

Alumni Publication in Commonwealth Magazine



By: [Claire Healy](#)
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Michael Nicholson, a CHC graduate who earned two bachelor's degrees in history and political science (2016) and a master's in public policy from UMass (2017,) recently co-authored an article published in the *CommonWealth* magazine. The [article](#), "Mass. Cities Losing Clout in Ed Funding Fight," tackles how a shift in voting power in favor of the Massachusetts suburban areas can change the political dynamic regarding Massachusetts funding for education.

"The shift in population in Massachusetts from urban centers to suburban areas," Nicholson explained, "correlates to the current debate surrounding funding formulas for K-12 education."

The article tries to understand what this shift could mean for Massachusetts' cities. It concludes that "the fight to update state funding formulas, particularly in the field of education, has become a lot harder." The concern is that "affluent suburban districts thrive, while poorer, urban districts struggle;" this gap may be exacerbated by shifting political power that allows suburban districts more say.

This article is a follow up from [a piece](#) that Nicholson co-authored in 2015, titled "The Downsides of Prop. 2 1/2 and Community Preservation Act; Well-Intentioned Policies are Exacerbating Inequality in Massachusetts."

Nicholson currently works as the executive aide to the mayor of the City of Gardner, and is a student at Suffolk University Law School. He credited his work to his time at UMass Amherst, stating that "the research methods, network, and other skills that went into [the article's] writing were all based on things learned while still in Amherst."



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