



An Act to Maintain Short Term Objectives for Students with Disabilities S. 218 Lead sponsors: Senator Creem and Representative Benson

- This bill would require school districts to continue the current practice of including short-term objectives and benchmarks in the IEPs of all students with disabilities. Short-term objectives are based on a child's disability –related needs, assessment data and the collective knowledge of the IEP team.
- A change in federal law removed the statutory requirement and this bill would ensure the *continuation of current practice* by requiring short-term objectives in state law.
- At least 14 states currently require short-term objectives or benchmarks in IEPs, including New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Jersey and Maryland.
- The inclusion of measurable short-term objectives in IEPs is important to assist in measuring the impact of special education services instruction, providing essential information for educators to adjust services and strategies in a timely fashion.
- Short-term objectives, as a system to measure accountability for learning, are especially important given that all students, including students with disabilities must ultimately pass MCAS.
- Measurable goals and short-term objectives are widely accepted and approved practices used in many settings for encouraging progress and attaining important goals, and have also been considered best practice in business for decades.
- The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has agreed to direct school districts to maintain short-term objectives in IEPs at this point in time, but this is such a critical protection for students with disabilities it is important to maintain these rights more permanently in our state law.

There is no cost associated with this bill, as it does not require any change in practice or procedure but rather codifies critical protections currently in place.

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