

JOINT CONFERENCE 2013 RECAP: Partnering to Sustain District Leadership

IN A CHARGED ATMOSPHERE, fanned by growing concerns over the impact of new regulations and assessments ranging from educator evaluations to the newly imposed PARCC testing for students, an unprecedented number of school committee members, superintendents, business officers, collaborative directors, administrative and other education personnel filled the meeting rooms to capacity at last month's annual MASC/MASS



Easthampton High School history teacher
Kelley Brown

conference in Hyannis.

Held November 6-9 at the Resort and Conference Center, the program featured more than 60 panel and other special presentations on key school finance and reform topics including educator evaluations; district determined measures; sustaining systemic change; financial operation reviews; bargaining for student achievement; and implementing the Common Core. Throughout the three-day event, many sessions drew such an audience that they were occasionally standing-room only.

Conference highlights included an extended look at how school curricula would change under the Common Core and the Wednesday dinner keynote address gave valuable insights into how the new strategy would enhance critical thinking and analytical skills in students. A conference first, the opening night keynote speaker was neither a school leader nor an administrator but an Easthampton high school history teacher, **Kelley Brown**. Using the Gettysburg Address and its 150th anniversary last month as her "lesson topic," Brown explained powerfully and persuasively how she teaches those 272 words using

Common Core principles and how through questions and analysis her students arrive for themselves at the historical and social significance of the speech.

One of the major shifts the common core has initiated, Brown explained, is the expectation that all students should be able to read, understand and analyze complex texts—and teachers must make significant adjustments to engage students with careful reading of those texts and not be afraid to let them wrangle with the language and the concepts. Under the new standards, literacy is now the work of the entire school.

"In the past, if I presented my students with a copy of the Gettysburg address, they would read it and wait for me to tell them what they had just read. And I would construct a lesson and do just that—explain what the document said, why it was important, and then move on to Sherman's march. No reasoning. No background. No evidence. And later in the day I would get together with other teachers and we would bemoan the fact that stu-

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COSCAP program draws record crowd in Hyannis

In addition to the full slate of leadership-related programs, the conference also included a day-long program for those who keep school leaders organized and help the district run smoothly—namely school committee secretaries and administrative assistants. Organized by the executive committee of MASC's COSCAP (Council of School Committee Secretaries/Admin-

istrative Personnel) group, the program included important information on keeping school policies up-to-date and the new fingerprinting law. More than 70 COSCAP members attended the Friday session at which they elected a new executive committee and discussed the possibility of expanding their program options in 2014.

[executive committee listed on page 6](#)



REPORT ON RESOLUTIONS 2013

The following is a report on actions taken on the resolutions that were considered by the Delegate Assembly at the annual meeting in Hyannis on Friday, November 8.

RESOLUTION 1-FUNDING FOR K-12 TRANSIENT STUDENT SUCCESS

(Submitted by the Framingham School Committee)

BE IT RESOLVED that MASC file or support legislation that will provide supplemental funding directly to affected school districts to help obtain academic records from schools in the United States and/or the countries of origin and to help provide the proper student supports to better integrate these mobile students into their current school districts.

The resolution passed, as submitted, on a voice vote.

RESOLUTION 2-PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR READINESS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER

(Submitted by the MASC Resolutions Committee)

WHEREAS the MA Board of Elementary and Secondary Education has approved the participation of the state's public schools in the PARCC program as an iteration of the Commonwealth's testing and assessment system for students, representing an unfunded mandate for those districts that did not sign onto the Race to the Top Program and, thereby, did not receive federal funding to prepare; and

WHEREAS in general, administration of the tests will require significant technological resources to be available in school districts to administer the tests; and

WHEREAS some regions of the Commonwealth lack wireless Internet service or the capacity to deliver Internet services sufficient for large numbers of students to take performance assessment tests at all; and

WHEREAS many of the state's public school districts do not have the Internet capacity to administer the PARCC assessment program at this time; and

WHEREAS the vast majority of the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts have developed, submitted and approved operating budgets for the FY 2014; and

WHEREAS the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education announced mandatory participation in testing of the PARCC in August 2013; and

