



Massachusetts Leads Nation in Education; Federal Budget Proposals Could Have Wide-Ranging Impacts

Massachusetts ranks **1st in education** in the national KIDS COUNT [rankings](#) of the states. Recent victories and future progress could be at risk if Massachusetts loses funding from the federal government that has been crucial to Massachusetts' successes. A large portion of the \$2.5 billion in federal grant money that comes to Massachusetts outside of the state budget supports education. The President's proposed budget that cuts federal funding could affect Massachusetts' ability to ensure that every child in the Commonwealth grows up ready and able to learn, and that our classrooms are able to provide high-quality [education](#) on the road to college and success in life.

The Rankings

#1 in Fourth Grade Reading

Historical [investment](#) in education has led Massachusetts to rank first based on national tests of fourth grade reading. Even in first place, still half (50%) of all Massachusetts fourth graders score below proficient. Support for grade level reading is an investment that helps ensure school success and makes on-time graduation more likely.

#1 in Eighth Grade Math

Massachusetts ranks first in the nation on national math scores in eighth grade. Additional investment could bring along the remaining 49% of eighth graders not yet scoring proficient on this national test. Children doing math at grade level by middle school are better-prepared for high school math success and for college.

#3 in the Share of Young Children Not in School

Massachusetts has recently [expanded](#) access to early education for its youngest residents, but the Census estimates that 41% of three and four year olds in Massachusetts are not in school (nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten.) High quality early education can provide the best first start for children, but there are long waiting lists for state-supported early education programs so many working families do not have access to high quality early education.

Tied for #12 in High School Graduation Rates

Close to one out of every eight high school students (13%) is not graduating on time, although there has been a notable improvement since 2010-2011, when 17% of students were not graduating high school on time.

The federal government is a [key partner](#) for the state in supporting the education of the children of Massachusetts. Cuts to these funds could have lasting effects on Massachusetts' educational success.

- The state receives more than \$9.8 billion in federal funds for Medicaid (MassHealth), supporting affordable health insurance for low-income families. Proposed repeal of the

Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion could put more than [\\$1.1 billion](#) at risk in Massachusetts by 2021. Added to this, the proposal to turn Medicaid from an entitlement to a per capita cap and additional funding cuts in the President's budget proposal could amount to an [estimated](#) 45% reduction in federal funds for health insurance by 2026 (over \$4 billion). A federal revenue cut of this size would put even more pressure on the state, potentially leading to cuts that could affect every program funded by the state budget.

- The state [receives](#) \$290 million in federal grants for special education that gets distributed to local school districts to support education for children with disabilities. The President's proposed budget would cut total special education support to the states by 7%, which could represent a \$20 million cut.
- Massachusetts [receives](#) \$240 million in federal grants for free and reduced-price school meals. These funds provide healthy meals so that children are well-fed at school and ready to learn.
- Massachusetts [receives](#) \$236 million in Title I supports that are intended to reduce achievement disparities for low-income students. The President's proposed budget would cut total Title I basic supports to local school districts by 6%, which could represent a \$13 million cut.
- Local communities in Massachusetts [receive](#) \$154 million for Head Start—the early education program for very low-income young children. Furthermore, federal funds are central to funding early education and care in the state budget. Federal revenues [pay for](#) over 70% of early education and are in the state budget. [Moreover](#), \$16 million in federal grants support preschool expansion in selected municipalities across the Commonwealth.

In addition, the President's [proposed budget](#) recommends completely **eliminating** certain sources of federal funds. Massachusetts would [lose](#):

- \$40 million: Teacher Quality Grants (teacher training);
- \$16 million: 21st Century Community Learning Centers (support for afterschool programs).

To see what works to improve education for our children, see MassBudget's [Children's Budget](#) and the [Roadmap to Opportunity](#).