



WORCESTER REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

FACT SHEET

Improving Access to Vocational-Technical Education

Vocational-technical schools (“voc-techs”) in Massachusetts are a respected and proven model that combines rigorous academics with real-world workforce preparation. The Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce supports legislation that invests in this model. This legislation provides a data-driven pathway to reviewing the admissions process while expanding funding to voc-tech schools to ensure that they continue to equip all eligible students with skills that strengthen them, whether in the workforce or in pursuit of further educational opportunities.

What would this legislative package do?

HD4510

- Establish a statewide vocational admissions task force to study voc-tech admissions practices, analyze state and district-level data and develop effective solutions.
- Pause implementation or enforcement of any new admissions regulations by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) until the task force completes its work.
- Maintain the high standards of the voc-tech model that prioritizes strong attendance, student safety and a clear interest among students in the program.
- Recognize the regional diversity of Massachusetts voc-tech districts and the varying financial and operational challenges that voc-tech schools would face through a statewide one-sized-fits-all admissions system.

H651/S358

- Calls for additional state funding to help voc-tech schools expand their programs, address regional demand and reduce the current waitlist of between 6,000 and 11,000 students.
- Enable better outreach and access to middle school students for voc-tech schools so that families are better equipped with information about the opportunities that these schools provide.

Why do these bills matter now?

- The Healey-Driscoll administration has proposed a lottery system – which will be voted on in May by DESE – that dramatically revises admissions requirements without solving the fundamental capacity issue.
- The lottery, as proposed, will exclude many students who are truly interested in, and well-prepared for, a voc-tech education while admitting others who are not.

Massachusetts needs greater funding and more seats for voc-tech schools to continue helping students from urban, suburban, and rural communities thrive.