

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE GENERAL COURT
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

April 7, 2009

The Abington School Committee
Abington Town Hall
500 Gliniewicz Way
Abington, MA 02351

Dear school committee members:

Thank you for bringing to our attention your letter to Governor Patrick of March 25th regarding his proposed distribution of a portion of Massachusetts' federal education recovery funds. Please know that we too are deeply concerned about the details of this announcement and the issues facing Abington's public schools.

While Governor Patrick does have sole authority to allocate this funding, it is important to note that the distribution he announced on March 19th assumes that the legislature will ultimately adopt a state budget identical to the one he proposed in January. These figures should therefore be viewed as an elaboration on the governor's budget proposal. I expect that substantial changes will be made to that proposal by the legislature.

As you know, the state's 1993 education reform law established "foundation budgets" for each school district, a minimum level of funding that each district must receive through a combination of state and local contributions. Under Governor Patrick's proposed budget, 166 districts receive a smaller state contribution than is required by this law. He intends to use this \$168 million to address that shortfall.

If various elements of the governor's budget plan are not adopted by the legislature exactly as proposed, the amount and distribution of federal recovery funds necessary to maintain foundation levels could vary considerably from the amount and distribution identified by the governor in March.

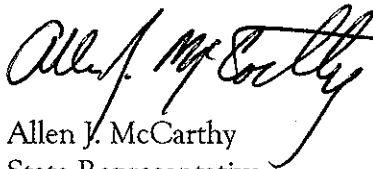
It is also important to note that this \$168 million is only a fraction of the \$1.88 billion in federal education recovery funds that Massachusetts is expected to receive. We in the legislature are working with the administration to ensure that this funding is distributed effectively and equitably.

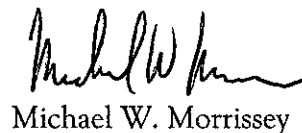
In total, Massachusetts is projected to receive nearly \$4 billion in federal stimulus funds between FY2009 and FY2011. This unprecedented infusion of federal funding is indicative of the grim financial challenges faced by states across the country.

There are several ways in which Abington will benefit from the federal stimulus program. Some funding will be distributed directly to cities and towns. For example, it was announced recently that Abington will receive \$316,776 in federal special education funds over the next 27 months. Other types of stimulus funding will bolster state spending accounts, freeing resources for local aid programs that might otherwise face unavoidable cuts.

Again, thank you for bringing your letter to our attention. Throughout this process, we will work with the administration, our colleagues in the legislature, and town officials to ensure that the communities we represent receive their fair share of this critical funding. As always, please do not hesitate to contact either of us with any questions or concerns.

Respectfully,


Allen J. McCarthy
State Representative


Michael W. Morrissey
State Senator