

Thanks to the recent efforts of House leadership, the Commonwealth is nearing the goal line its efforts to bring meaningful education reform to Massachusetts. On behalf of the CEO members of the Massachusetts High Tech Council, I urge House members to finish the important work of transforming our public education delivery system for the benefit of Massachusetts' teachers and students by passing H.4410 and rejecting amendments that weaken the charter and intervention provisions

Creating new innovative and effective schools and providing educators with new tools to close the minority and low-income achievement gaps are critical to Massachusetts from a social, economic, fiscal and moral standpoint.

States and nations with whom Massachusetts competes are advancing innovations that better prepare their students for the jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Meanwhile, we are seeing widening achievement gaps within Massachusetts and a rejection of proven innovations by an education establishment whose leadership is vested in the status quo.

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The public remains squarely behind dramatic education reform with approximately two-thirds of Massachusetts residents saying they would support the proposed ballot question to eliminate the state's charter school cap. Ballot question supporters, including the Council, have met the deadline for collecting signatures and are also raising money for the ballot question in November. The ballot question is a backup plan if the Commonwealth fails to adopt meaningful reform during this session.

Passage of legislation that enhances our Race to the Top application and expands access to charter schools in the districts where they are most needed are central to our expectations for this legislation.

If those two goals are clearly achieved, the proponents of the proposed ballot question have committed to suspending the campaign and rolling up our sleeves to implement the reform bill in the best possible way.