

Massachusetts Association of School Committees

Equity and Cultural Proficiency: MASC Pre-Assembly Keynote Event

On the morning of Saturday, November 7, prior to the afternoon convening of the Delegate Assembly (1:00pm), MASC will present a special keynote program from 9:45am-noon on equity and cultural proficiency and how to have important—though often difficult—conversations around race, diversity and equity.

Presented by Dr. Kalise Wornum, (right), a diversity coach/consultant and most recently Senior Director of Educational Equity for the Brookline Public Schools, participants will learn how cultural proficiency (or lack thereof) plays out in the classroom; understand the connection between cultural proficiency and developing an equitable school system; and what it means to be a culturally proficient school leader.

The program will begin at 9:45am, with a welcome from MASC President Deborah Davis and National School Boards Association President



Charlie Wilson, plus a briefing on national issues from NSBA Executive Director Anna Maria Chavez. The session will also include remarks from program sponsor Comcast/Internet Essentials about the impact of technology on education, multiplied many times over by the ongoing pandemic.

All school committee members, superintendents, school committee secretaries and other guests are invited to attend the morning program at no charge. We do ask however that you register in advance so that we can send you the link to the session.

PLEASE NOTE: if you are also going to be attending the Delegate Assembly as a delegate/alternate, there is a separate delegate registration that must be received prior to October 26. For others who are interested in attending the delegate assembly, but who will not be voting delegates, you may join the assembly by accessing the link to the meeting that will be posted on the MASC website.

Delegate Assembly Update

The Association's 75th annual meeting at 1pm on Saturday, November 7, will also be the Association's first "virtual" assembly of delegates.

The meeting, which will be held via Zoom with voting being done on a separate "Simply Voting" platform, is open to all members, although only registered delegates/alternates will receive the "voting" link.

The Zoom link for the Delegate Assembly will be accessible to all members and will be posted on the MASC home page: www.masc.org

The agenda for the meeting, which is printed in the 2020 Delegate Manual that was mailed to all members last month, includes approval of the FY21 budget, meeting and division reports and nominations for life membership. Also on the agenda is the election of officers with two candidates vying for the position of President-Elect, and discussion and approval of proposed resolutions.

The candidates for President-Elect will address the Assembly prior to the vote.

continued on page 3

School Committee/Superintendent Relations: Now More Critical Than Ever

Join your MASC and MASS colleagues for MASC's newly instituted virtual Friday Learning Lunch series. On November 6 from 12:00-1:15pm, MASC will host a professional development program on School Committee/Superintendent Relations.

Research has found that the strength of the governance team – the committee and superintendent working together – is an important factor in the success of a district. When there are shared values, shared goals, trust and respect in this relationship, students are the ultimate beneficiaries.

We invite you to spend your lunch hour with MASC and

learn what the research says about best practices, as well as how some committees and superintendents have built and maintained strong relationships to successfully lead their districts. Program presenters are: Dorothy Presser, MASC Field Director; James Marini, (ret.), currently serving as interim superintendent, Brookline; Margaret Driscoll, Vice Chair, Melrose School Committee.

All are invited to participate in this online program. There is no charge to attend, but we ask that you register in advance so that we can forward you the link to the program and any background materials. Register online at www.masc.org

Governor submits revised 2021 budget

Late last week, Governor Baker submitted a revised Fiscal Year 2021 budget recommendation for a total of \$45.5 billion.

The revised proposal includes over \$100 million to support economic development and small business efforts as the Commonwealth continues to recover from the impact of COVID-19. The budget also includes a \$108 million increase in the annual Chapter 70 investment, and at least \$442 million in federal supports for K-12 schools.

The proposed budget, known as Revised House 2, is built on the revised FY21 \$27.592 billion tax revenue forecast. This figure was revised from the consensus revenue agreement announced in January and reflects the budgetary and economic impacts of COVID-19.

