

MASC Bulletin

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MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES

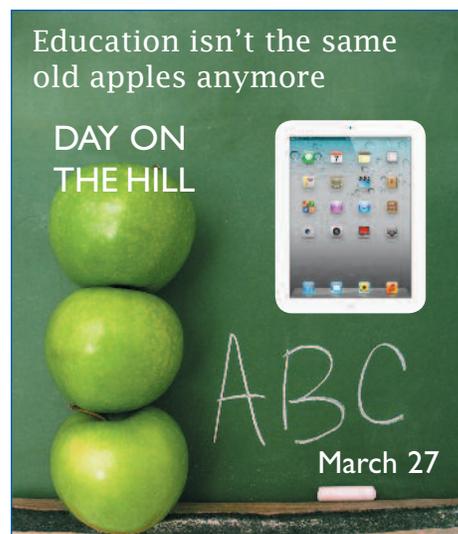
The State of Education in Massachusetts: Bring the Message to your Legislators on Beacon Hill

Join your MASC colleagues at DAY ON THE HILL in support of additional resources and collaboration

For many Massachusetts communities this season, the recession continues to take a toll on local budgets. Though there are some signs of improvement in the Bay State (a slightly improved housing market, unemployment numbers are down somewhat, and businesses are cautiously beginning to hire again), real economic growth has been elusive.

For school leaders, however, the demands to demonstrate student achievement and growth have never been greater.

The good news for districts preparing their FY13 budgets is that the Governor has promised a \$3.2 billion (3%) increase in overall state funding, including \$145 million more in Chapter 70 than districts received in FY12. And while many other accounts were at least level-funded (circuit breaker, regional school transportation, monies to charter schools), the costs associated with these programs continue to skyrocket. In addition, districts are being challenged by a record number of new



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Massachusetts granted NCLB waiver

In exchange: new reform strategies to target achievement gap

Earlier this month, the US Department of Education announced that ten states, including Massachusetts, have been granted a waiver to some of the most onerous provisions of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. The waiver will effectively exempt the state from the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement and the mandate that every student test at the proficient level in English and math by 2014. The waiver will also make it possible for local districts to have greater flexibility in the use of federal funds to address their own unique needs, and will no longer require them to set aside 20% of Title I funds for student choice and supplemental tutorial services.

In exchange for release from these mandates, MA has pledged that by

2017 schools will reduce achievement gaps by half among students of different backgrounds.

The wildly unpopular and counter-intuitive AYP measure that most recently resulted in labeling more than 80% of MA schools as inadequate, (despite ranking first in the nation on national tests) will be replaced by interventions created under the Education Reform Act of 2010. These measures focus on accelerating student achievement by identifying and targeting resources on schools and districts most in need of assistance. To date, 40 schools deemed as chronically underperforming are receiving targeted assistance and resources.

In order to qualify for the waiver,

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MASC advocates for school funding/NCLB reform with Congressional leaders

As school districts enter another troubled budget season, made more uncertain by the still-sluggish economy and the still-unauthorized NCLB act in this, an election year, seven members of MASC's Federal Relations Network took their case to Capitol Hill in early February as participants in the School Leadership/Federal Relations Summit presented by the National School Boards Association.

In visits to Capitol Hill, the MA delegation had lengthy, productive discussions with Representatives Michael Capuano, James McGovern, Nikki Tsongas and Senator Scott Brown, and with education advisors to Senator John

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MASC News

MASC DIVISION MEETINGS ADDRESS KEY ISSUES FOR DISTRICTS

The new educator and administrator evaluation requirements, state budget update, local aid forecast and concerns about declining enrollment in some districts have been on the agenda at MASC Division Meetings held in the past several weeks and will be on the program for several upcoming meetings that are being scheduled.

