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For Immediate Release

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House approves proposal to boost education funding

Bill will help communities address special education, health insurance costs

BOSTON – State Representative Hannah Kane, R-Shrewsbury, is backing a proposal to deliver additional education aid to cities and towns to help address rising special education and health insurance costs.

House Bill 4730, An Act relative to findings of the Foundation Budget Review Commission, calls for adjusting the state's Chapter 70 formula to increase funding for local school districts by approximately \$500 million over a five-year period, beginning in 2019. The bill was approved by the House of Representatives on a unanimous vote of 148-0 on July 11.

A 2015 study by the Foundation Budget Review Commission (FBRC) estimated the state is underfunding public education by as much as \$1-\$2 billion per year. House Bill 4730 seeks to implement some of the Commission's key recommendations in an attempt to establish a more equitable funding formula moving forward.

In addition to factoring in fixed costs related to special education services and health care benefits for school employees and retirees, House Bill 4730 directs the Department of Education to hire an independent research consultant to provide recommendations by December 31, 2018 on how the Chapter 70 formula can be adjusted to better account for the number of English-language learners and low-income students in each school district.

"Supporting all of Shrewsbury and Westborough's students and championing our schools continues to be a top priority of mine," stated Representative Kane. "I am proud to support this legislation, which takes material and thoughtful initial steps to implement key recommendations from the FRBC. I remain wholly committed to this effort, and am eager to further enhance the quality of education in Massachusetts going forward."

House Bill 4730 also requires the state Education Commissioner to create a data advisory commission to streamline school reporting so that resources can be more effectively allocated at the local level. The commission will be responsible for filing an updated report every year by December 1.

The bill now moves to the Senate, which previously approved its own education funding proposal on May 10.

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