WHEREAS this requirement has both budgetary and educational consequences; and

WHEREAS the United States Secretary of Education has indicated that federal waivers may be granted for reasonable delays in implementation of the PARCC program upon request of states,

BE IT RESOLVED that MASC call upon the Governor to petition the MA Board of Elementary and Secondary Education,

and that MASC also petition the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to direct the Commissioner to allow sufficient time for educators to prepare students for the new testing system and for cities, towns and school districts to secure appropriate and adequate technology services and devices to administer the PARCC Program, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that MASC file or support legislation that requires funding for any regulations originating from the DESE that directly affect the allocation of staff time or the time on learning for students. Lacking such legislation, MASC should also be prepared to file a petition with the State Auditor's office for a determination on whether said regulations constitute an unfunded mandate, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state provide through grants or other means appropriate technology to accommodate free PARCC implementation.

The text in boldface is additional language proposed in the form of an amendment by the Amesbury School Committee.

The text in italics is additional language proposed in the form of an amendment by the Winchendon School Committee.

Both amendments were adopted and the resolution passed on a voice vote.

RESOLUTION 3-TEACHER EVALUATION

(Submitted by the MASC Resolutions Committee)

BE IT RESOLVED that MASC supports enhanced leadership of all teaching staff to include trained and state administratively certified instructional leaders/ department heads/supervisors with the responsibility for an appropriate number of teachers such that the heretofore mentioned supervisory and evaluative tasks can be effectively performed; and that MASC supports

An updated Chapter 70 formula to reflect the increased costs associated with this enhanced leadership/supervision of all teachers in Massachusetts.

The resolution passed as presented on a voice vote.

RESOLUTION 4-EVALUATION OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

(Submitted by the MASC Resolutions Committee)

BE IT RESOLVED that MASC supports that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education be requested to solicit and consider in the evaluation process for the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education meaningful input and comment from stakeholder constituencies including school

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committees, superintendents, parents and other stakeholders, and further, that aggregated comments and input from stakeholder constituencies be made available for public review.

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that subsequent iterations of the teacher survey previously known as TellMass or Tells be revised to solicit feedback from educators about the performance of the Commissioner and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the impact of that performance on local district effectiveness, customer service performance, and morale.

The resolution passed overwhelmingly on a voice vote.

RESOLUTION 5-CONFIRMING ACTIONS FROM 2012

(Submitted by the MASC Resolutions Committee)

RESOLUTIONS APPROVED BY THE DELEGATE ASSEMBLY – 2012

RESOLUTION 1: Establishment of a Special Commission of the Legislature for the Study of Mandated Reports and Data Submissions for School Districts

(Submitted by the Framingham School Committee)

Therefore be it resolved that MASC file legislation which would have the effect of establishing a special commission of the Legislature, the purpose of which will be to determine the extent to which public school personnel are required to prepare and submit reports and data that are mandated by state and federal laws, agency regulations, and past practice notwithstanding whether the reports and data are a valuable part of improving student achievement. The commission will identify mandated reports and required submissions of data mandated by law, regulation or administrative directive, and it shall examine their value to benefit student achievement, identify those which are duplicative or redundant, and propose recommendations that may, but are not restricted to, eliminate, modify or otherwise revise them. Further, be it resolved that the commission shall require that there be a financial and programmatic audit of any proposed regulations or agency directives that shall include a determination of the amount of time deemed to be necessary for compliance with regulations and directives and estimates of all the expenses required for local agencies, including local and regional school districts, charter schools and educational collaboratives, to fulfill the requirements of the regulations and directives on an annual basis before any regulations, directives or mandates are imposed, and further, that no regulations shall be promulgated by these agencies unless the costs of compliance, administration and implementation are provided to local education agencies, including school districts, charter schools and education collaboratives. The commission will have a year to complete and report their findings to the legislature.

RESOLUTION 2: Modification of the Circuit Breaker Formula

(Submitted by the Framingham School Committee)

Now, therefore be it resolved that MASC file legislation which would have the effect of modifying the Special Education Circuit Breaker so that the Legislature would assist school districts by helping to fund more of the cost burden of educating students in out-of-district placements, the cost of which is \$125,000 or more by increasing the Special Education Circuit Breaker funding to

districts from 75% of the cost after 4 times the foundation formula to 100% of the cost after 4 times the foundation formula.