The budget proposes a total of \$45.5 billion in gross spending, excluding the Medical Assistance Trust Fund transfer, which reflects approximately 3.8% growth in spending over Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20). This represents an increase over the original House 2 spending proposal, primarily as the result of increased caseload costs at MassHealth related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Revised House 2 authorizes a withdrawal of up to \$1.35 billion from the Stabilization Fund, which would be reduced should tax collections or new federal revenue exceed the Administration's current assumptions. This proposal would leave the fund with a balance of approximately \$2.21 billion, a significant buffer in the event of future budgetary constraints in Fiscal Year 2022 and beyond.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS (IMPACT ON STUDENTS/EDUCATION) BY NUMBERS

Core Services

- Increases Chapter 70 education aid to local municipalities by \$108 million – for a total investment of \$5.284 billion
- Maintains the FY20 Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA) investment of \$1.129 billion to local

cities and towns \$4 million in funding for Community Compact related programs including best practices and regionalization and efficiency grants

- \$4.8 million for the Public Safety Staffing Grant Program managed by the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
- \$3 million for district local technical assistance

Education

- Protects education funding and, after recognizing the significant level of federal funding available to cities, towns, and school districts, total year-over-year K-12 education spending is more than what was originally proposed in House 2, which fully funded the first year of the Student Opportunity Act
- \$108 million increase in the annual Chapter 70 investment
- Recognizes at least \$442 million in federal supports for K-12 schools to assist with educating our students during the public health crisis

Early Education

- \$775 million for Early Education and Care
- \$85.2 million for a new trust fund to support future caseload increases and initiatives to improve early education and care
- \$10 million for future revisions to the sliding parent fee schedule reductions in parent contributions

Higher Education

- \$1.298 billion investment for the Department of Higher Education, University of Massachusetts, and state universities and community colleges, representing a \$14.8 million (1.1%) increase over the FY20 budget
- Approximately \$900,000 increase above the FY20 budget for financial aid and fee waiver programs at college campuses to maintain support for students currently or previously in the custody and care of the Department of Children and Families (DCF), or who have been adopted through DCF

MassHealth

- \$18.261 billion gross, \$6.617 billion net funding for MassHealth, a change of 10.1% gross, 0.1% net, versus the FY20 budget
- These changes incorporate COVID-19 related increases in caseload support and members, as well as costs for the public health response and provider relief
- This investment also includes the conclusion of the temporary, enhanced Employer Medical Assistance Contribution that was completed at the end of calendar year 2019, per statute

Children and Families

- \$1.063 billion for the Department of Children and Families, marking a \$236 million increase since 2015
- \$9 million to support continued progress toward a maximum caseload level of 15 clients per caseworker
- \$7.1 million to sustain investments made in FY20 for the expansion of support and stabilization services for foster parents, and services and supports for transition-age youth
- \$10 million for the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative

Housing and Homelessness

- \$181.7 million for the Emergency Assistance family shelter system
- \$122.7 million for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP)
- \$72 million in funding for local housing authorities
- \$53.4 million to maintain an estimated 3,036 beds, services, and day programs at homeless shelters for individuals.

The Joint Committee on Ways and Means is currently preparing a reconciled budget that Co-Chairs Sen. Michael Rodrigues and Rep. Aaron Michlewitz expect to release in the next few weeks. This will then be sent to Governor Baker for his review/approval.

Delegate Assembly

continued from page 1

The ten resolutions, including proposals relative to MCAS and High Stakes Testing; COVID-19 funding; Anti-racism; Lowering the Voting Age for Municipal Elections; and Monitoring Attendance of Students During the Pandemic, will be debated and voted on during the meeting. **NOTE THAT THIS YEAR**, due to the challenges of conducting the meeting electronically, **amendments to resolutions must be sent to MASC on/before noon, Friday, November 6.** Amendments may be emailed to gkoocher@masc.org or faxed: 617-742-4125. **There will be no opportunity to present amendments during the meeting.**

Delegates and alternates must be registered on/before Monday, October 26. Delegates and alternates are strongly encouraged to attend either of the two delegate training sessions that will be held on Friday, October 30 at noon and repeated on Saturday, October 31 at 10am. The purpose of the training session is to familiarize delegates with the electronic requirements, including the voting process, of the meeting. It is also advised that delegates/alternates have two devices (e.g. laptop and smart phone) available for the practice and the meeting. This will enable you to view the delegate assembly on one device and vote on the other. Otherwise you will need to toggle between the tabs on your browser.