On January 26, **Division IV Chair Shirley Lundberg** (Northborough-Southborough) hosted a legislative issues meeting at Algonquin Regional High School. The program was head-

lined by Rep. Harriet Stanley (D-Worcester) and education aides to Rep. Harold Naughton (D-Clinton) and Rep. Carolyn Dykema (D-Holliston) who discussed the state of the state budget and the forecast for local aid ("will try to protect Chapter 70 funding but no promises"). On February 15, **Division V Chair Jake Oliveira** (Ludlow) and MASC Legal Counsel Stephen Finnegan led a near-standing room crowd at Smith Vocational School in Northampton through an analysis of the new educator and administrator evaluation requirements, the urgency of the timelines, and the impact on collective bargaining. On March 7, **Division III Chair Patrick Francomano** (King Philip Reg.) has scheduled a sim-

ilar program for school committee members on the south shore. The program will be held at the Joseph Case School in Swansea and on April 9, **Division VII Chair Patrick Murphy** (Barnstable) will host a meeting at Dennis-Yarmouth High School for Cape and Islands members on the issue of declining enrollment (for more information, and registration forms for the upcoming meetings go to <http://www.masc.org/events-a-conferences/year.listevents/2012/02/27/>).

To make your voice heard on concerns around the state budget, new regulations and the prospects for local aid, register now to attend **MASC's Day on the Hill on March 27**. Your legislators need to hear from you on these issues.

NCLB WAIVER

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states were required to adopt certain aspects of the federal education agenda, including incorporating national academic standards to ensure college and career readiness and creating new evaluation standards for educators and administrators that include student test scores. MA signed onto the administration's agenda a year ago when it applied for, and received, a \$250 million competitive education grant.

According to DESE Commissioner Mitchell Chester the state will maintain the same high bar for determining achievement while implementing targets for student performance and growth that are realistic and achievable. The 2010 legislation that underscored the state's application for the waiver includes measures to target low-performing schools and districts, enforces rigorous standards to ensure readiness for college and enacts new regulations for evaluating educators and administrators. The waiver, Chester contends, will enable school leaders, educators and administrators to focus additional strategies on struggling districts.

The MA plan will also include (1) progress on gap-closing as measured by MCAS results in English, math and science; (2) success in moving students out of lower levels of performance (needs improvement/failing) into higher

levels (advanced); (3) evidence of growth and improvement; and (4) graduation and dropout rates for high schools. The state will also report data for the four most recent years and targets will be differentiated for each school, district and subgroup, based on a 2010-11 starting point.

DESE will also introduce other tools including annual results for students in the aggregate, as well as results broken down by low-income students, students with disabilities, English language learners and the state's major racial and ethnic subgroups. DESE will also make determinations based on a new "high needs" subgroup composed of students who are low-income, have a disability, or are English language learners. Schools will be classified on a five-level scale created by the 2010 legislation, ranging from on track to college and career readiness (level 1) to chronically underperforming (level 5) with extra resources and assistance directed to the most troubled districts. Data will also be used to identify high achieving and/or greatly improving schools who will be recognized as Commendation Schools.

MASC and the National School Boards Association (NSBA) responded to the waiver announcement with cautious optimism. NSBA Executive Director Anne Bryant warned that the waiver process should not be viewed as an acceptable substitute for stalling

the delayed reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) or relieving all school districts from unnecessary or counterproductive federal mandates. MASC Executive Director Glenn Koocher has indicated that, even relieved of the untenable mandates of NCLB and AYP, MA still has in place the highest achievement standards of any state. He also said he is hopeful that the new flexibility will enable more focus on schools truly in need of assistance rather than the blanket labeling of myriad schools for minor infractions. In the coming weeks, he indicated MASC will follow up with members on the implications of the waiver for local districts.

The logo for the Massachusetts Council of School Committee Administrative Personnel (COSCAP). It features a stylized wave graphic above the text "Massachusetts COSCAP" in a bold, sans-serif font, with "Council of School Committee Administrative Personnel" in a smaller font below it.

