

## Governor files legislation to encourage creation of empowerment zones

Testifying on the Governor's FY2020 education funding proposal before the Joint Ways and Means Committee on Monday, March 18, Lt. Governor Karen Polito and Education Secretary James Peyser announced that the Governor will be filing legislation to encourage development of so-called "empowerment zones."

The bill will be based on legislation filed last session by House Education Committee Chair Alice Peisch and Sen. Eric Lesser, following an "empowerment zone" model piloted by the Springfield Public School district.

The bill, according to the Baker administration, would define an innovation partnership zone as at least two schools or one school enrolling more than 1,000 students, governed by a board of directors with the approval of the local school committee or the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Baker's bill would allow a super-

intendent, mayor, local teachers' union, school committee members, teachers, or a group of parents to start the process to create an innovation partnership zone. The elementary and secondary education commissioner could also initiate a zone instead of a receivership, or to transition out of receivership, for schools performing in approximately the lowest 15 percent statewide.

The zones would operate under renewable five-year performance agreements between their boards and the local school committee or state education commissioner. They would be able to negotiate directly with the local teachers' union and to contract with eligible operating entities for day-to-day management of their schools, including nonprofits, higher education institutions or "groups of experienced educators."

In 2018 when the Governor endorsed the empowerment zone legislation MASC expressed serious concerns that the zones were a backdoor strategy for private

operators and the administration to sidestep the outcome of the charter school ballot question and circumvent local school committee and community approval of any newly established school or school realignment.

As outlined in MASC's 2019 Legislative Priorities "these empowerment zones, as conceived by some proponents, could be established by the commissioner of elementary and secondary education without the consent of the cities, towns and regions that would have to host them, but instead by overseen by appointed bodies with no assurance that real parent or local input would be sought. MASC believes that any restructuring of a school district or schools within them without the consent of the elected local leadership or the people (i.e., school committee, city council, town meeting or local referendum) is a violation of democratic principles of local control and transparent government."

Empowerment zones will be among the issues that will be discussed at MASC's upcoming Day on the Hill on Wednesday, May 1. Other topics will include revisions to the Foundation Budget formula, regional transportation funding, the challenges of small and rural school districts, circuit breaker update, charter school mitigation, and the social services safety net. MASC has prepared materials for members to share with their legislators as the 2020 budget is being debated. Register to attend at [www.masc.org](http://www.masc.org).

### Legislators, MASC members turn out for education funding update

MASC Past President **Jake Oliveira** (Ludlow) and Division III Chair **Jason Fraser** (Plimpton) outlined the differences in the three education funding proposals (the Governor's Bill, the Promise Act, and the Tucker Bill) currently before the legislature. More than 70 members turned out for the March 6 meeting that also included presentations from **Representatives Josh Cutler and Kathleen LaNatra.**



# Grand testing experiment fizzles as states shake off Federal dictates

According to a recent survey by Education Week, the testing revolution sparked by the Common Core has all but evaporated in less than a decade, with only a third of the states still using the federally funded assessments designed to measure those standards.

In the current academic year, only 16 states are still using the PARCC or Smarter Balanced assessments in math and English/language arts. When the tests were being designed in 2010-2011, 45 states (including Massachusetts) reported plans to use them. Three years later, a year before the tests actually became available, only half the states were still on board and that has dwindled to a third.

The initial plan to have states sharing the same assessments would have been an unprecedented shift in US educational testing. States had never before agreed in such large numbers to use one set of academic standards and tests. The premise was that this single test and standards would allow parents and policymakers to compare student progress across the states.

But opposition to the length and costs of the tests led most states to go back to implementing their own test. While not abandoning the not wildly popular MCAS test, Massachusetts administered the PARCC exam selectively for two years before returning to a revised MCAS 2.0 graduation requirement. Currently only 13 states require students to pass a test to get a high school diploma, compared to more than half the states in 2002. In some states, students can use projects or portfolios to meet this requirement.