RESOLUTION 3: Health Insurance Coverage for Medically Necessary Treatment in School

(Submitted by the Brookline School Committee)

Be it resolved that MASC supports House Bill H1531 (2012 Session) or any other proposed legislation which would require all government and private health insurers to cover medically necessary expenses for children and young adults with educational deficits and/or learning disabilities from 3 years of age to 22.

RESOLUTION 4: Funding for Educator Evaluation System

(Submitted by the MASC Board of Directors)

Therefore be it resolved that MASC bring to the attention of the Auditor of the Commonwealth that the implementation of a state-wide educator evaluation system represents an unfunded mandate under the law, and, further, that the Auditor of the Commonwealth be requested to identify for the General Court the cost of the unfunded mandates related to educator evaluation so identified so that the legislature may appropriate such local financial aid as may be required.

RESOLUTION 5: Relative to an Adequacy Study

(Submitted by the MASC Board of Directors)

Be it resolved that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees reaffirms its advocacy positions on funding of the public schools by calling upon the General Court to take steps necessary to determine the appropriate funding level for public schools and to make such adjustments in the Foundation Budget and Chapter 70 funding formulas as may be required:

- The legislature should ensure that all districts receive sufficient state financial assistance so that all municipalities and regions receive adequate funding, meaning that all districts are able to budget public schools at or above the state's foundation budget.
- That the foundation budget should be adjusted to meet the true costs of providing an adequate public education for all students.
- In order to make an accurate determination of adequacy, the legislature should authorize a formal "adequacy study" to determine the true cost of providing an appropriate current education.

RESOLUTION 6: Election of Governing Boards of

Commonwealth Charter Schools

(Submitted by the MASC Board of Directors)

Be it resolved that MASC file legislation to require that all members of governing boards of Commonwealth Charter Schools be elected by elected or appointed representatives of the elected or appointed member communities or appointed by elected representatives of member school committees.

A motion was made to split the resolution into its six component parts and reconfirm each separately.

The motion to split was overturned on a vote of 60 to 36, with one abstention.

The resolution motion was passed as originally presented.

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dents reading and comprehension skills seemed to be declining.”

Now, she says, before even reading the speech, students are asked to consider its context, its purpose—to be prepared to think and read like historians, able to make reasoned claims and support them with text-based evidence.

Lincoln, she concluded, grew into greatness because of his ability to listen, weigh claims and validate the reasoning of others. In the face of crisis, he was willing to seek out new ideas. “In a world of often quick and rash information decisions, Lincoln inspires us in this short speech to slow down, engage in reason and think purposefully about our path. In turn, we work to inspire students to want to be more careful, thoughtful and reasoned in their lives. These new standards can help us do just that.”

Also joining Brown at the podium were **MASS President Mary Czajkowski** of Barnstable who welcomed conference attendees, as well as **MTA President Paul Toner** and **Commissioner Mitchell Chester** both of whom reaffirmed their support of the new, sharper focus on raising student achievement whether through strategies such as the Common Core or educator evaluations to help identify areas for improvement.

Czajkowski also thanked the evening’s sponsor, **SODEXO**, a longtime MASC/MASS conference exhibitor and state-wide supporter of school-based efforts to help students succeed.

The company’s targeted mission, explained Sodexo representative Phil Bornstein who works to help districts identify specific services that will enhance learning, is to foster “Quality of Life” programs, “which in education

means an environment where students take pride in achievement across the academic, athletic, activities and social spectrum. Where students, faculty and staff share ideas, enjoy learning and have a sense of belonging in a happy, healthy environment committed to meeting individual needs that can inspire and drive success.

“Sodexo has had a long-standing relationship with MASC as our vision of improving the quality of life by providing students well-being solutions aligns with the learning goals of your member school districts. Sodexo is delighted to have chosen to sponsor the Keynote Dinner to demonstrate our support for MASC members goals and initiatives.”

Student initiative and achievement was also celebrated during the dinner with presentations to some of the record number (19) of Massachusetts vocational technical students who were awarded gold medals earlier this summer at the national SkillsUSA competition. The awards, presented by MASC President Mary Jo Rossetti and Commissioner Chester, paid tribute to the students, their families and their teachers who encouraged and nurtured the drive to succeed, in a few cases in spite of significant challenges or obstacles.

