

## MASC Summer Institute: Rise to the Challenge

Six months into a political reality that few would have predicted a year ago, school leaders are groping with a Pandora's box of unpredictable: From the Feds: staggering cuts proposed to education funding and Medicare reimbursement, and from the state: dire projections of less than anticipated revenues that could jeopardize the FY18 budget. Add to that mix the mounting regulatory/accountability requirements, skyrocketing benefits and pensions costs, changes to the low-income calculation formula and the encroachment of big-money/for-profit special interests all of which have left school leaders feeling caught between the proverbial rock and a hard place.

In the current environment, no



aspect of society—with education among the foremost—is immune to change, if not downright overhaul. The landscape for managing these challenges grows more complex with each passing week, but for school committees, informed guidance is available with MASC helping you to navigate this difficult terrain.

To prepare for the academic year ahead and what is likely be a problematic budget and bargaining season,

MASC's **Summer Institute** program on **July 28-29** will provide you with the information and tools you need to make the sound policy and budgetary decisions that will drive student achievement. The two-day Institute will present sessions on:

- MA and federal accountability requirements, including new changes to how DESE will classify districts beginning in the 2018-2019 school year;
- Goal setting and monitoring for continuous improvement;
- School finance and budgets: beyond the basics;
- The role of the chair;
- The importance of family engagement to promote equity and strategies school leaders can implement; and

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### AND THE WINNERS ARE. . .

**Christian O'Connor**, a resident of Groveland who graduated from Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School this month and **Alyssa Pool** who is in the 2017 graduating class at Hopedale High School were jointly awarded scholarships last month by the MASC Past Presidents' Council.

In awarding two MASC Past Presidents scholarships this year, Patrick Francomano, a member of the King Philip Regional School Committee who chaired the 2017 Council, noted that the number of outstanding applications submitted this year made it very challenging to narrow the selection down.

Pool, who will attend UMass-Amherst in the Fall, has been an active

volunteer in the Hopedale community, through her involvement with the Girl Scouts, the local branch of the National Park Service, and as a player and oboe teacher to local elementary school students she perpetuates her passion for music and musical performance in the community.

A member of the National Technical Honor Society, the Key Club, and an Eagle Scout, O'Connor was cited for his leadership and community service skills, in particular his efforts working with cardiac patients at Children's Hospital in Boston. He has enrolled in the Honors Electrical Engineering program at UMass-Lowell where he plans to study electrical engineering and environmental science. ❖

### BECAUSE YOU ASKED

*As school districts—and the Commonwealth—finalize their budgets for the coming year, one of the great unknowns is the impact on Massachusetts schools, students and families of purported cuts in federal education (and education-related) dollars. MASC has received numerous calls from districts concerned about reductions to/eliminations of key programs that provide services to students or subsidize targeted school spending. To help sort through the various reports, MASC has prepared an informal summary of the impact of the Trump budget proposals for education. Read below, and stay tuned.*

(This information is aggregated from several sources including the national news outlets, *Education Week*, and

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# Lessons from Sandy Hook: What MA Schools can Learn

The keynote session at the 2017 Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials' Annual Institute (MASBO), which members of MASC and MASS also attended, was **"Beyond Sandy Hook: Lessons Learned."** The morning-long session by Joseph Erardi, current superintendent, Newtown Public Schools; Daniel Jewiss, Connecticut State Police, the lead case officer for the investigation; Natalie Hammond, former lead teacher at Sandy Hook Elementary; and Michele Gay, parent of Josephine Gay, a late student at Sandy Hook Elementary, not only told their stories but moved to lessons that could be learned from the Sandy Hook attack and aftermath.

Dr. Erardi spoke of the need for trust in decision making, citing it as the reason the group chose to speak to school business officials about their experiences. The theme of trust and collaboration was repeated throughout the presentation.

Officer Jewiss repeatedly emphasized the importance of seconds, running through the timeline of what happened at Sandy Hook on December 14, 2012. The reporting not just of address but of location within a building in a 911 call—the empowerment of staff to call emergency services directly—the muscle memory of students and staff who have practiced responding to an emergency—all of these are ways in which seconds can be saved. Those seconds can save lives in an emergency.

Natalie Hammond spoke of the need for resiliency, of not letting tragedy define her, but help her to move forward to being a better person. As someone who continues in school administration, she stressed the need for a shared understanding with emergency response around school safety. Relationships with law enforcement, fire, EMS and others need to be built

on strong trust and a shared perspective. Just as school staff needs to understand school safety, public safety needs to understand child development. Staff needs hands-on training in which they are consulted and given a chance to improve; those protocols, even on something as simple as answer the door, must be implemented with fidelity. Substitutes, volunteers, and students are all part of safety response, as well, and shouldn't be left out of planning and training.

