

## CONFERENCE 2010 RECAP: Focused on the School Leadership, Student Learning and Raising Achievement in a Challenging Economy

Conference 2010 broke attendance records for the decade as school committee members, superintendents, collaboratives, school business officers, exhibitors, presenters and other special guests in the public education community gathered in Hyannis November 3-6 for the most ambitious school leadership program to date.

The conference was presided over by MASC President Kathleen Robey (Marlboro) and MASS President Michael Fitzpatrick (Superintendent, Blackstone Valley Voc. Tech.), who noted that the conference planning committee was joined this year by members of the MA Organization of Education Collaboratives (MOEC) and the MA Association of School Business Officials (MASBO). This led to an expansion in breadth and depth of critical programming topics and "something for everyone," as

Robey explained.

"The feedback we have gotten has been overwhelmingly positive. People have told us that the speakers and sessions were exceptionally good, the recently renovated conference center allowed for more informal interaction and the special "End-of-Year-Savings" and Friday-Saturday discount registration options made it possible for school committee members with tight work schedules and districts in precarious economic times to participate in at least part of the conference."

Once again, the program began with a series of "early bird" sessions on basic topics including "Optimizing your Advocacy Efforts" and "School Finance 101." The early bird program was followed by MASC's annual meeting at which 125 delegates considered seven resolu-

tions including special education circuit breaker extension, changes to charter school authorization and funding formula, concerns around district consolidation, restructuring and expanded regionalization, and mid-year budget cuts (a full report on actions taken begins on page 4).

The assembly also voted the incoming slate of officers for 2011: **Dorothy Presser**, Lynnfield, President; **Penny Blackwell**, Upper Cape Cod Reg. Voc. Tech., President-Elect; **Mary Jo Rossetti**, Somerville, Vice President; and **Steven Ultrino**, Malden, Secretary-Treasurer. Delegates also paid tribute to five veteran school committee members who were voted Life Membership: Robert Brousseau, Wareham; Ronald Dobrowski, Brockton; Marjorie Hurst, Springfield; Mindy Kempner,

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## MA Selected for \$15 Million High School Graduation Initiative Project

Governor Deval Patrick and state education officials recently announced that MA has been selected to receive \$15 million over the next five years through the federal High School Graduation Initiative (HSGI) to support statewide and local efforts for high school dropout prevention, intervention, and recovery.

Massachusetts was one of just two states picked for the award from the

U.S. Department of Education and one of 29 projects total nationwide selected for funding out of 184 applicants. The MA grant will focus on the 133 high schools throughout the Commonwealth that exceeded the statewide annual dropout rate of 2.9 percent in the 2008-09 school year.

As part of his strategic vision to improve public education across the state, Governor Patrick's Education

Action Agenda included the appointment of a Graduation and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Commission. The commission presented a report that included a number of recommendations on how the state could dramatically reduce the dropout rate through setting aggressive goals and intensifying supports.

DESE announced earlier this year that the state's high school dropout rate dropped to under 3 percent for the first time in the last decade, marking the third straight year of

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125 delegates were registered at this year's delegate assembly where proposed resolutions on the sped circuit breaker, charter school authorization and funding formula, MCAS and 766 schools, district consolidation/restructuring and mid-year budget cuts were considered and debated. Pictured: delegates voting on a proposed amendment. (A full report on actions taken by the delegates is posted on the MASC website: [www.masc.org](http://www.masc.org).)

## CONFERENCE 2010 in PICTURES

To see many more photos from this year's program, or to order go online to [www.tasherstudio.com](http://www.tasherstudio.com) click on 'Your Photos' Select MASC Put in the password: Cape



Incoming President Dorothy Presser presents the Life Member Award to President Kathleen Robey.



"Fiscal Friday" General Session Speakers Luc Schuster (partially hidden behind podium), Michael Widmer and JD Chesloff discussed the ongoing economic crisis and prospects for a turnaround.



National School Boards Association President Earl Rickman III (Michigan), MASC President-Elect Dorothy Presser (Lynnfield), and MASC Secretary-Treasurer Mary Jo Rossetti (Somerville) confer before the Wednesday night Keynote Dinner.



Thursday General Session Speaker Jim Braude shared insights on the recent election and offered tips on working with the media.



Members of the newly formed Council of School Committee Administrative Personnel (COSCAP).



Members of the Gloucester School Committee who received MASC's All State Division I award. Left to right: Michelle Sweet, Melissa Teixeira, Kathleen Clancy, MASC President Kathleen Robey, Val Gilman, Roger Garberg, Supt. Joseph Connelly, Nancy Harrison.



Agawam Supt. Mary Czajkowski, MASC President Kathleen Robey and State Representative (and former Agawam School Committee Member) Rosemary Sandlin congratulate Agawam School Committee Member Roberta Doering on being awarded the Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill award.