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## Legislative Committee Chairs Announced

Earlier this month Senate President Karen Spilka and House Speaker Robert DeLeo announced their appointments to lead joint legislative committees of particular interest to MASC members. A list of all legislative committees can be found at <https://malegislature.gov/Committees>.

### Ways & Means

#### Senate:

Michael Rodrigues, Chair  
Cindy Friedman, Vice Chair  
Jason Lewis, Asst. Vice Chair  
Michael Barrett  
Joseph Boncore  
Michael Brady  
Nick Collins  
Barry Finegold  
Anne Gobi  
Adam Hinds  
Patricia Jehlen  
Eric Lesser  
Joan Lovely  
Michael Moore  
Michael Rush

#### House:

Aaron Michlewitz, Chair  
Denise Garlick, Vice Chair  
Elizabeth Malia, Asst. Vice Chair  
Thomas Walsh  
Thomas Stanley  
James Arciero  
Brian Michael Ashe  
Sean Garballey

Carolyn Dykema  
Russell Holmes  
Paul Schmid  
Joshua Cutler  
Carole Fiola  
Mary Keefe  
Jay Livingstone  
Alan Silvia  
Daniel Hunt  
John Velis  
Christine Barber  
Carlos Gonzalez  
Jose Tosado  
Gerard Cassidy  
John Barrett, III  
Natalie Higgins  
Brian Murray  
Chyna Tyler  
Bud Williams  
Andres Vargas

### Education

#### Senate:

Jason Lewis, Chair  
Joan Lovely, Vice Chair  
Sal DiDomenico  
Adam Hinds  
Julian Cyr

#### House:

Alice Hanlon Peisch, Chair  
Paul Tucker, Salem, Vice Chair  
Thomas Walsh  
Jonathan Zlotnik  
Chynah Tyler  
Bud Williams  
Andreas Vargas  
Daniel Carey  
Richard Haggerty

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### Children, Families & Persons with Disabilities

#### Senate:

Sonia Chang-Diaz, Chair  
Diana DiZoglio, Vice Chair  
Jamie Eldridge  
Rebecca Rausch  
Brendan Crighton

#### House:

Kay Kahn, Chair  
Josh Cutler, Vice Chair  
John Rogers  
Jonathan Hecht  
Carmine Gentile  
Jack Patrick Lewis

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Nika Elugardo  
Tami Gouveia  
David LeBoeuf

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## Economic Development

### Senate:

Eric Lesser, Chair  
Brendan Crighton, Vice Chair  
Paul Feeney  
Walter Timilty  
Cynthia Creem  
Anne Gobi

### House:

Ann-Margaret Ferrante, Chair  
Kenneth Gordon, Vice Chair  
Brian Ashe  
Carole Fiola  
Michael Day  
Carlos Gonzalez  
Brian Murray  
Bud Williams  
David Biele  
Kathleen LaNatra

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## Elder Affairs

### Senate:

Patricia Jehlen, Chair  
Rebecca Rausch, Vice Chair  
Paul Feeney  
Edward Kennedy  
Marc Pacheco

### House:

Ruth Balsler, Chair  
Tricia Farley-Bouvier, Vice Chair  
John Rogers  
Bruce Ayers  
Carmine Gentile  
Michelle Ciccolo  
Nika Elugardo  
Kathleen LaNatra  
Tommy Vitolo

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## Health Care Financing

### Senate:

Cindy Friedman, Chair  
Harriette Chandler, Vice Chair  
Adam Hinds  
Julian Cyr  
Mark Montigny  
Joseph Boncore

### House:

Jennifer Benson, Chair  
Daniel Cullinane, Vice Chair  
Brian Ashe  
Christine Barber  
Steven Ultrino

Joseph McGonagle, Jr.  
William Driscoll  
Natalie Higgins  
Brian Murray  
Jon Santiago

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## Higher Education

### Senate:

Anne Gobi, Chair  
Joanne Comerford, Vice Chair  
Marc Pacheco  
Edward Kennedy  
Michael Rush

