

An Act to Ensure Equitable Access to Education, Including Special Education Services, for All Students in Massachusetts

HD 1433, Rep. Decker

This bill will make education data available to the public in a manner that reveals inequities for specific subpopulations of students.

Providing the Commonwealth and local communities access to this information is particularly urgent during the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery as Black and Latinx students have been significantly and disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

School districts are already required to submit student data to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) pursuant to state and federal law. However, this data is not currently available to the public in a manner that provides information about access to education for specific subgroups of children. This legislation would direct DESE to publish existing data on the delivery of educational opportunities in a manner that will provide important information about the range of demographic subgroups facing the most significant inequities, such as low-income Black students, Black males with disabilities, or Latino English Learners with disabilities.

With this information, DESE, educators, and local communities will be better positioned to address identified disparities. In the future, this legislation will require that DESE publish data in a similar manner regarding access to special education services for students throughout the Commonwealth. Finally, the legislation would require DESE to notify school districts of potential denial of equal educational opportunities if there is a statistically significant increase in the rates of placement of students of color with disabilities in substantially separate classrooms in the five years following the COVID-19 pandemic.

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