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**Janet K. Adachi, Chairman**  
**Board of Selectmen**

November 4, 2013

**Via E-Mail**

The Honorable Senator James Eldridge  
Representatives Atkins and Benson  
Massachusetts State House  
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Senate Bill 228

Dear Senator Eldridge and Representatives Atkins and Benson:

The Acton Board of Selectmen urges you to support Senate Bill 228, an act relative to regional school district capital project funding. This Bill provides for an increase in reimbursement money for school building projects in regional and vocational school districts. This funding would provide vocational schools with the ability to construct state-of-the-art facilities that would further the important work they already do improving the community while educating local students.

Vocational schools create students who are valuable members of the community while still in school. According to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education vocational students have a 10% higher graduation rate than students in comprehensive schools.<sup>i</sup> Vocational students with special needs have a 20% higher graduation rate than their counterparts in comprehensive schools.<sup>ii</sup> Vocational schools also minimize attrition with a 1.5% dropout rate compared to 3.8% for Massachusetts overall.<sup>iii</sup> By ensuring that more students graduate, vocational schools enrich their communities.

That enrichment manifests itself in the projects done by vocational schools for their communities. According to the Pioneer Institute, vocational education relies on partnerships with local leaders to create learning opportunities for students.<sup>iv</sup> This can be seen in co-operative partnerships that allow students to learn skills on the job while providing a service to the community.<sup>v</sup> These services can include the work of plumbing, carpentry, electrical, and HVAC students on off-site building projects, volunteer hours at

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nursing homes by health occupations students, or day-care services by early education students.<sup>vi</sup> On-site the schools invite community members to see the educational process at work while performing auto work, cosmetology services, graphic design, or cooking and serving meals.<sup>vii</sup> Additionally, all of these services are provided at cost to the community. Through these services, vocational schools provide a tangible benefit to their communities beyond educating students.

By preparing students for futures in college and the workforce, vocational schools make them valuable members of the community for years to come. The academic skills required for career success equal those required for college success and those skills are learned at vocational schools. Vocational schools provide a technical background that enriches the academic pursuits of students as they pursue post-secondary education.<sup>viii</sup> The Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education reports that students learn important skills such as timeliness, preparation, and discipline at vocational schools.<sup>ix</sup> These skills ensure their ability to enhance the community in the future.

For all the investments vocational schools have made in our communities, the Acton Selectmen believe that we should invest in them as well. As community leaders, we support Senate Bill 228 because it would provide funding that would allow vocational schools to more effectively instruct students while enhancing their services to the community. Given the status of vocational schools as important members of Massachusetts communities, we ask that you support Senate Bill 228. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Janet K. Adachi  
Chairman, Acton Board of Selectmen

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<sup>i</sup> Fraser, Alison, (October, 2008), "Vocational-technical education in Massachusetts," [https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&ved=0CEEQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.careertech.org%2Ffile\\_download%2F613d1cca-5901-4382-a378-ff84b7a39a50&ei=8GxJUtWKIsnl4APq84GYAw&usq=AFQjCNEQ2-DEHdwdCwjWSxnJNPXUjBWSkg&sig2=Kwmvya5NXqSw0jTCxMRLPlg&bvm=bv.53217764.d.dmg](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&ved=0CEEQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.careertech.org%2Ffile_download%2F613d1cca-5901-4382-a378-ff84b7a39a50&ei=8GxJUtWKIsnl4APq84GYAw&usq=AFQjCNEQ2-DEHdwdCwjWSxnJNPXUjBWSkg&sig2=Kwmvya5NXqSw0jTCxMRLPlg&bvm=bv.53217764.d.dmg), p. 6.

<sup>ii</sup> *Ibid.* at 9

<sup>iii</sup> *Ibid.* at 7.

<sup>iv</sup> *Ibid.* at 10.

<sup>v</sup> Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, (October 2006), *Employer Perspectives on Work Readiness Skills*, p. 12.

<sup>vi</sup> Fraser at 11.

<sup>vii</sup> *Ibid.* at 10.

<sup>viii</sup> Stone III, J.R., Alfeld, C., Pearson, D., Lewis, M.V., and Jensen, S., (2006), "Building academic skills in context: Testing the value of enhanced math learning in CTE," National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, [www.nccte.org/publications/infosynthesis/r&dreport/MathLearningFinalStudy.pdf](http://www.nccte.org/publications/infosynthesis/r&dreport/MathLearningFinalStudy.pdf).

<sup>ix</sup> Massachusetts Business Alliance For Education at 12.