Michele Gay, who lost her youngest daughter that day, said "it is everyone's expectation that when

they send their kids to school...they will be reunited at the end of the day. And that is a fair expectation." In an emergency, we default to our level of training and knowledge. Because the school had practiced school evacuations, first grade students who escaped the attack in their classroom ran down the hill to the fire station, the school's evacuation center; they stayed on the sidewalk, because they had always been taught to stay safe on the sidewalk. We are all first responders in the first moments of an emergency, and everyone can play a role. ❖

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## Policy Reference Manual Update

MASC field staff have spent time over the past year reviewing and revising the MASC Policy Reference Manual. We recently sent out via email a *Policy Newsletter* with details of changes to the manual that School Committees should review.

Changed policies can be found in the Online Policy Reference Manual on our website (<http://www.masc.org/policy-services-3/online->

[manuals](http://www.masc.org/policy-services-3/updated-new-policies)) and the *Policy Newsletter* has been posted on the Updated/New Policies page (<http://www.masc.org/policy-services-3/updated-new-policies>).

A hard copy of the Newsletter is also being mailed to all members.

**For questions or more guidance, contact Mike Gilbert, MASC Field Director—Policy at [mgilbert@masc.org](mailto:mgilbert@masc.org).**

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### ma news

#### **MA Ranks #2 in the Nation for Child Well-Being but Federal Cuts Could Erode Gains**

Children in Massachusetts lead the nation in educational achievement and also rank highly in health measures, but more than one in seven live in poverty, according to the 2017 KIDS COUNT® Data Book from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The annual report measures state-by-state child well-being across four categories: health, education, economic well-being and family and community.

Four new fact sheets from Mass-Budget examine these Massachusetts

rankings, describe investments the state and federal governments have made to achieve these results, and explain how repeal of the Affordable Care Act and proposed federal budget cuts would threaten child well-being in each of these areas.

The complete 2017 Data Book is available at <http://databook.kidscount.org>, The KIDS COUNT Data Center also contains the most recent national, state and local data on hundreds of indicators of child well-being, and allows users to create rankings, maps and graphs for use in publications and on websites, and to view real-time information on mobile devices. ❖

## because you asked...

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NSBA reports. Items particularly important in Massachusetts are highlighted.)

### OVERALL CUTS TO EDUCATION

The administration recently announced a 13.6% reduction to overall education aid through cuts or elimination of education programs. This amounts to \$10.6 billion reduction from existing programs and a diversion of \$1.4 billion to charter schools and to vouchers for private and religious schools through a conservative version of Race to the Top. **About 3% of the total would be taken from Massachusetts – roughly \$360 million.**

The Trump budget also cuts aid to 12 million students attending college, including a 50% reduction in “work-study” programs. It also eliminates loan forgiveness programs **which MASC has proposed as a valuable tool to get good teachers in the right schools.** (Please note that the state also takes a portion of federal funding as DESE distributes the money and extracts its administrative charges. This can be as high as 10-20%, exacerbating the impact of local funding losses. DESE is already smarting from the exhaustion of Race to the Top funds.)

### CUTS IN MEDICAID

Non-education budget implications include loss of Medicaid by a federal transfer strategy, effectively shifting the cost of expanded coverage to the states. **In Massachusetts, covering and filling the gap for those covered by Medicaid could require the state to find as much as \$1 billion (most of the anticipated revenue that would be generated by the “Millionaires’ Tax”).** A recent NPR report estimated that \$4 billion in Medicaid services billed by school districts would be lost **(\$120 million in MA Medicaid school-related services reimbursements).**

Additional reductions may take place in housing and other social services. Perhaps the most astonishing element of the proposed cuts is the effect they could have on Trump’s voter base: many working families across the board would see cuts in programs for their children from K-college.

### CUTS TO PUBLIC SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Nearly two dozen programs have been designated for elimination on the grounds that they have “achieved their original purpose, duplicate other programs, are narrowly focused, or are unable to demonstrate effectiveness.”

