

EDUCATION ISSUES UPDATE

Governor signs transgender public accommodations bill

On Friday, July 8 Governor Baker signed into law legislation protecting transgender people from discrimination, less than a day after he received the comprise legislation approved by both House and Senate the prior day. The law bans discrimination based on gender identity in places of public accommodations and would also transgender people to use sex-segregated facilities such as locker rooms and bathrooms that correspond to their gender identity (not necessarily their birth gender).

The bill directs the MA Commission Against Discrimination to adopt policies on enforcing the law and also requires the Attorney General's office to provide guidance on how to handle legal action if any person were to assert gender identity for an improper purpose. Both offices have until September 1 to report their recommendations, with the law taking full effect on October 1.

MASC will provide further updates to members on the implications for school districts.

SJC pulls Common Core from November ballot

In a unanimous July 1 ruling, the Supreme Judicial Court struck down an attempt to revoke the use of the Common Core classroom standards by putting the issue to the voters on the November ballot.

In reaching its decision, the Court did not consider the merits of Common Core. But in scrutinizing the legal language, the court feared the multi-part question would have put voters in the "untenable position" of deciding "two separate public policy issues" with a single yes-no vote.

The ruling came just days before the anti-Common Core group — which says it has collected 130,000 signatures since last year — was poised to clear the eighth and final hurdle to qualify for the ballot.

But Common Core supporters — a collection initially of 10 people, with help from the law firm Foley Hoag and the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education — intervened, challenging the attorney general's approval of the question's legal language.

The proposed question had called for: rescinding the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's 2010 vote to adopt Common Core; restoring previous Massachusetts curriculum standards; establishing a new process for developing future frameworks; and annually publishing the questions and answers from the previous year's assessment tests.

The high court found that while those issues might be related, they fail to meet the constitutional standard for "coherence." And publishing the tests, it said, would force the state to invest in creating new tests for each grade and subject each year — a taxpayer expense not hinted at in the question's wording.

SEL and Equity/Poverty Concerns lead Joint Conference Agenda

Critical issues confronting school districts large and small will be in the spotlight at the MASC/MASS 2016 Conference (November 2-5, Hyannis Resort and Conference Center). These include the social/emotional challenges that students across the economic and academic spectrum are confronting—both in the classroom and at home—and strategies that some schools have implemented to help students cope with these 21st century stresses. (see session list on pages 2-4)

Also prominent on the agenda will be keynote discussions of the growing number of students living in poverty (or on the fringes), and the impact of families' precarious financial circumstances on student achievement. Friday (Nov. 4) General Session speaker Dr. Ronald Ferguson



Dr. Ronald Ferguson

has spent a career as an economist at Harvard's Kennedy and Education Schools studying the issues of race, equity and poverty and the importance of eliminating the persistent inequities that constrain the potential of poor and minority students. He was one of the first scholars to bring widespread attention to the consequences — academic, moral, and economic — of educational inequity. More recently, Ferguson has widened his scope of inquiry, developing a broad vision for correcting inequities that centers less on the differences between groups and more on raising the bar for all students. Ferguson is the founder of the Tripod Project for school improvement and faculty director of

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Session Schedule at a Glance

MASC/MASS Joint Conference

(all sessions subject to change)

WEDNESDAY, November 2

PANEL SESSION I: 12:30-1:40pm

- Small Rural and Regional Districts: Fiscal and Enrollment Challenges
- Building a District Plan to Support Social and Emotional Health
- MassKids: Implementing the New Safe Child Standards
- Virtual Learning: Creating Regional Capacity to Expand Opportunities for All
- Interest-Based Bargaining
- Social/Emotional Learning: District-Level Partnerships and State Policy
- Cultural Implementation

PANEL SESSION II: 1:50-3:00pm

- Improve Outcomes with Student Survey Feedback
- Seven Habits of Happy Kids: An Elementary School's Response to Social Emotional Learning
- New Superintendent Induction Program: Ensuring a Smooth Transition
- DESE: Report from the Civic Learning and Engagement Task Force
- Goal Setting and Strategic Planning
- Foreign Exchange Students: Challenges and Benefits
- Policies You Need

MASC DELEGATE ASSEMBLY: 3:15pm

PANEL SESSION III: 3:25-4:30pm

- Budget Development: The School Committee's Role
- What Educational Collaboratives Can Do For You
- Innovations in Global STEM Programming
- Emergency Preparedness: Engaging Community Stakeholders in Crisis Planning and Protocols
- Candidate Performance Assessment: Impact on Mentoring, Hiring, Evaluation and Preparation Processes