### House:

Jeffrey Roy, Chair  
James Arciero, Vice Chair  
Denise Provost  
Sean Garballey  
Josh Cutler  
Aaron Vega  
Stephan Hay  
Rady Mom  
Mindy Domb

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## Housing

### Senate:

Brendan Crighton, Chair  
Julian Cyr, Vice Chair  
Joseph Boncore  
Harriette Chandler  
John Keenan

### House:

Kevin Honan, Chair  
Joseph McGonagle, Jr., Vice Chair  
Alan Silvia  
Christine Barber  
Jose Tosado  
Peter Capano  
Christopher Hendricks  
Patrick Kearney  
Tram Nguyen

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## Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery

### Senate:

Julian Cyr, Chair  
John Keenan, Vice Chair  
Cindy Friedman  
Walter Timilty  
Brendan Crighton  
Joanne Comerford

### House:

Marjorie Decker, Chair  
Jose Tosado, Vice Chair  
Angelo Scaccia  
Carolyn Dykema

## MASC Survey results

In the fall of 2018, MASC asked members to tell about their use of and satisfaction with various Association programs, events and services. The data was collected in order to help guide development and use of tools and resources to maximize their value to the membership.

Highlights of the survey responses are posted in the Members section on the MASC website at [www.masc.org](http://www.masc.org)

Daniel Ryan  
Natalie Higgins  
Daniel Carey  
Tami Gouveia  
Tram Nguyen

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## Revenue

### Senate:

Adam Hinds, Chair  
William Brownsberger, Vice Chair  
Michael Brady  
Joanne Comerford  
Patricia Jehlen

### House:

Mark Cusack, Chair  
Paul Schmid, III, Vice Chair  
Colleen Garry  
RoseLee Vincent  
Steven Ultrino  
Gerard Cassidy  
Stephan Hay  
Mindy Domb  
Susannah Whippis

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## State Administration & Regulatory Oversight:

### Senate:

Marc Pacheco, Chair  
Barry Finegold, Vice Chair  
Paul Feeney  
Rebecca Rausch  
Nick Collins

### House:

Danielle Gregoire, Chair  
Sean Garballey, Vice Chair  
Marcos Devers  
Daniel Donahue  
Daniel Hunt  
Carmine Gentile  
Carlos Gonzalez  
David Biele  
Maria Robinson

## Tools for schools

### SFY19 SAFER SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES EQUIPMENT & TECHNOLOGY GRANT OPPORTUNITY

The Executive Office of Public Safety and Security's (EOPSS) Office of Grants and Research (OGR) will make available \$7.2M in funding for school districts and charter schools to competitively solicit one-time grant funding to assist public schools and local municipalities with enhancing school security and the safety of students and staff. Priority will be given to school districts and charter schools demonstrating the greatest need AND proposing cost-effective solutions to addressing high-priority gaps

or weaknesses. Consideration will be also be given to schools that are taking meaningful steps to establish a more safe and supportive school climate, in order to reduce instances of violence.

#### Applicant Eligibility

A school district or charter school, in collaboration with its local municipality (host city/town where the public school(s) are located) that certifies that it has a Multi-Hazard School Emergency Threat Assessment and Response Plan already in place is eligible to apply.

Both the Municipal Chief Executive Officer (Mayor, City Manager, or Town Administrator) of the host community AND School Superintendent

or Charter School Executive Director seeking a grant award must sign the application being submitted. Only one (1) application per school district and one (1) application per charter school is permitted for consideration of funding.

#### Key Dates

**Application Posted:** On or about Tuesday, March 12, 2019

**Applications Due:** Wednesday, April 3, 2019 by 4:00 pm.

**Anticipated Award Announcements:** On or about Friday, April 26, 2019

**Anticipated Grant Period:** May 1, 2019-December 31, 2019

All files needed to apply for this grant opportunity can be accessed at: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/justice-and-prevention-grants>

### Shutesbury School Committee member to serve on Regional School Transportation Commission

Dan Hayes, a 16-year member of the Shutesbury School Committee, has been appointed to serve on the state's newly formed Special Commission on Regional School Transportation. The Commission will be studying ways to improve efficiencies relative to transportation for regional school students, students in special education with out-of-district placement; students attending out of district vocational/technical and agricultural schools. The Commission is expected to file a report with its recommendations no later than December 1, 2019.

