

MASC Bulletin

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MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES

JOINT CONFERENCE 2011 RECAP: LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY

Conference 2011 broke all recent attendance records as school committee members, superintendents, business officials, collaborative directors, administrative personnel, exhibitors, presenters and other special guests in the public education community gathered in Hyannis November 9-12 for the most ambitious school leadership program to date.

This year, conference planners responded to member requests for additional, early workshop programming, by jumpstarting the schedule so as to begin a full afternoon of sessions at noon on Wednesday and shifting the traditional Wednesday Delegate Assembly to Friday. According to many attendees, the scheduling adjustment enabled them to take greater advantage of the wide range of program options on topics ranging from Implementing Cost Efficiencies, to Using Data for Student Achievement, School Committee Self-Assessment, and Staying out of Legal Trouble. Throughout the three day event, many sessions attracted such an audience that they were occasionally standing-room only.

Once again this year, the MASC/MASS conference planning committee was joined by members of the MA Organization of Educational Collaboratives (MOEC) and the MA Association of School Business Officials (MASCO). This led to an expansion in breadth and depth of critical programming and “something for everyone” as MASC President Dorothy Presser (Lynnfield) explained.

“The feedback we have gotten has

been overwhelmingly positive. People have told us that the speakers and sessions were exceptionally good, the scheduling allowed for more informal interaction and the special “Friday-Saturday” discount registration option made it possible for school committee members with tight work schedules and districts in difficult economic circumstances to participate in at least part of the conference. That Friday was the Veterans’ Day holiday also

made it possible for members who traditionally have been unable to attend to join their colleagues for an intensive day of sessions.”

In addition to the full slate of school leader-related programs on Wednesday, the day also featured a special program for school committee secretaries/administrative assistants which included important information on records retention, and recent legisla-

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MASC issues sample policy on concussions

MASC is in the process of sending to all school committee members, superintendents and secretaries/administrative assistants a **POLICY NEWSLETTER** that includes the legal and regulatory requirements of the concussion legislation signed into law last summer. The mailing will also include a sample policy that districts may find helpful when drafting their own policies.

The legislation calls for the creation of a training program targeted at preventing and treating head injuries (concussions) suffered by student athletes. The Department of Public Health will oversee the development of this prevention program.

In additional regulations under the new law, school districts are required to adopt policies and procedures governing the prevention and management of sports-related head injuries. These policies would be based on input by a team consisting of, at minimum, a school administrator, school nurse or team physician if on staff, athletic director, certified athletic trainer if on staff, neuropsychologist if

available, guidance counselor, and teacher in consultation with any existing school health/wellness advisory committee. Once adopted, these policies and procedures need to be reviewed at least every two years.

According to MASC General Counsel Stephen Finnegan, districts need to ensure that the DPH receives an affirmation on school district letterhead by January 1, 2012 that the district has developed policies—on at least an interim basis—which have been adopted by the school committee. If the policies are only preliminary, the district has until March 1, 2012 to adopt final policies in accordance with the law and notify DPH of the adoption. Districts are not required to submit copies of the specific policies adopted, only affirmation on letterhead that an appropriate policy has been adopted.

Should you have any questions about the specific requirements or the timeline, please contact Jim Hardy at the MASC office: jhardy@masc.org or call 617-523-8454.

Report on Resolutions 2011

Following is a summary of the actions taken on the five resolutions that were considered at the 2011 Delegate Assembly held at the Resort and Conference Center in Hyannis on November 11. 108 delegates were registered.

RESOLUTION 1: Providing Greater Access for Students to Exploratory Visits to Chapter 74 Approved Vocational Education Programs

Submitted by Nashoba Valley Technical School Committee

Cosponsored by Shawsheen, Smith, Greater Fall River, Northeast, Assabet Valley, Greater Lowell, Minuteman, Joseph P. Keefe, South Middlesex, and Tri County Regional Voc. Tech. School Committees

BE IT RESOLVED: That MASC present to the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) the following addition to the Code of MA Regulations 27:07 language that states, "Structured Time must include delivering of school services via Exploratory visits for secondary 8th grade middle school students to which the district is also a member of a public Chapter 74 Regional Vocational Technical School district." [Proposed additional language from Groton Dunstable] with all costs for such exploratory visits to be borne by the Chapter 74 Regional Vocational Technical School District. (Amendment approved on voice vote.)

That MASC assert to DESE that MA Regulations on Access to Equal Educational Opportunity (603 CMR 20.00) was promulgated in part to ensure that all students have equal rights of access and equal enjoyment of opportunities, advantages, privileges, and courses of study at public schools in the Commonwealth, and further that

MASC propose to DESE that school districts shall provide middle school students and their parents/guardians with information on vocational technical education. Further, that MASC propose to DESE that the regulations recognize that common methods of providing information include the delivering of school services via exploratory visits for 8th grade middle school students to high schools with Vocational Technical Education programs and recruitment activities in middle schools conducted

by high schools with vocational technical education.