MASS BUSINESS MEETING: 4:30pm

KEYNOTE DINNER Guest speaker: Rev. Liz Walker 7:00pm

**Early Bird Rate
Extended
through July 31.**

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THURSDAY, November 3

PANEL SESSION IV: 8:45-10:00am

- Strategies for Children: Implementing PreK Programs and Building Capacity
- Vocational Technical/Agricultural Education: Best and Emerging Practices
- Building Blocks for Learning: Connection Between Social/Emotional Health and Academic Achievement
- Families in Crisis: Addressing Social and Emotional Needs
- Code of Conduct: Establishing a Positive Behavioral Intervention Support Model
- Charter School Reform Update
- NEASC Accreditation Process: A New and Improved Model
- MCAS 2.0: An Update

GENERAL SESSION Guest speaker: Dr. Nicholas Covino, William James College 10:45am

PANEL SESSION V: 2:30-3:45pm

- School Building Authority Update
- School Law 101
- Social/Emotional Learning: Educational Collaborative Initiatives
- Advocacy and Media Strategies
- Superintendent Contracting: Dos and Don'ts
- Supporting Transgender Students: Laws, Policies and Best Practices
- District Governance Program: The Path to More Effective Boardmanship
- Special Ed Transportation: Cost-Savings Strategies

PANEL SESSION VI: 4:00-5:15pm

- Special Education Issues Update
- Recovery High Schools: Best Practices
- School Law 201
- Regional Schools Budget Oversight: It's Your Responsibility!
- Educator Evaluation: Tools and Strategies
- Chapter 70: What it is/How it works/21st century Challenges
- Agricultural Schools: Best Practices
- BoardDocs: Save Time. Save \$\$

DINNER Guest speaker: Jimmy Tingle 6:30pm

FRIDAY, November 4

PANEL SESSION VII: 9:00-10:15am

- MIAA: New Initiatives
- Creating a New Path for Assessments
- Ballot Questions: A Review of the Issues
- Peer-Relationship Violence Prevention Program Initiative
- **FEATURED PANEL: Between a Rock and A Calm Place: Behavioral Intervention Strategies**

GENERAL SESSION Guest speaker: Ron Ferguson, Harvard University 10:30am

PANEL SESSION VIII: 2:30-3:45pm

- Board Self-Evaluation
- Parliamentary Procedures
- Arts Alliance for Improved Academic Achievement
- Small District Issues
- School Committee/Superintendent Relations
- Legislative Update
- Family Engagement
- Multi-generational Communications (2:30-5:00pm)
- New Member Orientation: Part I (2:30-5:00pm)

PANEL SESSION IX: 4:00-5:15pm

- Student Activity/Revolving Funds: Audit Guidelines
- ESSA: Update on Recent Developments
- Senate Immersion Module
- Using Technology to Improve Achievement
- Social Media: Pitfalls & Practices

MASC Life Member/Awards Banquet 7:00pm

Two sets of panels and a featured lunch focused on students, families and school leadership

9:00am-10:15am

- Students and Social Media
- Student Internships: Implementation and Benefits
- Focus on Students: Dual Enrollment Opportunities
- Role (and Responsibilities) of the Chair
- New Member Orientation: Part II (9:00-11:45am)

10:30-11:45am

- Hot Topic! Early Start Times for Schools
- What is Maker Space? What it can do for Your Students
- Focus on Students: Peer Mentoring Programs
- Looking for a Leader: Superintendent Searching

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STUDENT VOICES LUNCH

Topic: Social and Emotional Well-Being: The Students' Perspective

School Committee members are encouraged to have students and families attend any of the Saturday sessions at no charge, although we ask that students/family members be registered so that badges and materials will be ready for them.

There is a \$25 fee to attend to lunch.

Register online www.masc.org or call 617-523-8454.

SEL and Equity/Poverty Concerns

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the Achievement Gap Initiative (AGI) at Harvard. He has consulted with a number of MA school districts and will discuss some of his findings during his presentation.

As yet another aspect of MASC's commitment to bringing focus to the challenges of equity and poverty, members of the MASC leadership team participated June 11-14 in an Equity/Advocacy program in

Washington DC presented by the National School Boards Association. The Saturday Symposium on effective policy and strategies to address equity included sessions on meeting the needs of diverse student populations; defining educational equity in the digital age; fostering healthy, safe and supportive learning environments for all students; and strategies for leveraging funding streams and community resources to help close

the achievement gap. The day-long Symposium was followed by NSBA's annual Federal Relations Network/ Advocacy program, at which attendees heard from key legislators on the recently enacted ESSA legislation and MASC attendees met with members of the MA Congressional delegation with whom they discussed issues around school funding, vocational education, student mobility and poverty, school safety, inter-generational issues and concerns about over-regulation.