In addition to serving on the Shutesbury School Committee, Hayes is also a representative on Erving School Union #28 and chair of the Collaborative for Educational Services (CES). He has been an avid advocate at the local level seeking full funding for schools and funding reforms including aid to rural school district and quality education for every student.

A graduate of UMass-Amherst with a degree in business, Dan is the co-owner of an auto repair business in Easthampton where he employs many graduates from Smith Vocational High School in Northampton.

**masc**

Massachusetts Association of School Committees  
One McKinley Square  
Boston, MA 02109

# MASC DAY ON THE HILL: **Wednesday, May 1, 2019**

LEGISLATION • ADVOCACY • LITIGATION

Investing in all MA students

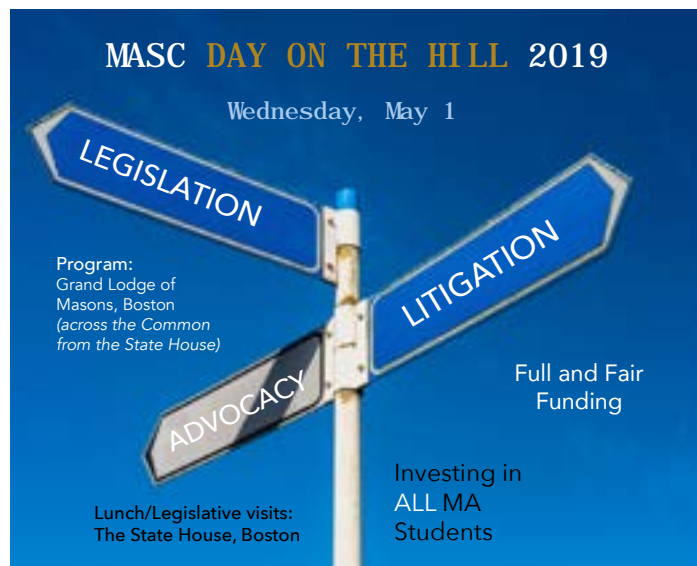
## PROGRAM

**Location:** Grand Lodge of Masons  
186 Tremont St., Boston  
(across the Common from the State House)

- Foundation budget legislation update
- MASC legislative priorities (see reverse side)
- Advocacy strategies
- School funding lawsuit restart update

## LUNCH

The State House, Great Hall  
Prepared and catered by  
MA vocational school students



**BRING YOUR STUDENTS, JOIN YOUR LEGISLATORS AND COLLEAGUES  
FOR THIS CRITICAL UPDATE ON THE FUTURE OF SCHOOL FUNDING**

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## REGISTER NOW:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Billing District: \_\_\_\_\_

District Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Participant's email: \_\_\_\_\_

Bill me    Bill school district    Check enclosed

Cost: \$75.00. Includes continental breakfast, materials and buffet lunch.

Return registration to MASC, One McKinley Square, Boston, MA 02109

Or fax: 617-742-4125

Or register online: [www.masc.org](http://www.masc.org)

School committee members and superintendents are encouraged to invite students to join them at this important learning/advocacy event. Students may attend at NO CHARGE but they MUST be registered to ensure that we have sufficient materials and resources for all.

# MASC 2019 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- Support for Early Education Programs
- Strengthen the Children's Services Safety Net
- Chapter 70 Funding Revision/Foundation Budget
- Full Funding for Special Education Circuit Breaker
- Charter School Funding/Approval/Mitigation Reform
  - Full Funding for Regional Transportation
    - Full Funding for METCO
    - Mandate and Regulatory Relief
    - Support for Rural School Districts
  - Retention of Medicaid Covered Services
- Coverage for Medically Insured Services in Schools

Visit MASC website for Day on the Hill updates.  
[www.masc.org](http://www.masc.org)