

## SENATE....No. 54.

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### Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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IN SENATE, February 5, 1852.

ORDERED, That the Committee on Education be instructed to inquire into the expediency of authorizing any town or district within the Commonwealth, to raise money for the support of high schools within the same.

Sent down for concurrence.

F. H. UNDERWOOD, *Clerk.*

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, February 6, 1852.

Concurred.

LEWIS JOSSELYN, *Clerk.*

## Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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IN SENATE, March 10th, 1852.

The Joint Committee on Education, to which was committed the order of the Senate of February 5, to inquire into the expediency of authorizing any town or district within the Commonwealth to raise money for the support of schools within the same, have attended to the subject, and

### REPORT:

That they find that an opinion prevails very extensively among School Committees, and those most practically conversant with the operations of our school system, in favor of abolishing the school districts, so far, at least, as regards the superintendence and management of the schools, and the employment of teachers is concerned. It is supposed, that by giving to one Committee the general superintendence of all the schools in the town, the benefits of education will be more equally distributed, and that the schools of the poorest district will be placed more nearly on a footing of equality with those of the wealthiest, than has heretofore been done. From the unanimity of sentiment on the subject, exhibited from year to year in the reports of the School Committees of the various towns, it is not unreasonable to suppose, that the plan of districts, as now established, will be changed for a system more conducive to the interests of education. Impressed with these views, and believing that the power asked for will have a tendency to perpetuate the district system, the Committee find the first important reason for the conclusion to which they have arrived. There are, however, other and weighty reasons for such a conclusion, independent of the

considerations alluded to, and they are so clearly and forcibly stated by the late Secretary of the Board of Education, in his Tenth Annual Report, that we annex them, as follows: "The establishment of such districts (districts having the power to tax themselves for the purposes of education) is contrary to the general policy of the State; and, though several efforts have been made, within a few years past, for the creation of similar districts in other towns, they have been unsuccessful. The objection urged against these applications, is briefly this:—If the populous and wealthy part of a town has power to tax itself for the support of schools, the strongest motive to make common cause *with the whole town*, for the same object, is taken away. The privileged part of the town can have the best of schools, though all the residue of it should have the poorest. The incorporated portion may have the preponderance in respect to wealth, and a majority of the voters. If so, the rest of the town would be at their mercy, and would be obliged to accept such schools as their charity would grant. The incorporated part, having incurred the expense of providing for its own schools, must be actuated by very high motives, to do for others as it had done for itself. The whole host of selfish impulses would be arrayed against a compliance with this great law of christian ethics. On the other hand, if the affluent and educated portion of the town can move no faster than its neighboring districts move, if the condition of its own improvement is, that the neighboring districts shall be improved also; then, whether animated by interested or disinterested motives, it must labor for the advancement of others, that it may secure its own."

The Committee, therefore, conclude, that no further legislation is necessary upon the subject of the order.

Respectfully submitted.

EDWARD L. KEYES, *Chairman.*

