

Written Testimony to Joint Education Committee  
In SUPPORT of Senate Bill 343/House Bill 530  
Honorable Co-Chairs, Senator Jason Lewis and Representative Denise Garlick  
Dennis Burke, Chief of Staff, Senator Lewis, [dennis.borke@masenate.gov](mailto:dennis.borke@masenate.gov)  
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SUPPORT Senate Bill 343/House Bill 530 An Act establishing an education-to-career data center.

From: Mary L. Churchill, Associate Dean and Professor of the Practice, Wheelock College of Education and Human Development, Boston University, Roxbury resident, and former Boston Public Schools parent.

Honorable Chairpersons Lewis and Garlick and Committee Members,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 343/House Bill 530. I submit this testimony as a longtime resident of the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston, as a former Boston Public Schools parent, as a college professor of educational leadership and policy studies and university administrator, and as the former Chief of Policy and Planning in the City of Boston.

In my own work in the City of Boston and within universities and districts in the metro region, I have found that it is crucial to have data sharing across agencies. In addition, it is only with the use of “longitudinal” data that we can uncover the long-term impacts of disruptions caused by incidents such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Longitudinal data is also key to determining what works as far as solutions to the challenges we face. Linking education-to-career data files is critical to determining if our investments in college and career pathways are paying off.

In writing, I can’t help but think of the current crisis related to chronic absenteeism in the Commonwealth and across the country and the globe. We will need to know the impacts that today’s chronic absenteeism will have on future workforce readiness and labor shortages. Learning about the performance of state initiatives and return on public investment. To properly prepare for the future, researchers and policy makers must have access to high quality, linked, longitudinal data.

We are fortunate that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has some of the best longitudinal data in the country. It is crucial that access to these data is improved. We are also fortunate to have some of the best research universities right here in the Commonwealth. We need more research, and we need to make sure that the findings from the research are readily available to policymakers and the public through a centralized education-to-career data center.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

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