As the conference celebrated student achievement in the face of challenge, so **Thursday General Session speaker Michael Staver** prodded conference attendees to move out of their comfort zones and inhabit the leadership skills that can drive student excellence. Staver, the author of **Leadership Isn’t for Cowards**, challenged the audience to examine some of their own preconceptions that get in the way of leadership and progress. Through entertaining personal stories injected with a fair amount of humor, he artfully presented the ways in which we can all be our own worst enemies in our attempt to lead. Being a good leader, according to Staver, means leaving your comfort zone, challenging the status quo and encouraging others to do the same.

“Successful leaders are realistic about their circumstances and aren’t afraid to take both action and ownership for results. I urge you to create a value-based culture where excellence is both encouraged and demanded.” He concluded by reminding his audience that successful leaders nurture not only



Thursday General Session speaker Michael Staver

those they lead, but attend to their own needs for personal growth and renewal.

Attendees were definitely challenged to move out of their comfort zone by afternoon guest speaker **Jack Levin**, distinguished professor of sociology and criminology at Northeastern. In a graphic, occasionally disturbing presentation, Levin reviewed both past and recent episodes of mass violence (Boston Marathon, Sandy Hook) and cases of individuals who sought notoriety through horrific destructive behavior. An often-sought-after media resource, Levin advised school leaders to be on alert for certain cues young people may exhibit that could be portents of more serious problems.

Thursday also featured the immensely popular networking/buffet lunch (followed by lively attendance in the exhibit hall for the Ice Cream Social, generously donated by **Cape Cod Dairy**). In the evening, the Leadership Awards banquet honored the 2013 All-State School Committee and Lifetime Achievement Award recipients (a complete listing, including photos, is posted on the MASC website). The banquet was preceded by a special “Meet the Board” reception, hosted by the MASC Board of Directors.

An added feature of the Thursday dinner was special guest **Jermaine Wiggins**, a former tight end for the New England Patriots who has become a prominent spokesperson for the **New England Dairy & Food Council** on the critical importance of good nutrition for students to ensure successful learning. He has also been a key proponent of the Council’s Fuel Up to Play60 breakfast program that many MA districts participate in. Wiggins shared aspects

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Former Patriots tight end Jermaine Wiggins and MASC Life Member Steve Ultrino won the Fuel Up to Play60 breakfast challenge

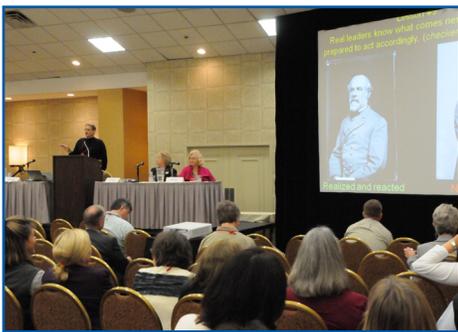
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of his difficult childhood and thanked teachers and other adults who stuck by him and kept him “moving ahead, at times when I might not have had the courage to do so.”

The Friday General Session opened with greetings from **NSBA President-Elect Anne Byrne**, a member of New York’s Nanuet Union School District and who has been a frequent attendee at MASC programs and events. Byrne was followed by a roar of applause for the next guest **MA State Auditor Suzanne Bump**, whose office this year made significant findings on behalf of school districts in helping to identify unfunded mandates.

MASC President Mary Jo Rossetti, who introduced the next featured speak-



Friday General Session speaker **Michael McGough** explains principles of leadership from the Battle of Gettysburg

er, noted that the conference had begun with Teacher of the Year Kelley Brown explaining how Common Core strategies can help students learn to analyze and understand the many issues in the Gettysburg Address. Friday’s **General Session speaker, Michael McGough**, a professor at York College in Pennsylvania and a licensed guide at Gettysburg Military Park, also used this famous battle to underscore his message of leadership lessons. Weaving together stories of this most studied battle in human history and the impact of the events, McGough drew ten leadership lessons. Describing how both Union and Confederate leaders responded on the battlefield and how their actions led to either success or setbacks, he went on to apply these to the leadership challenges school committees and administrators face today. These include articulating and holding steadfast

to goals, being guided by a strong moral compass and understanding the power of words.

