

MASC Legislators of the Year announced



Adrian Madaro Julian Cyr

The MASC Board of Directors is delighted to honor Representative Adrian Madaro and Senator Julian Cyr as the Association's 2022 Legislators of the Year. The awards recognize their respective efforts and continuing leadership in the area of mental health, including this year's major legislation that will have direct impact on children and families.

Adrian Madaro represents the 1st Suffolk District, which comprises the neighborhood of East Boston. As a lifelong East Boston resident and the son of an immigrant, he has focused on advancing environmental justice, protecting and increasing access to green and open space, making Massachusetts more fair and inclusive, and improving our public transit and infrastructure. He currently serves as the House Chair

of the Joint Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery. In this capacity, he helped usher the most comprehensive reforms to mental health care in Massachusetts in decades through An Act Addressing Barriers to Care for Mental Health. Among other things, these reforms contain measures to support children and adolescents facing mental health challenges and improve access to mental health care in carceral settings. The overarching goal of this legislation was to increase access to quality, on-demand mental health care.

In addition, as a new father, Representative Madaro introduced legislation to create a universal early education and care program in Massachusetts. He did this in concert with child care providers, early educators, and business leaders who have identified that child care and early education programs enable parents to remain in the workforce. He also did this while recognizing that early educators and child care providers, who are disproportionately women

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Auditor identifies \$1.2 billion in unfunded mandates

The state has a \$1.2 billion shortfall in aid promised to cities, towns, and school districts, Auditor Suzanne Bump concluded in a report released on October 13.

The report looked at several major categories of state aid and identified \$711.4 million in unfunded mandates related to school aid; \$448.3 million related to school transportation; and \$103.3 million in government aid, mainly related to

the Community Preservation Act.

State law prohibits unfunded mandates, requiring the Legislature to fund anything it requires cities and towns to do. But practically, lawmakers have often ignored those obligations. For example, they regularly appropriate only a portion of mandated expenses for school transportation.

Bump's 59-page report, released

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Chandler to receive MASC's Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill award



Sen. Chandler Worcester Senator and frequent MASC co-collaborator **Harriette Chandler**. In announcing the recognition, MASC President Andrea Wadsworth commended the Senator on her long history with public schools as well as her special relationship with MASC and her advocacy in support of children and families for more than 30 years.

The award will be presented later this year at a Worcester School Committee meeting, in honor of the Senator's former membership on the Committee.

Senator Harriette L. Chandler (D-Worcester) represents the First Worcester District and currently serves as the Massachusetts Senate President Emerita. She previously served as the Senate President from 2017 to 2018. She began her political career in 1991, serving on Worcester School Committee. In 2000 she was the first Worcester woman elected to the Massachusetts State Senate.

On Beacon Hill, Senator Chandler has fought to expand access to healthcare services and for the rights of those experiencing homelessness. She has worked to pass policies that support children and

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Procurement Legislation Update

On August 26, 2022, Governor Baker signed into law Chapter 198 of the Acts of 2022, "An Act Relative to School Operational Efficiency." As a result of this, on November 25 of this year, the upper threshold for price quotations in Chapter 30B will increase for municipal and regional school districts only from \$50,000 to \$100,000. The new price quotation threshold for school districts only will be from \$10,000 to not more than \$100,000. The other price quotation requirements in section 4 of Chapter 30B still apply. School districts may opt to use a bid (invitation for bids or IFB) for procurements below \$100,000. The request for proposals (RFP) threshold remains \$50,000 for all jurisdictions.

At this time, we await guidance from the Chapter 30B technical assistance team of the Office of the Inspector General, expected later this month. MASC will share a policy update for the appropriate district policies as soon as possible following that.

NATIONAL NEWS

\$1 BILLION CYBERSECURITY GRANT ANNOUNCED

The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security has announced that the first-ever cybersecurity grant program designed for state, local and territorial governments nationwide will distribute \$1 billion over the next four years.

The cybersecurity funding will be available through the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program, which states can apply for and then allocate to school districts and local governments. Districts cannot directly apply for the federal grant, which was established by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021.

The grant can be used to address cybersecurity risks or threats on information systems owned or operated by school districts to support best cybersecurity practices, such as multi-factor authentication, enhanced logging and data encryption.

