

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Rural School Aid Awarded to Local Districts**

**BOSTON- Senator Anne M Gobi (D-Spencer)** was proud to join state education Commissioner Jeffrey C. Riley and **Senator Adam Hinds ( D- Pittsfield)** in announcing that 33 rural school districts will be receiving funds as part of a new \$1.5 million appropriation to help cash-strapped rural schools in sparsely populated communities. Established during the FY19 Senate Budget debate, Rural School Aid will assist school districts with low population densities and lower than average incomes to address fiscal challenges and take the needed steps to improve efficiency.

"I appreciate working with Senator Adam Hinds and the Rural Schools Initiative to bring this important funding to schools serving the district," remarked Senator Gobi. "I will continue to work on additional initiatives to bring more funding to our schools so our students have the same opportunities as students in non-rural areas."

The following towns and school districts in Senator Gobi's district will receive the additional funding:

- Wales: \$33,480
- Monson: \$43,130
- Brookfield: \$14,760
- Petersham: \$7,424
- Holland: \$7,461
- Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District: \$183,774
- Quabbin Regional School District: \$119,758
- Tantasqua Regional School District: \$86,825

"The introduction of Rural School Aid within the Massachusetts FY19 budget is a tangible reason for all rural public school communities within the Commonwealth to have hope for the future of their students. The Massachusetts Rural Schools Coalition greatly appreciates the leadership of Senator Adam Hinds and Senator Anne Gobi in realizing this important milestone," said Mohawk Trail Regional Schools

Superintendent Michael Buoniconti. Buoniconti serves as the chair of the Massachusetts MA Rural Schools Initiative.

Rural communities, particularly those of lower-income populations, struggle year to year to overcome significant obstacles that include declining student enrollment, staffing and spending trends, insufficient local aid, low reimbursement rates for regional school transportation, and so forth. To further add, rapidly aging and declining population trends in rural communities have also worsened fiscal conditions of rural schools.

For these reasons, Senator Gobi worked with her colleagues to establish a rural school aid formula in the FY19 Budget to provide rural school districts additional fiscal support to fill the funding gaps that Chapter 70 aid does not provide. The formula takes into account two key metrics – student density and ability to pay. Under this, school districts that qualify for Rural School Aid have fewer than 21 students per square mile in communities where the average per-capita income is not greater than the statewide income average. School districts with less than 11 students per square mile and incomes of no more than the state average per capita income qualify for the largest amount of aid.

Any district receiving funds under this program must submit a plan to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education by February 1, 2019 outlining the steps the district will take to increase regional collaboration, consolidation, or other efficiencies over the next three fiscal years.

For more information, please contact Senator Gobi's office at (617) 722-1540.

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