Join your COSCAP
colleagues at a
Mini-Marathon Workshop
"Charting the Course"

Wednesday, April 18
9am-2pm

Westborough, High School
Westborough

For information: www.masc.org

2012 Legislative Priorities

- Adequate and Equitable Distribution of Chapter 70 School Aid
- Local and Regional Transportation
- Charter School Finance Reform
- Full Funding of Education Circuit Breaker
- Funding to Support Education for Mobile Students
- Strengthen the Children's Services Safety Net through Inter-agency Collaboration
- Relief from Excessive Regulation
- Accountable Virtual Schools

MASC DAY ON THE HILL 2012

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mandates (health, nutrition, concussion prevention, as well as recently announced provisions for educator evaluation that will have significant ramifications for collective bargaining) that will require costly new processes to be implemented. Additional challenges are posed by the growing number of charter schools, the new virtual charter schools and the pressures on districts threatened by mayoral or other administrative usurping of local control.

For budget and regulation-weary school leaders, the solution begins with you and your colleagues. Never before has it been as imperative to remind legislators of the critical need for additional—and sustainable—resources. If districts are to meet the challenges of educating all children to a 21st century standard in an era of increasingly fierce global competition where “average” is no longer good enough, schools will need to support and grow student learning opportunities.

These and other issues (see sidebar “Legislative Priorities” above) will lead the agenda at MASC’s 2012 DAY ON THE HILL program at the State House on Tuesday, March 27. Members are encouraged to bring the message to Beacon Hill that real achievement and accountability can only be accomplished with real dollars. This year’s advocacy program will include critical discussions around the future of education funding in an era of high expectations; the need to support and strengthen services for mobile and other challenged students through improved inter-agency collaboration; a renewed call for legislative commitment to comprehensive school funding; and a special afternoon briefing on the new educator evaluation regulations, the urgency of the timeline, and the implications for collective bargaining.

School committee presence at Day on the Hill is critical, according to MASC President Penny Blackwell. School leaders

need to raise their voice to state and federal policymakers, she notes. “Our 2200 school committee members represent the state’s largest body of elected officials. Our collective influence potential to offer solutions and advance action for student achievement is enormous. There has never been a better, or more critical, time to leverage the moment, push hard for our issues and impress upon legislators the urgency of implementing the fiscal and regulatory reforms that will move districts forward and ensure long-term sustainability.”

Blackwell also reminds members that pressure on legislators from competing interests will be fierce, and “there will be other voices in the education and business communities who will attempt to drown out our message. It is up to all of us to demonstrate leadership through advocacy and keep our issues in the spotlight.”

Day on the Hill registration information has been mailed to all school committee members and superintendents, and registration information is posted online. As in the past, MASC encourages members to invite their student representative to the school committee to join them at the program absolutely free of charge.

Please contact the MASC office if you have any questions about the program (800)392-6023 or check the MASC website (www.masc.org) for Day on the Hill registration information and updates. We look forward to seeing you at the State House on March 27.

And don’t forget to invite your legislators to join you for lunch in the Great Hall—prepared and catered by MA vocational school students.

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: An NSBA Affiliate WEBINAR

Community engagement offers a great opportunity for a school committee to reach out to their community and share a positive message and information about their school district. Learn about proactive strategies and key elements for successful community engagement. **Presenters: NSBA and State Association Staff**

Wednesday, March 14, 2012 • 3:00-4:00pm

There is no cost to participate but space is limited!

Reserve your Webinar Seat now at: <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/939944176>

School funding

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Kerry and Representatives Stephen Lynch, John Olver, Richard Neal, Barney Frank, William Keating, John Tierney and Edward Markey. At these meetings, MASC and the legislators discussed the impact of the economy on districts ability to provide services to students and MASC urged the legislators to support initiatives to provide more flexibility for schools as well as a continued level of federal funding that can match the demands of NCLB and growing accountability regulations. MASC members also presented compelling testimony on the need to revise elements of NCLB, as well as continued support for the Perkins Act and vocational education and presented important information on the impact of student mobility on school districts and student achievement. The delegation concluded by asking legislators to support repeal of the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision of the Social Security Act in order to make it possible for districts to hire high quality teachers from private industry.

