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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Wednesday, October 18, 2017

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Gobi and Ferguson Announce Regional Schools Report

BOSTON – **Senator Anne M. Gobi (D-Spencer)** and **Representative Kimberly N. Ferguson (R-Holden)** announced the release of a report from the State Auditor’s Office with findings and recommendations on how to improve the structure and finance of Massachusetts regional school districts.

Auditor Suzanne Bump and her staff contacted regional schools across the Commonwealth, including superintendents, school committee members and other stakeholders to inform the report. They found that while the unique structure of regional school districts has created benefits for students and towns such as better educational and financial resources, it has also resulted in some significant challenges. One of the biggest challenges highlighted is the funding for regional school transportation. Many regional schools districts have low population density and span for many miles making transporting its students expensive and difficult. Another challenge that was highlighted was the difficulties that can arise while determining a school budget and the tensions that can arise between member towns. They found that in order to encourage further regionalization statewide these issues need to be addressed in order to incentivize other towns to explore school regionalization.

“I was glad to join Representative Ferguson to work with the State Auditor to bring attention to many of the issues that have a detrimental effect on Regional School funding,” said Senator Gobi. “I am committed to continuing to work for greater funding equity and to assist the schools, communities and students they serve.”

“Thank you to the Auditor and her staff for producing such a thorough and in depth report of regional school districts in the Commonwealth,” said Representative Ferguson. “The report’s findings are consistent with what I have heard from regional schools across the state and in the First Worcester District. I look forward to working with Senator Gobi and the regional schools caucus as we move forward from here and address the issues highlighted in the report.”

Senator Gobi and Representative Ferguson met with Auditor Suzanne Bump's Division of Local Mandates earlier this week to preview and discuss their report on regional school districts titled "Supporting student and community success: Updating the structure and finance of Massachusetts regional school districts." They are planning subsequent meetings with the chairs of the Joint Committee on Education, the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means and the regional schools legislative caucus to discuss the findings and possible ways to implement them. Senator Gobi and Representative Ferguson serve as co-chairs of the regional schools caucus, a group of legislators with regional schools in their district who meet periodically to discuss issues faced and proposed reforms.

To read the report in it's entirety, you can visit the State Auditor's website at www.mass.gov/Auditor.

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