

MASC Bulletin

March 2008 v.43 n.2

www.masc.org

MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES

Preview: Day on the Hill 2008

School leaders encouraged by recent restructuring changes and initiatives

ON BEACON HILL, THE TIMES ARE INDEED A-changing and much of the credit for recent initiatives goes to MASC members and other school leaders who have led the charge over many months for a more collaborative education partnership. The 2008 legislative session begins at the same time as we welcome a newly expanded Board of Education, a new Commissioner of Education, a newly established Education Secretariat and—of paramount importance—a revitalized commitment from the administration to continue to listen and work with us toward our common goals.

What has not changed is the continuing—and growing—need for additional and sustainable resources; concerns about the charter school funding formula and enrollment figures; the many-layered challenges posed by the mandates of MCAS and NCLB and the goal of educating all children to a 21st century standard in an era of global competition and economic recession. These and other issues will lead the agenda at MASC's



2008 Day on the Hill program at the State House on Tuesday, April 29.

Members are encouraged to bring the message that real achievement and accountability can only be accomplished with real funding increases, and remind their legislators of the soaring price tags associated with complying with state and federal requirements.

[continued on page 3](#)

NCLB reauthorization/reforms lead MASC/Congressional dialogues

With the issue of reauthorization of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act pending in Congress, 12 members of MASC's Federal Relations Network took their case to Capitol Hill last month along with nearly 1000 other school board members from across the country as

Relations summit presented by the National School Boards Association (NSBA).

In visits to Capitol Hill, the Massachusetts delegation met with education advisors to Senator Edward Kennedy and aides to Congressmen Richard Neal, James McGovern,

MA educators encouraged to TeLL it like it is. . .

MA educators opinions are actively being sought this month via the MA Teaching, Learning and Leading Survey (TeLLS)—the first-ever online survey of all teachers and administrators in the state. The survey is designed to give educators a chance to express their opinions about what works well and where changes are needed to improve teaching and learning in their schools and is available through March 18 at www.masstell.org. MASC is one of the sponsors of the survey. **PLEASE ENCOURAGE YOUR TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS TO RESPOND BEFORE THE MARCH 18** closing date.

MASSNEWS

Three new Charter Schools approved

At their February meeting, the Board of Education voted to grant charters to the founders of three new proposed charter schools, including one that will open this fall.

The Department of Education received 10 proposals for new charter schools this year, and requested full applications from five of the founding groups. Of that group Acting Commissioner Jeffrey Nellhaus recommended the Board approve four new charters, one of which the Board rejected.

The new charter schools are:

- **The Silver Hill Elementary School** will reopen as the Silver Hill Horace Mann Charter School in Fall 2008. The school will be located in Haverhill and will enroll a maximum of 580 students in grades K-5. The school will emphasize enrichment education, and social and character development.

- **The Dorchester Collegiate Academy Charter School** located in Boston, will open in 2009 and will enroll a maximum of 240 students in grades 4-12. The school will focus on providing students from the Greater Boston area with the skills they need to successfully transition into college without requiring remediation.

- **The Hampden Charter School of Science** will open in 2009. This will be a regional school serving a maximum of 350 students in grades 4-12 from Chicopee, Ludlow, Springfield and West Springfield. Its mission will be to provide a college preparatory focused education to students and will provide an extended math and science curriculum.

The Board rejected a proposal for the International Charter School of Southeastern Massachusetts, a regional Brockton-based school that would have served up to 1300 students in grades K-12.

The state's charter school statute allows for a total of 120 charter

schools: 48 Horace Mann and 72 Commonwealth. There are currently 54 Commonwealth and seven Horace Mann charter schools in operation.

MassHealth Children's Behavioral Health Initiative

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Office of Medicaid (EOHHS) has just issued a Request for Information (RFI) for the **MassHealth Children's Behavioral Health Initiative**, an initiative under development that is designed to improve behavioral health services to MassHealth-enrolled children and adolescents under the age of 21. EOHHS seeks information from interested parties on the design, implementation, and delivery of the new Initiative Services, and on implementing a new standardized behavioral health clinical assessment process. Responses to the questions in the RFI are requested no later than April 1, 2008.