In cases like Title II funding, which is the basis for a lot of district-based professional development, this money is, in many instances, the single source for programming. If it goes, districts would need to fund all professional development out of their own funds. In many cases, the budget document says that these programs should be funded by someone else—not the US Department of Education—but “federal, state, local and private funds.” **This means that states, school districts, cities and towns will be expected to pick up the costs.**

Programs on the chopping block include:

- Career and Technical Education (Perkins Act) of \$166 million. **This would cut about \$5 million directly from federal allocations to MA Chapter 74 programs.**
- After-school and summer programs (\$1.2 billion)
- Arts education (\$27 million);
- American history and civics academies (\$1.8 million);
- Full-service community schools that provide comprehensive academic, social, and health services to students and their families (\$10 million);
- Library-based literacy programs (\$27 million);
- “Impact aid” to districts that lose revenue because of federal facilities like military bases (\$66 million). **This has a significant effect on students whose parents work at federal bases and operations including Devens, Lincoln, Natick, Cape Cod (Otis AFB), and Westover.**
- International education and foreign language studies (\$73 million);
- gifted and talented programs (\$12 million);
- preschool development grants to help states build or expand high-quality preschool services (\$250 million);
- Special Olympics programs for students with disabilities (\$10 million); and
- Supporting Effective Instruction State

## EDUCATION BUDGET UPDATE

School services, budgets and social/family issues that may be impacted by the administration’s threatened cuts will be the part of agenda at **MASC’s SUMMER INSTITUTE** in Marlboro, July 28-29.  
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Grants, funds used to train teachers and to reduce class sizes (\$2.345 billion).

- Elimination of programs including mental health services, anti-bullying initiatives, and Advanced Placement courses (\$400 million).

### AREAS OF INCREASE

Trump would set aside \$1 billion of Title I funding for states that create open enrollment policies, which allow parents to choose schools that are not their neighborhood schools, and that allow federal, state, and local dollars to follow students to the public school of their choice. Diane Ravitch, formerly Assistant US Secretary of Education and currently an educational historian and education policy analyst, refers to this as the “backpack-full-of-cash” method of financing schools.

The administration’s budget also includes a conservative version of Race to the Top with \$400 million to “create, develop, implement, replicate, or take to scale entrepreneurial, evidence-based, field-initiated innovations to improve student achievement. . . and rigorously evaluate such innovations.” In addition, the Trump proposal would allow states to compete for \$1 billion in Title I funds IF they agree to meet his agenda for more charters, vouchers, online schools, or other alternatives to public schools. Vouchers are unconstitutional in Massachusetts but only to the extent that state funding is used. Federal funding could “follow the child” to private and parochial schools if Congress approved.

**MASC will keep you updated as we learn more. ❖**

## 2017 MASC/MASS Conference “Early Bird” Discount

Register for the 2017 Joint Conference before July 15 and save your district some serious dollars while ensuring the best in professional development for school leaders.

This year's conference, November 1-4, in Hyannis will feature more than 75 panels and special sessions, including featured speakers **Andrea Cabral**, former Secretary of Public Safety; **Bill Daggett**, President, International Center for Leadership in Education who will focus on personalized learning strategies; long-time Boston Herald sports columnist **Steve Buckley** who will discuss sports as part of students' social and emotional learning and the need to address sports bullying; as well as a **keynote panel of MA legal and medical experts** who will give an update on the opioid crisis and suggest strategies that schools can implement to help students and families cope.

Register now for early bird savings: [www.masc.org](http://www.masc.org)

## Summer institute

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- The opioid epidemic and the legalization of marijuana: addressing these issues through policy to ensure student and staff well-being.

The program will be held at the Marriott Courtyard in Marlboro. Sessions are scheduled on Friday (July 28) from 4:00-6:00pm and Saturday (July 29) from 8:15am-12:30pm). Register for one day or both (registration online at [www.masc.org](http://www.masc.org)). Six hours of (air-conditioned) professional development this summer can help you manage the challenges the rest of the year.

**REGISTER NOW.** ❖

### TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS

#### ENDING HUNGER IN THE CLASSROOM

This recently released first-ever annual report on poverty, hunger and free and reduced meal programs in MA elementary and secondary schools highlights the importance of breakfast as key to student achievement. Statewide, 44% (approximately 400,000 students) enrolled in MA public schools qualify for free or reduced price meals. In the state's 33 highest poverty districts, that jumps

to 87% of students.

While over two-thirds of children in high poverty schools participate in lunch, only half participate in breakfast—many because they are not able to access it before school starts.

The solution: breakfast after the bell for all students regardless of family income. Breakfast after the bell allows students to eat in their classroom for the first 10-15 minutes of the school day which Commissioner Chester has advised counts as time on learning if it is accompanied by teacher instruction.

However, according to this report, of the 300,000 eligible children in the state's highest poverty districts, only half are currently accessing it. Not only does this result in students who are not nutritionally prepared for a school day of learning, but forfeits significant USDA reimbursement dollars.

The full report, which includes charts of individual district eligibility and participation rates, can be downloaded at: [http://childrenshealthwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/MA-School-Breakfast-Report-April-2017\\_web.pdf](http://childrenshealthwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/MA-School-Breakfast-Report-April-2017_web.pdf).

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