



**MTF Comments on the Foundation Budget Commission's
Draft Final Report, October 2015**

The Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation (MTF) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft of the final report for the Foundation Budget Review Commission. At this time, the Foundation offers general comments on updates to the report since June 2015 while renewing our comments from May 2015 regarding the health care and special education proposals.

This report reflects the excellent work done by the Commission to identify aspects of the existing foundation budget formula that may not accurately account for actual costs borne by school districts. The report wisely recommends that districts make available online information regarding their spending plans for the proposed additional funding for economically disadvantaged students. Secondly, the report recommends that districts publically provide the metrics that will be used to measure student outcomes. Both of these are important first steps towards enhanced transparency and accountability. In this area, MTF also supports the recommendation from the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE) that districts also be required to make available data that tracks performance on each metric.

Ultimately, however, these recommendations and their financial implications must be considered in the context of the entire state budget. The Commonwealth is operating with a structural budget deficit that is the result of increases in spending outpacing recurring revenue growth. In short, current state finances do not allow for an increased state investment in Chapter 70 of hundreds of millions of dollars per year.

In addition, any new investments must be accompanied by clear statements of purpose for those investments and the criteria by which the state will evaluate whether these investments are successful in achieving their intended goals.