THIS RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED AS AMENDED (UNDERLINED TEXT)

RESOLUTION 2: Teacher Evaluation

Submitted by the Wareham School Committee

BE IT RESOLVED that MASC supports enhanced leadership of all teaching staff to include:

- Trained and state administratively certified instructional leaders/department heads/supervisors with the responsibility for an appropriate number of teachers such that the heretofore mentioned supervisory and evaluative tasks can be effectively performed and
- Instructional leaders/department heads/supervisors that spend a portion of their time in the classroom and the remaining time devoted to their instructional leadership duties, as determined by their school principal.
- An updated Chapter 70 formula to reflect the increased costs associated with this enhanced instructional leadership of all teachers in Massachusetts.

THIS RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED AS PRESENTED.

RESOLUTION 3: Charter School Funding:

Submitted by the Gloucester School Committee

BE IT RESOLVED that MASC reaffirms its position to change the funding mechanism so that Commonwealth Charter Schools, which are approved and supervised solely by the state, be funded directly out of a line item in the state budget. [Chelmsford proposed the following language (single underline) and that no charges or fees or reduction of state aid to education affect any city or town Groton Dunstable proposed (double underline) or regional district.]

THIS RESOLUTION WAS APPROVED AS AMENDED.

RESOLUTION 4: Enactment of a Freeze on Federal Regulations Pending the Reauthorization of No Child Left Behind

Submitted by the MASC Resolutions Committee

BE IT RESOLVED that MASC urge its member districts and, as an association, act independently to call upon the Secretary of Education of the United States to deregulate the No Child Left Behind law, its including the supplemental services set-aside and the unreasonable system of sanctions for failing to meet Adequate Yearly Progress standards, and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that MASC urge the Congress to enact a thorough revision to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that precludes unfunded federal mandates, and that establishes standards and assessments that are reasonable, workable, and fully funded.

THIS RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED AS IT APPEARS HERE WITH THE POSITION OF SECRETARY OF EDUCATION OF THE UNITED STATES SUBSTITUTED FOR THE NAME OF THE CURRENT SECRETARY.

RESOLUTION 5: State Educator Evaluation Process

Submitted by the MASC Resolutions Committee

BE IT RESOLVED that MASC petition the legislature to fund in full the cost of implementing these regulations, and, further that,

MASC petition the legislature to enact by statute requirements that these regulations be reviewed not later than every two years in order to ensure that unelected state bureaucrats will not have the authority to impose by regulation additional mandates that carry unreimbursed costs to the local public school districts.

THIS RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED AS PRESENTED.

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tion around CORI and other issues. More than 50 members of the 2-year-old Council of School Committee Administrative Personnel (COSCAP) attended the day-long session, many staying afterwards to visit the Exhibit Hall and attend the always popular Exhibitors Reception.

Over the next three days, more than 60 panels and special interest clinics were presented, many focused on issues of immediate concern to committee members and administrators, including the upcoming teacher and administrator evaluation regulations; the ramifications for collective bargaining; using data to promote student achievement; the impact of new technologies, both in building learning capacities, as well as the emotional and health ramifications of the uses/abuses of social media. And always, the economy, and innovative ideas from school districts on how to meet increased demands, more cost-efficiently and more productively.

Conference highlights included the traditional Wednesday night Keynote Dinner with the three education commissioners: Sherri Killins (Early Education); Mitchell Chester (Elementary and Secondary); and Richard Freeland (Higher Education) who all spoke to the need for their offices to interact and re-envision education from cradle to college. The dinner was hosted by MASS President Maureen LaCroix, and guests were treated to impressive performances by vocal and jazz performance students from Rockland. Wednesday night also saw the first Joint Conference presentation of the DESE/DPH School District Health and Wellness Awards, presented this year to Everett, Wilmington, Brockton, Foxboro and Lexington, representatives of whom were on hand to receive their tribute banners from Commissioner Chester. Thursday and Friday General Sessions were standing room only as attendees lined the edges of the room on Thursday to hear MIT labor and management studies Professor Thomas Kochan; Business Roundtable Emeritus

Executive Director Alan Macdonald; MTA President Paul Toner; Marshfield Superintendent Scott Borstel; and MASC President Dorothy Presser discuss the future of collective bargaining in an era of increased accountability and regulation. Thursday also featured the increasingly popular networking/buffet lunch (followed by lively attendance in the Exhibit Hall for the Ice Cream Social, generously sponsored by Cape Cod Dairy). In the evening, the Leadership Awards Banquet honored the 2011 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 Thursday banquet also paid tribute to the Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, Jr. award honoree, MASC's highest honor, which was presented this year to former superintendent and DESE administrator Karla Brooks Baehr. Baehr, received a sustained standing ovation from the capacity crowd for her "contributions, her courage, her conscience and her commitment to doing what is right for kids, teachers and communities without regard to the risk to her own personal career or reputation," noted MASC President Dorothy Presser. "She did not sacrifice principle to politics nor yield to the easiest or most popular strategies. She is, and has always been, the only one we all really trusted."