The money cannot be used to purchase cybersecurity insurance or for extortion payments resulting from a ransomware incident, according to K12 Security Information Exchange.

Ultimately, the state will decide how and where to distribute funds. At a minimum, 80% of these state grant allocations must be distributed to local government agencies, which include school districts. Additionally, at least 25% of the funds should go to rural communities.

It is recommended that district leaders proactively contact their state's chief information officer to find out how they plan to implement the federal grant.

The grants require states to create a cybersecurity planning committee and a cybersecurity plan. States also must conduct assessments and evaluations to set statewide priorities for the funding.

MA NEWS

STATE BOARD VOTES TO MANDATE K-3 LITERACY SCREENINGS

For the first time MA schools will face a requirement to screen young students for dyslexia and other potential learning disabilities at least twice per year. At its September meeting, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted unanimously in favor of regulations setting statewide standards for districts to monitor student literacy progress.

Many Bay State schools are already performing some kind of dyslexia or learning disability screening, but officials said the existing framework is dotted with gaps. Now, schools will be subject to the same requirement to assess every kindergartener, first grader, second grader and third grader at least twice annually using state-approved tools to gauge their "reading ability and progress in literacy skills."

Supporters hope the regulations will unjam more than a decade of stagnant reading proficiency scores and help identify students who need additional resources earlier on in their education.

Schools will need to intervene to assist students found to be "significantly below relevant benchmarks" with follow-up action to determine how to support their needs, such as

by supplementary reading instruction, then notify a parent or guardian within 30 days.

The new regulations will take effect July 1, 2023.

The regulations build on a law Gov. Charlie Baker signed in October 2018, which tasked the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Early Education and Care with crafting new guidelines to help districts identify students with learning disabilities.

Then-Sen. Barbara L'Italien, one of the chief sponsors of the legislation, estimated at the time that dyslexia affects one in five children in MA.

Tools for schools

BuyBoard, has been providing procurement services to cities, towns, and school districts for over 20 years. MASC has recently joined the BuyBoard family and MASC members can sign up with the purchasing cooperative's free, value-added service, enabling districts to reduced purchasing costs on products and services your district is buying today. BuyBoard's goal is to drive down districts costs and make the procurement process more efficient.



There are currently 45 MA cities and towns, including 15 school districts who have signed up with BuyBoard. Members have the ability to make purchases from an approved list of vendors that have

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gone through the competitive bidding process. Schools participating in the cooperative will be able to take advantage of contracts in over 70 contract categories, including: instructional materials; technology-hardware, software, licensing; maintenance-custodial, grounds, HVAC, fuel; athletics-public safety; outdoor-bleachers, turf, track, lighting; and band-instruments, uniforms; among many other contract areas. There is no cost to join or use any of the contracts and membership is open to all types of local government agencies and non-profits. Revenue to operate the BuyBoard comes from a small service fee payable by participating contract vendors and is generated only when a member makes a purchase.

BuyBoard, as an MASC affiliate, will be a premier sponsor and exhibitor at the upcoming Joint Conference in Hyannis. Visit them at booth #38 or in advance of the conference, learn more about them at www.BuyBoard.com. For questions, do not hesitate to contact David Ricketts (david.ricketts@buyboard.com) or call (913) 424-5758 for assistance of questions.

"Tip" O'Neill award

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families across the Commonwealth, and is a passionate advocate for women's rights and reproductive justice.

Senator Chandler holds degrees from Wellesley College (B.A.), Simmons College Graduate School of Management (M.B.A.), and Clark University (Ph.D.). She holds honorary degrees from Worcester State College, Honorary Doctorate of Public Administration '88, Clark University, Honorary Doctor of Laws '16, and most recently from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters '22. She is married to Worcester attorney Burton Chandler and has three adult children and four beloved grandchildren.

Genocide Studies course increasingly popular at Essex Tech.

In the seven years since its introduction, teachers Justin Bilton and Jason Stark's Genocide Studies course has grown, by word of mouth, from one section of 17 students, to over half the senior class in the 2022-2023 year.