Interspersed with these points, McGough related some little-known facts about MA regiments that were present at the battle and the important, sometimes heroic, role they played in the outcome.

Heroism comes in many forms and is sometimes enacted on “battlefields” that do not make the history books, and by participants whose names are nowhere inscribed. Friday lunch guest speaker **Carolyn Casey**, executive director of **Project 351**, introduced the audience to the program that brings together 8th graders from each of the 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth and draws on their passion and potential as forces for positive change in their communities and across the state. Through service, leadership development plus initiative, energy and creativity, these young people have envisioned and put into action year-long projects many of which have been extended as their impact has been felt and applauded. Indeed, today’s heroes and tomorrow’s leaders.

The busy Friday afternoon agenda included Division meetings at which elections were held and topics were suggested for upcoming programs; additional panels, including a follow-up to the morning keynote; and the Association’s annual meeting at which delegates considered five resolutions proposed by members and the Board of Directors that will guide advocacy efforts for the coming year (for a full report on actions taken, see the recap beginning on page 2).

The assembly also voted the incom-



Waiting for the general session to begin



Incoming MASC President Ann Marie Cugno (left) and 2013 President Mary Jo Rossetti (right)

ing slate of officers for 2014: Ann Marie Cugno, Medford, President; Patrick Francomano, King Philip Regional, President-Elect; Jacob Oliveira, Ludlow, Vice President; and Patrick Murphy, Barnstable, Secretary-Treasurer. Delegates also paid tribute to three veteran school committee members who were voted Life Membership: **Clarence Bachand** of the BayPath Regional Vocational Technical School Committee; **William Flannery** of Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School Committee; and **Steven Ultrino**, a former member of the Malden School Committee and past member of the MASC Board of Directors. These newly elected Life Members were also recognized along with their Life Member colleagues at the Friday night Leadership/Life Member reception and dinner.

Following some inspired—and spirited—musicianship on the part of the Somerville High School Chorus, MASC President Mary Jo Rossetti congratulated the new and returning Life Members and thanked those who continue to fight the good fight for the students of their communities. Not everyone, she suggested, understands “the energy required to be an effective school committee member, or the sacrifices you make. The time it takes to keep up-to-date on the issues—and the details, the many nights out, the worry over making the right decisions and how these will impact your schools and your students—these all take a toll, but these are responsibilities everyone in this room has taken to heart.” Rossetti also spoke eloquently of the issue that she has made her special mission for the past several years—that of raising awareness and finding solutions to the

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challenges and unique problems faced by transient students and their families.

“No one really cared about them. They weren’t part of the fabric of our community. They didn’t make connections and they didn’t make the news. They had no resources. They didn’t vote. Most of us didn’t even know who they were. I am proud that MASC has taken a leadership role in bringing this issue to the attention of our municipal leaders and our legislators. The McKinney-Vento Act was a start, but it was unrelenting, effective advocacy on all our parts that brought real legislative help to these families in the Education Reform Act of 2010. Even NSBA has made addressing these challenges

a priority at the national level.”

The final order of business for the evening was the traditional passing of the gavel from President Rossetti to **Incoming President Ann Marie Cugno**. Cugno thanked her family, her local Medford board and friends and the MASC Board for their ongoing support and vowed to continue the effort to focus on children who “cannot or do not have anyone to advocate for them—and not only when we’re on camera or at a meeting! Advocacy for what we know is right for our children is 24/7, 365 days a year and we need to make sure that we are at the table helping to make the decisions, and not just for the purpose of filling out the seats. I look forward to hearing from and working with you in the year ahead.”



Members of the Barnstable High School Jazz Combo who performed at the Keynote Dinner on Wednesday night.

SAVE THE DATE!

Joint Conference 2014

November 5-8

COSCAP 2014 Executive Committee

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Bellingham Public Schools

Andrea Machnik, Vice Chair
Westborough Public Schools

Dorothy Mulone, Secretary
Littleton Public Schools

Susan Rieger, Recording Secretary*
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Aimee Manzoni-D’Arpino, Member
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Joanne Kuzborski, Member
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Maureen Schnare, Member
Gardner Public Schools

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