The Thursday banquet was followed by another conference first: MASC Movie Night, featuring Friday General Session speaker Tony Wagner's groundbreaking film "*The Finland Phenomenon: Inside the World's Most Surprising School System*." The hour-long film, a prelude to the next day's general session, examined the innovative rethinking of how education and learning are presented to students by Finnish educators, administrators and parents. The film, which was hosted by Teachers21 President John D'Auria, elicited much discussion and many follow-up questions from the nearly 100 movie-goers.

The Friday General Session opened with greetings from NSBA President Mary Broderick, a member of the East

Lyme, CT School Board; and opening remarks from State Auditor Suzanne Bump who reported on her office's focus on improving transparency and integrity in the management and use of state dollars and the "implicit promise that your money—taxpayer money—is going to be well spent, effectively spent, and openly accounted for."

Following up on his film of the evening before, Harvard Education School professor and prolific author Tony Wagner captivated the audience with his insights on the global achievement gap and what it means for today's students to be successful adults, workers and citizens in the 21st century.

"It is not that our [school] systems are failing," he emphasized. "What our systems need is to be reinvented to meet the challenges of a global marketplace and the technological revolution."

First and foremost Wagner called on school leaders to adopt new ways of encouraging thinking and problem solving, rather than the traditional emphasis on memorization and testing. "No one ever says, 'gee, if I'd only had more content I could have done better,' he noted. "Our students need more skills, not content, and work that is challenging. What is needed is a shift from what has largely been an information-based learning environment to a transformation-based learning focus. What students can do with what they learn is as—if not more—important in today's workforce where the ability to innovate and collaborate is key to success."

Friday programming events were also planned to recognize the November 11 Veterans Day holiday and several sessions focused on helping students and families who have a member serving in the military. The Friday lunch guest speakers included Dr. Paula Rauch, Chief of Child Psychiatry Liaison Services at Mass. General, who has helped many military families cope with the unique struggles they face. Also on the program were Robin Brown and her daughter Alexis, wife and daughter of

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MA National Guard Staff Sgt. Michael Brown, who recently returned from Iraq. Fifteen-year old Alexis spoke openly and movingly about the challenges she and her sisters endured “military brats” and many in the audience were visibly touched by her affectionate tribute to her supportive family as well as her honest account of how school leaders can help improve the climate for the military children in their districts.

Friday afternoon highlights included MASC division meetings and additional programming, as well as the Association’s annual meeting at which delegates considered resolutions focusing on educator evaluation; increased access to vocational exploratory options; charter school funding; and a freeze on federal regulations pending NCLB reauthorization (see page 2 for a full report on actions taken by the delegates).

The assembly also voted the incoming slate of officers for 2012: **Penny Blackwell**, Upper Cape Cod Reg. Voc. Tech., President; **Mary Jo Rossetti**, Somerville, President-Elect; **Jacqueline Doherty**, Lowell, Vice President; and **Ann Marie Cugno**, Medford, Secretary-Treasurer. Delegates also

MASC SEEKS MEMBERS FOR EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

In an effort to address the state requirements for using student achievement data as criteria to measure educator effectiveness, MASC has reorganized its Student Assessment Committee to the **Committee on Evaluation and Assessment**. The newly restructured committee will review and make recommendations related to measures of student performance that might be considered for the evaluation of personnel in school districts, and to review and make rec-

ommendations related to the evaluation process and tools for evaluation of superintendents of schools, including measures of student achievement that might be appropriate for these evaluations.

Members who are interested in joining the Evaluation and Assessment Committee should respond electronically to Executive Director Glenn Koocher at gkoocher@masc.org and to put “Evaluation and Assessment Committee” on the subject line.

paid tribute to six veteran school committee members who were voted Life Membership: Mitchell Blaustein, Sharon; Christopher Ghilarducci, Berkley; Elizabeth Lafond, Hatfield; Charlene McEntee, Plainville; Marc Peterson, Oxford; and Paulette Van der Kloot, Medford. These newly elected Life Members were also recognized, along with their Life Member colleagues, at the Friday night Leadership/Life Member reception and dinner which formally introduced the incoming Board of Directors, distinguished guests and the special talents of two student jazz ensembles from Lynnfield.

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 to all attendees in the next several weeks, 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). We hope that you will take a few minutes and share your conference thoughts with us.

Happy Holidays and we look forward to seeing you in Hyannis November 7-10, 2012

Massachusetts Association of School Committees

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