The full-year curriculum includes sections on the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust, the Rwandan genocide of the Tutsis, the Bosnian Genocide and the Cambodian Genocide. The course also explores ongoing travesties such as the slaughter of the Rohingya in Myanmar, the Uighurs in China, Russia's current war in Ukraine, as well as other contemporary human rights issues.

As a result of the popularity of the course, the two teachers have started their own teacher development endeavor—The 1948 Project—to help other educators in the Commonwealth develop their own genocide education courses and to offer professional development in tactful and effective genocide education that promotes empathy and awareness amongst students.

Bilton is an alumnus of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) Belfer Conference, and a fellow of The Genocide Education Project's Armenia Program in Yerevan.

Stark is the descendant of Holocaust survivors.

Justin Bilton will also be on-site at the upcoming Joint Conference on Thursday, November 3 to discuss the curriculum and answer any questions attendees may have. You can visit him that day at a booth in the Pool Lobby area of the hotel.

MASC Legislators of the year announced

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and people of color, are underpaid for their invaluable commitment to our youth. He has worked with equity-minded advocates and policy experts who understand that our early education and child care systems are complicated that require creative solutions and tremendous investment from stakeholders in government and the private sector.

Senator Cyr has represented Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket since his election in 2016. Now serving in his third term, he is among the youngest senators in the 40-member body, serving as Senate Assistant Majority Whip; Chair of the Joint Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery; Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Racial Equity, Civil Rights, and Inclusion; Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Elder Affairs. He also serves on

committees with oversight of health care policy, public health, telecommunications and energy, COVID-19 emergency management, and redistricting.

Julian got an early start in public advocacy at 16 years old, organizing a student-led effort at town meetings in Brewster, Eastham, Orleans, and Wellfleet to fully fund quality education in local public schools. Later, he led grassroots organizing on the Cape & Islands for Governor Deval Patrick's and President Barack Obama's successful re-election campaigns. He worked as a harm-reduction counselor at the AIDS Support Group of Cape Cod and served on the board of directors of Health Imperatives from 2014-2017, a nonprofit health and human services agency that provides services to thousands of families and individuals in Southeastern Massachusetts.

MASC Lifetime Achievement and All-State School Committee Winners Announced

The following members have been nominated by their colleagues and the MASC Board of Directors in recognition of their contributions to the Association and to their students and school communities. The awards will be presented at the Friday night, November 4, awards ceremony during the upcoming Joint Conference in Hyannis.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Terry Russell, Monomoy Reg.
Robert Peterson, Shawsheen Reg. Voc.
Michael Pietrowski, Southeastern Reg. Voc. Tech.
William Hayner, Arlington
Heather Boulger, North Adams
John Cotton, Smith Voc. Tech.

ALL-STATE

Division I: **Manny Cruz**, Salem
Division II: **Paul Kendall**, Ashland
Division III: **Gerald Finn**, Blackstone Valley Voc. Tech.
Division IV: **Margaret Hughes**, Narragansett Reg.
Division V: **Alison Schlachter**, South Hadley
Division VI: **Hawlemont School Committee**
Division VII: **Natalie Kanellopoulos**, Falmouth
Division VIII: **Donald DiBiaso**, Diman Tech.
Division IX: **Erin Brunelle**, Holyoke
Division X: **Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui**, Cambridge

Auditor

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by her office's Division of Local Mandates, is an attempt to document some of the major categories that remain underfunded. She called it a "roadmap" for lawmakers "if they truly want to address the problems of shortfalls in municipal reimbursements."

Many of the largest expenses relate to special education. The state pays nearly \$350 million for

the special education circuit breaker to reimburse communities with high special education expenses. But Bump's report says that level of funding still leaves another \$400 million to be borne by school districts. The state does not repay districts for special education transportation within a district, a \$191 million expense. When students are transported out of district for special education, the state pays \$18 million of a \$100 million expense.

The report is likely to be among

the last issued as auditor by Bump, who was elected to the post in 2010. A former state legislator who served as labor and workforce development secretary under Gov. Deval Patrick, she is not seeking a fourth term this fall.

Note: Suzanne Bump is the guest speaker at the Joint Conference Friday, Leadership Lunch November 4 in Hyannis.

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