



**Testimony of Alan G. Macdonald, Executive Director
H.4157, “An Act Relative to Educator Quality Throughout the Commonwealth”
June 9, 2005**

Chairman Antonioni, Chairwoman Haddad, and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of H.xxxx. As business leaders, Roundtable members are concerned that far too many of our young people are leaving school without acquiring the kinds of skills and knowledge that are a prerequisite for success in today’s increasingly global economy. In 1992, MBR released a report which called for fundamental changes in the education system including: a clearly defined planning process to set aggressive goals and measure progress against those goals; allowing educators the flexibility and authority necessary to allow their schools to thrive; and strong leadership at all levels to implement these changes.

Another critical recommendation in our 1992 report was support for “improved professional development programs for teachers.” This was based on research that has consistently shown a strong correlation between teacher quality and student achievement. In fact, Stanford University’s Hoover Institution recently found that “the most effective teachers were able to boost their pupils’ learning by a full grade level more than students taught by their least successful colleagues.” Teaching, and the leadership that supports it, is the most significant variable in student achievement.

To a great degree, much of our report’s recommendations were accomplished through the education reform act of 1993. Yet some remains unfinished. H.4157 continues the movement, addressing the issues of teaching and leadership in a way that is both comprehensive in scope and positive in nature. It seeks to develop educational leaders who can build and sustain professional learning communities by increasing the rigor of supervision and evaluation for teachers and administrators, while upgrading the skills and requiring greater accountability of the evaluators. The bill also focuses professional development funds on direct improvement of instructional leadership, teaching, and learning and aligns professional development with school and district improvement goals and student results.

To use a business analogy, investing in teacher evaluation and professional development, and engaging in a process of review and feedback, is like spending short dollars on maintenance to retain the value of a critical capital investment. The investments in H.4157 are designed to help support and build successful careers for our most important capital assets in public education – our teachers – and subsequently improve outcomes for children which, of course, is our ultimate goal.

MBR’s 1992 report urged business to “do whatever we can to directly assist education professionals in the implementation of change.” More than a decade later, we still believe this to be true. H.4157 provides this “direct assistance to education professionals” and is a unified effort to improve all the systems impacting teaching and leadership. The Massachusetts Business Roundtable is pleased to join a diverse and broad coalition in supporting this legislation.