The MassHealth Children's Behavioral Health Initiative RFI can be accessed from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' procurement website, www.comm-pass.com. Directions for finding the RFI documents on Comm-PASS site are posted on MASC's website homepage at www.masc.org:

MASSNEWS

NSBA Appoints MASC Officer to Convention Role

MASC Secretary-Treasurer Ellen Holmes, a member of the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School Committee, has been appointed Sergeant-at-Arms for the 2008 NSBA Delegate Assembly meeting this month in Orlando. In this capacity, she will work with the NSBA Credentials Committee to certify Delegates on check-in, and assist with transmission of proposed resolutions and amendments during the meeting.

MASC Field Director appointed to Labor Relations Division

Jim Hardy, MASC Field Director—Policy, is the newest member of the Division of Labor Relations Advisory Council. He was appointed to serve on the Council last month by Governor Deval Patrick. The Council consists of 13 voting members, with five members representing labor, five representing management and three at-large. The Director of Labor and the Director of the Division of Labor Relations serve as ex-officio members.



The Council was created last November when the former Board of Conciliation and Arbitration and Labor Relations Commission were abolished and a new Division of Labor Relations (DLR) was established in their place. One of the goals of the reorganization is to make the resolution of labor disputes fairer and more efficient, according to Labor and Workforce Development Secretary Suzanne Bump. Among the first tasks of the Advisory Council is the submission of qualified candidates to the Governor for the DLR director's position as well as for members of the newly created Commonwealth Employee Relations Board (CERB).

Also serving on the Council is **Peter Berry, Esq.**, a member and Past President (2007) of MASC's Council of School Attorneys.

DIVISION MEETINGS

Division I—Northeast Region

A Division I meeting was held on January 31 at Haverhill High School attended by about thirty School Committee members and Superintendents. Joel Gagne, a former member of the Hull School Committee and currently a Senior Consultant with Avakian and Associates with expertise helping school districts with override cam-

[continued on next page](#)

paigns, presented a compelling program on communications and public relations suggestions for school leaders. Among the topics he discussed was the importance of two-way communications—why it is necessary not only to convey your message to the public, but also to understand the perceptions and issues of different groups within the community so that these can be adequately addressed in messaging from the School Committee. He also stressed the need for a united message coming from the school board and, hopefully, from other boards in town, especially when trying to pass an override.

Following the presentation, members took time to informally share their ideas and experiences. The meeting provided a great opportunity to meet and network with colleagues from other districts in the division. A follow-up meeting is being considered for later this spring. Please contact **Division Chair Dorothy Presser** at dorothypresser@hotmail.com with suggestions for programs or discussion.

Division VII—Cape and Islands

Division VII invites interested MASC members to attend its second annual Legislative Forum on Thursday, March 20th from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Cape Cod Regional Technical High School in Harwich.

The evening will consist of a buffet dinner presented by the school's Culinary Arts program, followed by election of Division VII officers for the upcoming year, and a chance to meet with members of the Cape Cod legislative delegation. There is a \$12.00 charge to attend the dinner; members may attend the meeting portion of the program at no charge. To register: www.masc.org or call for more information: (617)523-8454.

MASC files legislation

Per the action of the 2007 Delegate Assembly, MAC has filed new legislation relative to proof of residency of charter school students (text follows).

According to MASC Legislative Counsel Stephen Finnegan who filed the legislation and is following its progress reports that the bill was heard last month. No action has been taken yet, but Finnegan reports that several key legislators voiced strong support for the concept. MASC will keep members posted regarding further developments.

AN ACT REQUIRING PROOF OF RESIDENCY OF CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS

Section 89(O) of Chapter 71 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out the first sentence and inserting in place thereof the following:

Each charter school shall annually, no later than April 1, notify each public school district in writing by pro-

viding it with at least the names, addresses and dates of birth of the students who will be attending the charter school from that district the following September, as well as the new students who will be transferring from that district to the charter school in the following September. The charter school shall also notify each public school district in writing no later than October 15, March 1 and June 15 by providing it with at least the names, addresses, and dates of birth of the students attending the charter school from the district as of October 15, March 1 and June 15 respectively.

