

HOUSE No. 523

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Martha M. Walz

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying:

An Act reducing the dropout rate.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Martha M. Walz</i>	<i>8th Suffolk</i>
<i>Carlos Henriquez</i>	<i>5th Suffolk</i>
<i>Christopher G. Fallon</i>	<i>33rd Middlesex</i>
<i>Cory Atkins</i>	<i>14th Middlesex</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>
<i>Denise Andrews</i>	<i>2nd Franklin</i>
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>31st Middlesex</i>
<i>David M. Rogers</i>	<i>24th Middlesex</i>
<i>Carl M. Sciortino, Jr.</i>	<i>34th Middlesex</i>

HOUSE No. 523

By Ms. Walz of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 523) of Martha M. Walz and others for legislation to reduce the school dropout rate and assist students who have dropped out. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

An Act reducing the dropout rate.

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to increase the number of students in the Commonwealth who graduate from high school, therefore, it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 1 of chapter 76 of the General Laws, as amended by chapter 222 of
2 the acts of 2012, is hereby amended by inserting at the end of the third paragraph the following
3 sentence:- Notwithstanding the expectations that school districts set for student attendance and
4 the manner in which districts hold students accountable for their attendance, each district shall
5 ensure students have the opportunity within the same academic term to make up assignments and
6 earn credits for assignments missed due to unexcused and excused absences.

7 SECTION 2. Said chapter 76 is hereby further amended by inserting after section 21, as
8 added by section 9 of chapter 222 of the acts of 2012, the following section:-

9 Section 22. (a) Every school district with an annual dropout rate greater than 2% shall
10 develop a district-wide action plan designed to reduce the dropout rate and to assist students who
11 have dropped out of school and want to return to complete their high school education. Action
12 plans shall be submitted to the department of elementary and secondary education and shall
13 include, but not be limited to, the following content:

14 (1) the percentage by which the school district anticipates reducing the student
15 dropout rate and the timeline for achieving the reductions;

16 (2) the percentage by which the school district anticipates increasing the graduation
17 rate and student attendance rates in grades 8 to 12, inclusive, and the timeline for achieving the
18 increases;

19 (3) other objectives that the school district identifies that are designed to result in
20 improved dropout prevention, improved student attendance, and improved student engagement
21 and re-engagement within the school district;

22 (4) how the school district will measure success in achieving the goals and objectives
23 of the district-wide action plan;

24 (5) what steps school staff and parents will take to address the factors that indicate a
25 student is at risk of dropping out of school;

26 (6) a description of the outreach and referral strategies the school district will use for
27 students at risk of dropping out of school;

28 (7) a description of the strategies and actions the school district will undertake to re-
29 engage and re-enroll students who have dropped out of school;

30 (8) a description of the strategies and actions the school district will undertake to
31 increase parental involvement and support parents or guardians in more fully participating in the
32 activities of the school and the education of their child; and

33 (9) a comprehensive listing of alternative education options and other opportunities to
34 earn a diploma offered by the school district.

35 (b) Districts shall work with teams of community stakeholders to develop a
36 comprehensive approach for reducing the number of students who drop out of school and
37 increasing the number of students who graduate from high school. The comprehensive approach
38 shall include the district offering alternative options that enable students who have dropped out
39 to return and receive a full high school diploma. These options may be delivered directly by the
40 school district or by non-profits approved by the school district. The department of elementary
41 and secondary education shall publish guidance for school districts to consider when creating
42 their plans and provide technical assistance to enhance a district's ability to meet the diverse
43 needs of its student population.