MASC salutes the MA students who were Gold Medalists at the 2010 USA Skills Competition. Left to right: Alex St. Martin (BayPath Voc. Tech.); Kyle Brodeur (Diman Voc. Tech.); Commissioner Chester; Michael Breen (Minuteman Voc. Tech.); Michael Flores (Shawsheen Voc.)

Photographer: Chris Kisiel, member, Woburn School Committee

## 2010 CONFERENCE

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Southeastern Reg. Voc. Tech., and Maureen Vacca, North Reading.

The assembly also made a special presentation to State Senator Robert O'Leary, Co-Chair of the Education Committee, who was presented MASC's Legislator of the Year award. O'Leary applauded the (often under-appreciated) efforts of school committee members and noted how proud he was to have played a role in moving forward the recent education reform legislation. While admitting the debate did not always go smoothly ("it was difficult just because it was so important"), he was gracious in his thanks to MASC for its efforts to be collaborative throughout the process. "I will miss working with you, and thank you for all your help and support." (Senator O'Leary, who has a Ph.D in history, did not run for reelection in order to be able to devote more time to his teaching responsibilities at the college level.)

Over the next three days, more than 60 panels and special interest clinics were presented, ranging in topic from "The Challenges of the New Social Media," "High School/Higher Ed Partnerships," and "Coerced Consolidation" to "New Data Tools for Financial Management," "Efficiencies in Regular and SPED Transportation" and "Avoiding Common Leadership Mistakes." Also on the program were sessions focused on new member training, revenue savings and generation (part of the Fiscal Friday program) and student health and wellness issues and their impact on student achievement. The Exhibit Hall, which drew a lively crowd of visitors—especially for the Thursday Ice Cream Social sponsored by Garelick—featured many new vendors this year who promoted cutting edge developments in curriculum software, safety/software devices and a spectrum of services around school building and renovation.

Both the Thursday and Friday General Sessions were standing-room only events as attendees lined the edges of the room to hear greetings from the National School Board Association brought by NSBA President Earl Rickman followed by local media host/commentator Jim Braude (Thursday) and a panel consisting of some of the state's most fiscally astute observers: Michael Widmer, President of the MA Taxpayers Foundation; JD Chesloff, Deputy Director of the MA Business Roundtable; and Luc Schuster, Policy Analyst at the MA Budget and Policy Center (Friday).

Braude opened his remarks with a tribute to all those in the room who dedicate their time to public service, and recalled the two years he spent on the Cambridge City Council. "I was an elected official and it was the most tortured two years of my life. The only thing worse than angry, small-minded, uninformed constituents is angry, small-minded, uninformed colleagues." He then delivered an insightful, often humorous and very candid analysis of the state and national election two days earlier and shared some pointers on how school leaders can work effectively with their local media. "Work us, use us, adopt a reporter—we are crazed for information—and answer our questions to help us understand your issues."

On Friday (designed as a Fiscal Friday focused program) Widmer, Chesloff and Schuster shared their not always upbeat evaluation on the state of the economy and the prospects for a near-term recovery from the recession. Both Schuster and Widmer agreed that while the state is in a good position for the remainder of FY11 ("little chance of 9C cuts") it will be very different picture for 2012, owing to the reliance for the past two years on one-time federal monies and the collapse of state revenues (although all admitted that the state dodged a bullet in the rejection of the Question 3 tax rollback). "I think in the end we may not see as much of a restoration of cuts, but a

long-term structural change," Widmer concluded.

Other conference highlights included the traditional Wednesday night Keynote Dinner with Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester and special guest Dr. Lauren Smith, Medical Director, MA Dept. of Public Health. The dinner, during which awards were presented by MASC to the students who excelled as Gold Medal Winners at the 2010 Skills USA Competition, was followed by an informal cracker barrel session with Commissioner Chester who answered questions from participants. The Thursday Leadership Awards banquet honored the 2010 All-State School Committee and Lifetime Achievement Award recipients (a complete listing of this year's honorees, including photos, is posted on the MASC website).

The Friday luncheon featured guest speaker Dayle Hayes, MS, President, Nutrition for the Future Inc., and Chair of School Nutrition Services DPG, who offered a non-nonsense, fiscally responsible update on the connection between school nutrition, academic performance and school districts' bottom line. On Friday evening, the MASC Board of Directors welcomed attendees and guests to the Life Member reception and dinner, at which the incoming Board of Directors, newly elected Life Members and other distinguished guests were introduced. Guests also had the opportunity to enjoy an outstanding musical performance from students in the Marlboro A Cappella Choir, led with finesse by director Shannon Pypers.

