



Line Item 7010-0012

Support \$35 million for METCO in FY27

HISTORY: In its 60 years of existence, METCO is proud to remain a national and historic model for voluntary school integration. METCO opens doors of opportunities for urban students while also embarking on a systemic journey of racial equity and integration (REI) for all students and families in our METCO communities.

LEGACY: METCO is the only program in the state fulfilling the requirements of the 1965 Racial Imbalance Act to desegregate schools. A recent [report by the Racial Imbalance Advisory Council](#) showed “unambiguous” benefits in both educational outcomes and diversifying school districts. Two of the key recommendations of this report urged for increased and consistent state investments into METCO.

OPPORTUNITY: METCO faced level-funding in FY26 despite increased need and clear data of the program’s success. We ask that METCO be given equal investments to other education programs by **leveraging the booming Fair Share surtax funds to increase METCO’s line-item and support urgent one-time investments.**

Support FY27 Funding of \$35M (\$5.1M increase) for METCO:

- [Leverage Fair Share Funds](#) dedicated to Education and Transportation have far exceeded benchmarks. METCO is the only state public education program at the center of both education and transportation. Fair Share Funds should be leveraged to support this work.
- [Address Rising Costs:](#) Educational and transportation costs continue to rise. State funding for METCO has not kept pace with Chapter 70 public education increases amid:
 - [Rising special education costs](#) that landed \$1.6M beyond Circuit Breaker Funding in FY24
 - Continued need for social-emotional learning staff and other unique student support services
 - [Skyrocketing transportation costs](#) and more expensive bus contracts
 - [Persisting achievement gaps](#) in early literacy and math, and Advanced Placement (AP) courses
- [Advance essential social-emotional initiatives](#) to further holistic integration efforts and student belonging

TRANSPORTATION, ACCESS & BELONGING

METCO brings urban youth into the classrooms that broaden their academic opportunities - and now more than ever, we need to ensure that students experience a sense of belonging where they feel seen, valued and empowered through direct student-facing programming and expansion of inclusive best-practices. Rising transportation costs are a defining factor in our students’ ability to access the full educational experience that METCO makes possible, as increasingly expensive bus contracts directly affect equity of access across districts. Without additional funding, these escalating costs threaten the reliability of transportation that is foundational to student opportunity and program success. At the same time, expanded student-facing programming is essential to ensure students experience a strong sense of belonging where they feel genuinely seen, valued, and empowered within their school communities. Increased investment will allow METCO to address targeted academic supports, transportation barriers and the social-emotional, racial equity, and integration supports that are critical to students’ success.

FAIR SHARE INVESTMENTS

Ample Fair Share revenues have allowed unprecedented investments in education across the state. However, METCO continues to see our line-item stagnate or see only small increases - which is not sufficient to guarantee level service for any per-pupil program. As Fair Share Revenues boom and remain available, METCO, which sits at the intersection of transportation and education, should benefit similarly to all other state education programs. **Out of a conservative projected income of \$2.6 billion in Fair Share revenue for FY27, METCO is seeking just .2% of this total to achieve a \$5.1M increase.**

INCLUDE PAC LANGUAGE

We also seek “**Prior Appropriation Continued**” (PAC) language to allow unspent funds to be carried over to December 31, 2026. Due to unforeseen challenges to staff and students (e.g., labor shortages and necessary programming), solutions cannot be forecasted. This PAC language will allow districts to plan for and implement early summer and fall programming to address needs.0