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*Governor*



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*Lt. Governor*

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## **Baker-Polito Administration Proposes \$150 Million Investment in Public Education & School Safety Package**

*Funding will support school safety measures, community college scholarships, early college programs, and strengthen behavioral health services and prevention efforts*

**BOSTON** – The Baker-Polito Administration today filed legislation providing \$150 million across K-12 and higher education programs, including funds to support school safety, strengthen mental health programs in schools, provide additional pathways to higher education opportunities, and address substance misuse prevention, education and screening for students.

“These targeted investments will make our schools safer and provide our students the resources they need to access a great education,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “This supplemental budget includes resources for cities and towns to improve security measures in school buildings and boosts mental health resources for educators across the Commonwealth. Our administration looks forward to working with the Legislature to promptly approve this funding.”

“This bill will provide the Commonwealth’s students with improved access to mental health and support services, as well as training to report threats in schools,” **said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito**. “These new resources are important tools to improve school safety in our communities.”

The administration is proposing a wide-ranging \$72 million package to make school security upgrades in the Commonwealth’s schools and provide resources to students, staff, and first responders to better respond to threats within schools. Under this bill, each superintendent would report annually to the Department of Secondary and Elementary confirming whether they have a multi-hazard evacuation plan in place, as required by state law. In addition, they would report on any trainings, exercises, or simulations related to the plan that were conducted in the prior year.

This package includes:

- \$40 million in additional aid to school districts to hire additional social workers, mental health counselors and psychologists
- \$20 million in matching grants for security and communications upgrades in K-12 schools and at public colleges and universities
- \$4 million to provide training to School Resource Officers
- \$2.4 million to create a tip line to provide public safety and school personnel with timely information on potential risks
- \$2 million for a statewide “Say Something” campaign
- \$1 million for school safety training for educators, health officials, and first responders
- \$750,000 for the Safe and Supportive Schools Initiative
- \$500,000 for sharing best practices in emergency planning, threat assessment, and rapid response
- \$500,000 to create a school safety website

The supplemental budget also includes \$10 million for substance use prevention, education, and screening for school-aged young people as part of the Administration’s comprehensive opioid legislation, the CARE Act.

Earlier this session, the Baker-Polito Administration proposed a [second major legislative effort](#) to address the opioid crisis called the CARE Act. The bill is currently before the Legislature and proposes the creation of a statewide standing order for naloxone, increases access to treatment and recovery services including expanding the use of recovery coaches, and includes important provisions to educate youth in the classroom at a young age about the dangers of opioids.

The administration is also proposing several investments across K-12 and higher education programs, including programs that will increase access to post-secondary opportunities:

- \$30 million for targeted intervention and turnaround efforts aimed at closing student achievement gaps in districts with high concentrations of low income students
- \$15 million to fund scholarships for students attending community colleges to cover unmet tuition costs for students with financial need, as first proposed in the administration’s Fiscal Year 2019 budget proposal
- \$12.5 million for the Special Education Circuit Breaker
- \$7 million for regional school transportation costs
- \$3 million for early college grants to enable high school students to take college courses – typically in science, technology, engineering, and math – and earn credits at no cost to them before they graduate
- \$700,000 for tuition and fee waivers for children who turned 18 while in the care of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and enroll in college, and to children who have been adopted from DCF

The bill also provides new consumer protections for college students in Massachusetts by requiring public and private colleges and universities to report to the Department of

Higher Education any known financial liabilities or risks to the long-term financial viability of the institution.

“We know, in talking to school superintendents to develop these proposals, that school safety is dependent on much more than better locks and communications systems. Our goal is to provide more support to schools, not only for better security systems, but also to enable them to employ the expertise of counselors, mental health professionals and social workers that can help students, and spot trouble signs before there is a tragedy,” **Education Secretary James Peyser said.**

“It is critical that our interventions develop and implement strategies that proactively address the behavioral health needs of youth to improve their quality of life in the classroom and at home,” **said Health and Human Services Secretary Marylou Sudders.** “No effort to address school safety is sufficient without addressing the behavioral needs of our youth.”

“This budget funds a series of steps to enhance the safety of students in the Commonwealth,” **said Secretary of Public Safety and Security Dan Bennett.** “While it is not possible to prepare for every possible threat, this comprehensive combination of preventive and educational measures puts us in a strong position to bolster student safety going forward.”

The education funding was filed as part of a supplemental budget bill for Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) that also provides significant funding for local infrastructure improvements and allows for a deposit into the Commonwealth’s budget reserves. The FY18 supplemental budget consists of \$575 million in supplemental appropriations, at a net state cost of \$514 million. After accounting for certain outside sections, the total fiscal impact of the bill is \$583 million.

“The Baker-Polito Administration continues to take a disciplined approach to spending taxpayer resources, targeting surplus funds in ways that will deliver meaningful benefits while protecting the budget’s long-term structural balance,” **Administration and Finance Secretary Michael Heffernan said.**

Other supplemental budget highlights:

- \$94 million to fund ratified and anticipated collective bargaining agreements
- \$50 million for cities and towns to fund local road and bridge maintenance and improvement projects
- \$35.4 million for snow and ice removal costs in FY18
- \$30 million for municipal clean water projects
- \$10.1 million for the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission to provide employment assistance services to clients
- \$10 million transfer to the Life Sciences Investment Fund
- \$8 million for multi-year municipal police training needs
- \$5.9 million for tuition and fee reimbursements for National Guard members
- \$5 million in transitional housing assistance for hurricane evacuees from Puerto Rico, as FEMA assistance ends

- \$1.5 million for Community Compact Efficiency and Regionalization grants

The bill will close the books on FY18, which ended June 30. Preliminary tax collections for FY18 are expected to be approximately \$1 billion above budgeted estimates. About half of that amount will be transferred to the stabilization fund, bringing the estimated balance of that fund to nearly \$1.8 billion. The bill allocates an additional \$48 million to help pay down the Commonwealth's unfunded retiree health benefit obligations.

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