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**MAVA Earns Legislative Victory to Help Increase Seats  
for Students Seeking Vocational-Technical Education**

A little-noticed provision in the state's new Economic Development Law may help some regional vocational-technical high schools in Massachusetts address their long waitlists. The provision was supported by the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators (MAVA), a statewide professional association that advocates for high-quality vocational-technical and agricultural education in Massachusetts.

On November 10, 2022, Governor Charles D. Baker signed the provision into law as part of Chapter 268 of the Acts of 2022, *An Act Relating to Economic Growth and Relief for The Commonwealth*. Among other things, the \$3.76 billion spending package included funding for a host of economic development initiatives across Massachusetts.

Also included in the massive bill was language proposed by MAVA and the Alliance for Vocational Technical Education (AVTE) to expand the authority of regional school committees, including regional vocational-technical school committees, to enter into long-term leases for educational purposes. The new law allows such leases for up to 25 years. The old law limited such leases to 5 years. The long-term leasing provision, which amends Section 16 of Chapter 71 of the Massachusetts General Laws, can be found in Section 109 of Chapter 268:

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2022/Chapter268>.

The change is designed to allow regional schools located near vacant commercial or industrial real estate to enter into a long-term lease for space and use it to create more seats for students seeking a vocational-technical education. The long-term leasing idea is not a replacement for vocational-technical expansion projects funded by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), but it gives regional schools a new option to consider.

"Over the past few years, our schools have experienced a tremendous increase in demand for high quality career and technical education," said Steven C. Sharek, Executive Director of MAVA. "This demand has resulted in unprecedented waitlists, as many schools do not have the space or time to seek MSBA capital funds for expansion and cannot responsibly commit resources to building out satellite

space under a short five-year lease. We hope this provision will change that and provide a new tool to help open up more seats for students seeking vocational-technical education.”

Passage of the leasing provision was the culmination of many months of hard work by MAVA, its members, and its advocates on Beacon Hill. MAVA hopes that the new law will have a positive impact on schools and students across the Commonwealth.

In celebrating this achievement, MAVA wishes to thank its primary legislative sponsors: Rep. Frank Moran (D-Lawrence) and Sen. Eric Lesser (D-Longmeadow). It also wishes to thank Sen. Michael Rodrigues (D-Westport) and Rep. Aaron Michlewitz (D-Boston), Chairs of the Senate and House Committees on Ways and Means, respectively; Sen. Jason Lewis (D-Winchester) and Rep. Alice Peisch (D-Wellesley), Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Education; Rep. Adam Scanlon (D-North Attleborough); countless other legislative supporters and co-sponsors; the Alliance for Vocational Technical Education (AVTE), and Ventry Associates, MAVA’s representatives on Beacon Hill.

MAVA is a non-profit organization that serves 61 member schools which enroll more than 51,200 high school students across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Its website is found at [www.MAVA.us](http://www.MAVA.us).

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