 2024 - <https://www.mma.org/resource/chapter-70-understanding-the-funding-formula-for-education/>

Urge your legislators to take action to fix a funding flaw hurting our schools – MTA – March 27, 2024 - <https://massteacher.org/news/2024/03/chapter70>

What's Driving the Cost of Public Education? - MMA - January 24, 2025 - <https://www.mma.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2025-C351-FridayWorkshop-CostPublicEducation.pdf>