



## Office of the Superintendent

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To: Rep. Williams & Members of K-12 Education Budget Committee  
From: Brett White, Andover Public Schools Superintendent  
Re: Written Testimony in Opposition of HB2553

Please consider this written testimony in strong opposition of HB2553 as you discuss it at the hearing on February 1, 2022. This bill would be very harmful to our school district for a variety of reasons.

Andover Public Schools has closed enrollment, meaning students must live within the district boundaries in order to attend. Our district has a long-held belief by our Board that enrollment should be limited to those who are paying local taxes to support our schools. By policy, the only exceptions that are made are for staff members in the district working at least 20 hours per week.

HB2553 would **require** school districts to allow students who are not residents to enroll in and attend any school in the district at any time during the school year, unless the number of transfers exceeds the capacity of a grade level for each school of a school district as determined pursuant to the bill. This language usurps the local control that our Board of Education has, and should continue to have, in establishing enrollment policies. The State should not dictate enrollment requirements to local Boards of Education. Our parents and community members appreciate our residency policy and expect it to be followed. Given our location, tens of thousands of potential students would be within driving distance of Andover. Requiring our district to accept students runs counter to our district philosophy about neighborhood schools and would be a logistical nightmare to implement.

HB2553 would cause class sizes to increase. This will impact the personalization that learners receive, and would have a detrimental impact on our educators and students. Because funding for brick-and-mortar students is based on the previous year's count, our district would likely need to hire additional staff when we wouldn't receive any funding for the out-of-district students until the following year. As a growing district, we already face challenges of anticipating enrollment changes for the upcoming year, and HB2553 would unnecessarily complicate that process further.

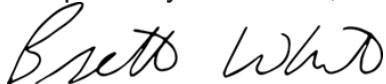
The requirement that, on or before Jan. 1, 2023, each board of education would have to adopt a policy to determine the number of nonresident students that the school district has the capacity to accept in each grade level for each school of the school district and the reasons for denial of any application of a nonresident student seeking to transfer to such district is problematic. The capacity at a given grade level changes daily based on

students moving in and out. The reality is that HB2553 would lead to overcrowded classrooms, upset parents, and additional burdens placed on educators.

Language in the bill states that the reasons for denial may include, but not be limited to, high rates of absenteeism and repeated suspensions or expulsions from school. It says that a school district shall not accept or deny a nonresident student transfer based on ethnicity, national origin, gender, income level, disabling condition, proficiency in the English language, measure of achievement, aptitude or athletic ability. This verbiage could create legal issues and the potential for a discrimination complaint if a student has a disabling condition that manifests in discipline issues that could then be a reason to deny admission to that student.

Parents and patrons in the Andover school district expect the provisions in our admissions policy to be followed. We have a long-standing policy of being a closed enrollment district. HB2553 takes away local control, and is a legislative overreach. It will lead to higher class sizes, and additional staffing needs when funding isn't provided until the following year. It will create chaos, when we currently have a well-defined process for enrollment and admission. This bill is harmful to Andover Public Schools, and I am strongly opposed to it.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brett White". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brett White

Andover Public Schools Superintendent