The evening concluded with a presentation to Agawam School Committee member Roberta Doering, who was honored as this year's Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill Jr. award winner for her lifetime service to education, including her years as President of both MASC and the National School Boards Association and the program wrapped up with remarks from Peter Haley, a former

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# Report on Resolutions 2010

Following is a summary of the actions taken on the 7 resolutions and 3 proposed amendments to the MASC bylaws that were considered at the 2010 Delegate Assembly held at the Resort and Conference Center in Hyannis on November 3. 125 delegates were registered.

**RESOLUTION 1: SPECIAL EDUCATION CIRCUIT BREAKER EXTENSION** (Submitted by the Framingham School Committee; also sponsored by the Marlborough, Randolph, Lowell, Harvard, Canton, Malden, North Reading, and North Andover School Committees)

**BE IT RESOLVED** that MASC file legislation which would have the effect of modifying the Special Education Circuit Breaker law to assist and encourage school districts to create programs to keep students in district. The modification shall be that the state will pay 75% of any expenses exceeding two times the average student cost for all students housed in a collaborative program, and 75% of any expenses exceeding one time the average student cost for students housed in an in-district or substantially separate program.

An amendment to the resolution was proposed but did not carry (53 votes in favor, 64 opposed).

**The resolution was adopted as presented.**

**RESOLUTION 2: CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZATION** (Submitted by the Salem School Committee; also sponsored by the Randolph, Revere, Peabody, and Triton Regional School Committees)

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees file legislation before the General Court to establish a charter school authorization and funding system providing for the following: Charter Schools may be instituted in any School District or Region in one of four ways: 1. Approval of a Horace Mann Charter School application by the local School Committee.

2. Approval of a Charter School application by the district or regional School Committee. 3. Approval of a Charter School application by the voters of a School District(s) or region(s) at a general election or Town Meeting(s).

4. Approval of a Charter School application by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education without approval of either the School Committee or the voters of the district/region. Elementary and Secondary Education, funding shall be through the budget of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education without usage of Chapter 70 or any other local funds.

**The resolution was adopted as presented on a voice vote with one "nay" and three abstentions.**

**RESOLUTION 3: MCAS SCORES AND 766 APPROVED SCHOOLS** (Submitted by the MASC Board of Directors)

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education require 766 approved schools, including non-public institutions who serve Massachusetts students, to report publicly their aggregate MCAS scores and growth information but, in the process, preserve and protect the confidentiality of individual student records.

An amendment to the resolution was proposed by the delegate from Tantasqua Regional School District, which was ruled not germane by the Chair. It was moved and seconded to appeal the decision of the Chair. The motion to appeal did not carry.

**The resolution was adopted as presented.**

## RESOLUTION 4: CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA

(Submitted by the Everett School Committee)

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the legislature should change the funding formula for charter schools. The charter school will receive funding based on the Base Rate Components of student enrollment from the sending district.

**The resolution was adopted on a voice vote as presented.**

## RESOLUTION 5: DISTRICT CONSOLIDATION, RESTRUCTURING AND EXPANDED REGIONALIZATION

(Submitted by the MASC Board of Directors)

**BE IT RESOLVED** that MASC shall advocate before the legislature that local school governance and district structure shall remain with the discretion of cities, towns, and the citizens thereof, acting through the ballot or their delegated representatives on their city councils, school committees, town councils and town meetings, and further that MASC shall advocate to prevent granting authority to any appointed state official, appointed board, or receiver to coerce the restructuring of any school district and its governance without the expressed approval of the school committee, city council, town meeting, town council and voters of each affected community.

**The resolution was overwhelmingly adopted as presented on a voice vote.**

## RESOLUTION 6: MID-YEAR RETIREMENTS

(Submitted by the King Philip Regional School Committee)

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees file legislation that would end the practice of educator

retirements during the school year that, while convenient for eligible educators, is not in the best interests of the students.

**The resolution was defeated on a vote of 65-45.**

### **RESOLUTION 7: MID-YEAR BUDGET CUTS**

(Submitted by the MASC Board of Directors)

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees urges the legislature to continue to maintain the requirement that all changes to the Chapter 70 local aid appropriation be approved by the General Court and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the legislature further prohibit changes to the appropriations for public schools without the consent of the General Court, and further that the Governor and legislature be urged not to enact mid-fiscal year budget rescissions including so called "9C" cuts to appropriations for public schools during Fiscal Year 2011.

**The resolution was adopted on a voice vote as presented.**

### **Proposals to Amend the MASC By-Laws**

The Board of Directors of the Association recommended to members that the by-laws of the Association be amended as follows: Please note: new language is in bold; language being deleted is crossed out.