Sponsored by: Senators Anthony Galluccio, Patricia Jehlen; Representatives Denise Provost, Carl Sciortino, Stephen Smith

Day on the Hill

[continued from page 1](#)

This year's program will include critical discussions around the future of education funding in an era of higher expectations; the need for additional flexibility around the many competing assessment requirements; and a renewed call for legislative commitment to comprehensive school funding.

Keynote presenters (invited) include: Governor **Deval Patrick**; Lt. Governor **Timothy Murray**; Senate Ways & Means Chair **Steven Panagiotakos**; House Ways & Means Chair **Robert DeLeo**; Senate Education Committee Chair **Robert Antonioni**; and House Education Committee Chair **Patricia Haddad**.

School committee presence at Day on the Hill is critical, according to MASC President Ellen Furtado. "We are very encouraged by the recent changes at the Board and Department of Education, and by the administration's spirit of openness and cooperation with school leaders. The Governor, Lt. Governor and Special Education Advisor Dr. Dara Mohler-

Faria have made a point of seeking our input on regulatory and funding concerns and have appointed an unprecedented number of MASC members to participate on task forces, exploratory commissions, advisory committees and the School Readiness Project, which is expected to be reported out later this spring." Nevertheless, Furtado cautions, the Governor and the legislature will be faced with many competing demands for additional dollars and "it is imperative that we impress upon them the urgency of moving forward to make fiscal and regulatory reform an education priority."

Day on the Hill registration information has been mailed to all school committee members and superintendents and the registration information and forms are posted online. As in the past, MASC encourages members to invite their student representatives to join them at any portion of 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 for Day on the Hill updates: www.masc.org. We look forward to seeing you on April 29.

Federal Relations Network

continued from page 1

Michael Capuano, Stephen Lynch, Edward Markey, John Olver, William Delahunt, John Tierney and Barney Frank, asking for comprehensive reform of NCLB in order to provide more flexibility for schools, as well as a level of federal funding that is more commensurate with the extensive obligations the federal law places on schools. During these discussions, MASC members presented compelling testimony on the negative ramifications of the NCLB mandate, as well as the need for full federal funding of IDEA; continued support of vocational education; environmentally safe schools; and how current Social Security provisions make it difficult for districts to hire high quality teachers from private industry.

In workshops and breakout sessions during the event, attendees were briefed on key education issues by NSBA staff and heard from Congressional leaders who addressed the impact of the upcoming presidential election, the slumping economy and global concerns and discussed the special challenges—and opportunities—these present for public education advocates. According to Senator Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.), the

Members of MASC's Federal Relations Network took their concerns to Congress last month, bringing well-documented information on the need to reform No Child Left Behind, continue support and funding for the Perkins Vocational Act, the impact of student mobility on education, and strategies to secure the resources necessary to both comply with federal mandates and increase educational achievement. Pictured left to right, (lower step): MASC Vice President Kathleen Robey (Marlborough); Linn Caprarella (Plainville); Ellen Holmes, MASC Secretary-Treasurer (Ashburnham-Westminster); MASC President Ellen Furtado (Swansea); MASC President-Elect Debra Bibeau (Amesbury). (upper step): Joseph Santos, MASC Past President (Ludlow); Dorothy Presser, Division I Chair (Lynnfield); Charlene McEntee Division III Vice Chair (Plainville); Mary Jo Rossetti, Division II Chair (Somerville); Mindy Kempner, Division VIII Chair (Southeastern Voc. Tech.); Michael Gilbert, MASC Technology Director (Whittier Voc. Tech.). Boston School Committee member Elizabeth Reilinger (not pictured) and Executive Director Glenn Koocher also attended the three-day program.



next president will need to engage in a new discussion about the role of education in the federal government, and “listen to those closest to education—school board members, educators and parents.”

Hagel, long a champion of full funding for IDEA, reiterated the imperative that the government honor its original commitment when the special education mandate was enacted in 1975. Otherwise, he said,

local districts will have to divert more and more of their scarce local resources to comply with the sped mandates. Participants were also encouraged to ask their legislators to support the NCLB Improvements Act (HR 684) introduced by Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska), which includes 40 recommendations proposed by NSBA to make the law more flexible, less punitive and more responsive to the needs of districts.

Massachusetts Association of School Committees

One McKinley Square, Boston MA, 02109

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

www.masc.org