In workshops and breakout sessions during the three-day event, the more than 800 attendees were briefed on key education issues by NSBA staff, including the urgent need for members to advocate strongly for accountability changes to NCLB and for adequate



Left to right: MASC President Dorothy Presser (Lynnfield), Division III Vice Chair Charlene McEntee (Plainville), President-Elect Mary Jo Rossetti (Somerville), Secretary-Treasurer Ann Marie Cugno (Medford), and Vice President Jacqueline Doherty (Lowell) discuss the need for NCLB reauthorization and revision with Congressman Michael Capuano.

funding for public education, not only to help stem losses during the ongoing economic downturn, but also to enable districts to support the spiraling costs of educational mandates. Also on the agenda was the ongoing stalemate in the reauthorization of NCLB (now almost two years overdue), as the House and Senate continue their parti-

san positions on revising elements of the bill. Currently, both the House and Senate have put forward draft legislation (NSBA urged support for the House version) although in their meetings with MA legislators, MASC learned that few of them were confident that a bill would get passed in an election year.

March 7 (W)

Division III Meeting

Joseph Case HS, Swansea

March 27 (Tu)

DAY ON THE HILL

State House, Boston

April 9 (M)

Division VII Meeting

D-Y High School, Yarmouth

April 18 (W)

COSCAP Mini-Marathon Workshop

Westborough HS, Westborough

Massachusetts Association of School Committees

One McKinley Square, Boston MA, 02109

(617)523-8454 (800)392-6023 FAX: (617)742-4125

www.masc.org

MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES

MASC PAST PRESIDENT'S SCHOLARSHIP Information and Application for 2012 Award

MASC has established a scholarship funded by and honoring the Association's Past President's to recognize an outstanding student who demonstrates outstanding scholarship, service to the school district, community or public at large, or distinguished achievement.

Eligible candidates must be public high school seniors in a municipal or regional school district that is a member of MASC and a relative of a current or former school committee member.

The scholarship winner will be selected by a panel of MASC Past Presidents. Criteria have been established broadly to recognize and encourage a wide range of applicant interest.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

The Past Presidents may consider any of the following criteria in considering applicants or nominees:

- Outstanding Scholarship
- Service to the School District, Community or the Public at Large
- Distinguished Achievement in any Field.
- Relationship to the current or former MASC member.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

Eligible students may apply directly by submitting the brief application and statement. School Committee members and others may submit the application and statement on behalf of any eligible student. Applicants may submit supporting data but are asked to limit all submissions to no more than five pages.

Applications must be submitted in hard copy format via US Mail and must be received not later than 5:00 p.m., April 23, 2012. Applications must be sent to:

Executive Director, Massachusetts Association of School Committees, One
McKinley Square, Suite 200, Boston, MA 02109

Applications may be downloaded from the MASC Web Site at www.masc.org.

**MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES
PAST PRESIDENT'S SCHOLARSHIP - Application for 2012 Award**

NOMINEE:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

SCHOOL: _____

DISTRICT: _____

RELATIONSHIP TO CURRENT OR FORMER MASC MEMBER:

NOMINATOR (IF OTHER THAN NOMINEE)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL _____ PHONE: _____

SCHOOL/DISTRICT: _____

RELATIONSHIP TO CURRENT OR FORMER MASC MEMBER:

Please attach a statement that explains how the candidate demonstrates scholarship, leadership, service to the school, community or public and/or outstanding achievement.

Submit this sheet and attachment(s) to:

Executive Director, MASC
One McKinley Square, Suite 200
Boston, MA 02109

Applications must be received by 5:00 p.m., April 23, 2012.