#### **1. Change regarding dates of terms of office:**

Article VI – Duties of Officers & Committees Section 6, change to read:

Officer Requirements – Each Association officer, if that officer ceases to be a member of a school committee, shall be entitled to serve until the following ~~January 1 and~~ **next December 31** and ~~each Division officer who ceases to~~

~~be a member of a school committee shall be entitled to serve until the next following July 1~~ **next December 31.**

**The amendment to the bylaw was approved as presented.**

#### **Article VII – Election of Officers**

##### **Section 1, change to read:**

Election and Term of Office –The officers, except for the President, shall be chosen by ballot at the annual meeting of the Association and shall hold office until the following January 1 **next December 31 and until...**

**The amendment to the bylaw was approved as presented.**

#### **2. Changes regarding Association and Division Officers:**

Article V – Division Organization and Administration Section 4, change to read:

Division Officers—Each Division shall elect such officers as its by-laws provide. The term of office of such officers shall be two years. Division officers shall take office on July 1 following election. The term of office of any Division chair- man shall expire upon the Division Chairman's acceptance of any elected office of the Association. **Any Division officer that ceases to be a member of a school committee shall be entitled to serve until the next June 30.**

**The amendment to the bylaw was approved as presented.**

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member of the Winchester School Committee who recent book *Bury Me Across from Burger King* offers a humorous reflection on the joys and tribulations of serving on a school committee.

The MASC/MASS/MOEC/MASBO Planning Committee extends its thanks to everyone who contributed to making this year's event such a success. A survey will be mailed out

#### **3. Change regarding electronic participation at Board meetings.**

Article VIII – Board of Directors Section 4—Quorum Add the following at the end of the section:

For the purposes of achieving a quorum, the President may permit participation by a board member or members via telephone, voice over internet protocol (VOIP) or other means that allow for distance participation in the meeting.

A motion was moved and seconded to approve the amendment to this bylaw regarding electronic participation at MASC Board of Directors meetings.

Prior to a vote on the amendment, a motion was moved and seconded to amend the motion with the following language:

**For the purposes of achieving a quorum, the President will permit participation by a board member or members via telephone, voice over internet protocol (VOIP) or other means that allow for distance participation in the meeting, as long as all Board members are able to hear all other Board member comments easily at all times.**

**The amendment, as modified, was approved on a voice vote.**

to all attendees very soon and we look forward to hearing your thoughts about this year's conference and your suggestions for future programming. The survey will also be posted on the MASC website ([www.masc.org](http://www.masc.org)) and can be downloaded. We hope you will take a few minutes and share your thoughts with us.

Happy Holidays and we look forward to seeing you in Hyannis November 9-12, 2011.

# Initiative Project

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improvement but recognizing that there is still work to do.

Planning and implementation of the HSGI project will be led by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The goal is to increase support for district-level initiatives through funding and technical assistance as well as bolstering the state-level infrastructure to maximize local activities to substantially increase the number of students who earn a high school diploma. This will be accomplished through a range of activities that promote mutual sharing of needs and promising practices at and across the state and local levels.

The HSGI grant will engage the 133 targeted high schools in the process of conducting a careful analysis to identify their at-risk students and advise them on effective and appropriate programs and policies to strengthen dropout prevention, intervention, and recovery approaches within each district. Massachusetts will collaborate with schools to assist them in implementing the highest quality interventions through technical assistance, training, and the exchange of promising practices.

Through the HSGI grant project the DESE will implement four key activi-

ties, which combine local and state-level actions:

- **Create a State High School Graduation Coalition:** The Department will create an inter-agency, cross-sector State High School Graduation Coalition to facilitate the statewide sharing of promising programs and practices, to engage in a public information campaign on dropout reduction, and to inform and support related state initiatives.
- **Expand the Dropout Prevention and Recovery Work Group:** The Department will considerably expand the existing Work Group to increase the number of participating schools and districts and broaden the variety and frequency of opportunities for networking and sharing promising approaches among the 133 members of the HSGI School Cohort.
- **Implement Research-Based Practices in the HSGI School Cohort:** Through a competitive grant process, the Department will help support targeted schools in implementing research- and evidenced-based practices and strategies. The Department will also provide technical assistance, state guidance, and learning exchanges with support from a new partnership with a state third-party intermediary organization.
- **Establish Three New Gateway to College Sites:** The Department will

create a new partnership with the Gateway to College National Network to establish the Gateway to College program - an early college model to support at-risk students - at three new sites through targeted funding and technical assistance.

The HSGI award is the fifth major competitive grant the state has received since May. MA earned the top score in the second round of the Race to the Top competition and secured \$250 million in funding to help implement the next generation of education reform in MA. The funding will be utilized to build a statewide data system to better track student performance, inform instructional practices and provide a new measure of teacher and principal effectiveness as well as to build a more professional teacher development and support system. Race to the Top also includes a focus on incorporating health and human services into the school day.

MA also received \$13 million to build a statewide longitudinal data system to tie teachers to student performance; \$59 million in School Improvement Grants to implement redesign plans in the state's Level 3 and 4 schools; and \$27 million through the Teacher Incentive Fund to attract and retain great teachers and leaders in 22 high-need schools in Boston and Springfield.

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