The training sessions will also be recorded so they may be reviewed prior to November 7.

If you have any questions about the resolutions or the Delegate Assembly procedure this year, please contact MASC Executive Director at gkoocher@masc.org or via cell: 617-733-0497.

Legal Update: Andover CERB Decision

Analysis provided by MASC General Counsel Stephen J. Finnegan, Esq.

On September 8, 2020 the CERB (Commonwealth Employment Relations Board) determined that the Andover Education Association engaged in an unlawful strike when its members refused to enter school buildings to engage in professional development activities on August 31, 2020. The CERB rejected the Union's argument that because their members performed their job duties outside, the decision not to enter school buildings was a concerted, protected protest over the Andover School Committee's decision to require teachers to physically report to work during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic before the Parties had reached an agreement on return to work issues. The statutory definition of a strike (see M.G.L., c. 150E, S. 9A) was added to Section 9A in 1973, and remains unchanged since then. The statutory definition of a strike includes a public employee's refusal "in concerted action with others, to report for duty" and the CERB unanimously held that the phrase "report for duty" means reporting not just when but where the employer has ordered its employees to report and therefore, teachers were required to enter school buildings for professional development as directed by the employer.

DESE Update: Snow Days

The Department has received inquiries from school districts about possible snow days this school year. Districts have asked whether it is permissible to schedule students for a remote learning day in the event that schools are closed because of inclement weather or other emergency, instead of closing school and making up that time later in the school year.

For the 2020-2021 school year, because of the pandemic, each district has created a plan that includes a remote learning model. As set out in DESE's regulations (603 CMR 27.00), remote learning may include synchronous or asynchronous components, provided that students have opportunities to regularly interact with teachers, such as through feedback, office hours, and other regularly scheduled individual student interactions.

Remote learning models must include the following components:

1. procedures for all students to participate in remote learning, including a system for tracking attendance and participation;
2. remote academic work shall be aligned to state standards;
3. a policy for issuing grades for students' remote academic work; and
4. teachers and administrators shall regularly communicate with students and their parents and guardians, including providing interpretation and translation services to limited English proficient parents and guardians.

The Commissioner has determined that for this school year only (2020-2021), if there are days when schools must close because of inclement weather or other emergency, districts may choose whether to treat those days as "snow days" to be made up later or provide all students with remote learning on those days in a manner that is consistent with the regulatory requirements listed above. This decision will be made at the local level.

MASC LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AND ALL-STATE SCHOOL COMMITTEE AWARDS ANNOUNCED

The following individuals have been selected to receive MASC's 2020 All-State School Committee and Lifetime Achievement awards. The awards, which are traditionally presented at the Thursday night banquet during the annual joint conference will be presented at a later date when we can all safely be together. The award recipients are:

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Mary Antocci, Dudley-Charlton Regional
Robert Decker, Frontier Regional

ALL-STATE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Division I: **Mayor Tom McGee, Lynn**
Division II: **The Everett School Committee, Everett**
Division III: **Jon Wilhelmsen, Plympton**
Division IV: **Katherine Hennessy, Marlborough**
Division V: **Peter Demling, Amherst**
Division VI: **Mayor Thomas Bernard, North Adams**
Division VII: **TBA**
Division VIII: **Val Gilman, Essex Tech**
Division IX: **Roberto Jimenez Rivera, Chelsea**
Minority Caucus: **Vedna Lacombe-Heywood**

In addition, the following individuals have been nominated for Life Membership in the Association. Their full biographies are printed in the 2020 Delegate Manual that was sent last month to all members and they will be voted on by the Delegates at the (virtual) Delegate Assembly on Saturday, November 7.

NOMINATED FOR LIFE MEMBERSHIP:

Joshua Amaral, New Bedford
Richard Bath, Brockton
Alfred "Fred" Fantini, Cambridge
Elaine Rabbit, Dudley-Charlton Regional
Marc Terry, Ashland

FIRST CLASS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BOSTON, MA
PERMIT NO.
58830