

SENATE No. 409

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Paul W. Mark

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act to establish a community schools special legislative commission.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Paul W. Mark

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

*Berkshire, Hampden, Franklin and
Hampshire*

SENATE No. 409

By Mr. Mark, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 409) of Paul W. Mark for legislation to establish a community schools special legislative commission to investigate community schools and to make recommendations regarding the adoption of community schools across the commonwealth. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

An Act to establish a community schools special legislative commission.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. (a) As used in this section, the following words shall, unless the context
2 clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:

3 (i) “Community School”, a public school that utilizes a community school coordinator to
4 facilitate the establishment of a set of strategic partnerships between the school and other
5 community resources that leverage shared accountability, collaborative leadership, capacity
6 building, and family and community engagement, to promote student achievement, and the well-
7 being of students, families, educators, and neighborhood residents through a variety of engaging
8 practices including the provision of wraparound services.

9 (ii) “Community Schools strategy”, a strategy that transforms a school into a community
10 school where educators, local community members, families, and students work together to
11 establish shared vision and goals to strengthen conditions for student learning and healthy

development, including but not limited to the organization of in- and out-of-school resources, supports, and student opportunities.

(b) There shall be a special legislative commission on community schools, hereinafter referred to as the commission, to investigate community schools and to make recommendations regarding the adoption of community schools across the commonwealth. The special legislative commission shall consist of 15 members: the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on education, or their designee, who shall serve as co-chairs; the secretary of Education or a designee; the secretary of Health and Human services or a designee; 1 representative from the Massachusetts Community Schools Coalition; 1 representative from the American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts; 1 representative from Massachusetts Teachers Association; 1 representative from United Way of Massachusetts Bay; and 7 members to be appointed by the Governor: 2 of whom shall be student representatives from existing Massachusetts community schools, 1 of whom shall be a parent representative from an existing Massachusetts community schools, 1 of whom shall be a superintendent from a Massachusetts district employing community school strategies, 1 of whom shall be a principal of a Massachusetts community school, 1 of whom shall be a Massachusetts community school coordinator, and 1 of whom shall be a member who represents a community based organization. In making such appointments, the Governor shall consider rural, urban, and suburban geographic representation across the commission.

(c) The commission shall: (i) analyze systems, structures, and policies that support successful community school implementation models and trends in community school model adoption across different jurisdictions in the Commonwealth and nationwide; (ii) investigate the policies of other such jurisdictions intended to support and incentivize community school model

adoption, (iii) provide an assessment of community school adoption, implementation, and outcomes in Massachusetts; (iv) define the essential elements and principles of implementing community school models, including but not limited to as an equity strategy; (v) research the outcomes and evidence associated with community schools model adoption, including but not limited to reductions in school absenteeism; (vi) investigate the policies of other jurisdictions intended to support and incentivize community school adoption; (vii) identify any existing barriers, including but not limited to legal, regulatory, information and training, or funding barriers for Massachusetts schools to successfully adopt and implement community school strategies. The commission shall meet not less than once every two months.

(d) The commission shall develop a report of its findings and include specific recommendations in response to such findings, including any legislative or regulatory changes necessary for the Commonwealth to implement the commission's recommendations. At a minimum, such report shall include: (i) an overview of the findings of the commission's work pursuant to subsection (b), including but not limited to policy recommendations relative to codifying definitions relative to community schools; adopting policies and funding strategies to incentivize statewide adoption of community school strategies; and, creating sustainable funding streams in support of local district and school-level adoption and implementation of community school strategies; (ii) recommendations for a statewide community school pilot program including, but not limited to: (1) the number and nature of eligible communities to participate in the pilot program, (2) the resources necessary to support the pilot program, (3) the process by which pilot funding should be awarded, and (4) the data and outcomes reporting requirements and criteria for the evaluation of the pilot program and its participants. The commission shall file its report with the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives, the senate and house

58 committees on ways and means, the joint committee on education, the office of the governor, and
59 the executive office of education not later than February 15, 2026.