



Massachusetts Association of School Committees

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Report of the Resolutions Committee

The MASC Resolutions Committee met on July 6, 2016 to consider the resolutions proposed by member districts for consideration at the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Association. Members present were: Patrick Murphy (Barnstable), Chair; Paulette Van der Kloot (Medford); Jason Frasier (Silver Lake Reg.); Mildred Lefebvre (Holyoke); Irene Feliciano-Sims (Holyoke); Margaret Driscoll (Melrose); Geoffrey Swett (Wareham); William Fonseca (East Longmeadow); Kathleen Kelley (Cambridge); Devin Sheehan (Holyoke); Patrick Francomano (King Philip Reg.).

The following resolutions were moved forward by the Resolutions Committee and approved by the MASC Board of Directors at their meeting on July 13, 2016.

Please note: On advice of counsel, the text of Resolutions 2 and 3 do not appear in the printed Delegate Manual. Please reference the text below for the resolutions to be discussed at the Delegate Assembly.

RESOLUTION 1: FOUNDATION BUDGET

(Submitted by the MASC Resolutions Committee)

WHEREAS a special Foundation Budget Review Commission (FBRC) reported its recommendations in 2015 the General Court and to the public, and

WHEREAS among the recommendations were those to calculate more accurately the costs of students in special education and health insurance costs for employees and retirees, and

WHEREAS several recommendations of the members of the Commission to establish adequate and equitable funding for school districts remain unresolved, and

WHEREAS there remains a broad consensus that the overall calculations used to establish the “Foundation Budget” for city, town and regional school districts remain significantly understated and, in the opinion of MASC and its members violates the letter and spirit of the ruling of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in the 1993 McDuffy Case,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC calls upon the legislature to enact the recommendations of the Foundation Budget into law, and further,

That the legislature order the Commission to reconvene in order to conduct further deliberations and make such recommendations as the FBRC may propose, and further

That the FBRC shall address and make recommendations toward the overall accuracy of the adequacy of the overall Foundation Budget

RESOLUTION 2: TAX REFORM BALLOT QUESTION

(Submitted by the MASC Resolutions Committee)

WHEREAS there is a clear need to invest in our state's educational, social, and infrastructure systems, and
WHEREAS the need to rebuild our roads and bridges, strengthen public education, and provide the necessary support to help ensure social and economic equity for the residents of Massachusetts, and WHEREAS a reasonable solution could be a combination of tax reforms and measures of accountability to establish a more equitable source for revenue and a more effective way of measuring our success, and

WHEREAS Net income growth over the past decade has demonstrated a disproportionately lower tax burden as a share of net income upon high wage earners within a current tax system than is asked of economically disadvantaged and middle class families, and

WHEREAS Advocates for social and economic equity are considering seeking to ask voters to amend the Constitution of the Commonwealth to allow for greater tax equity that will not raise taxes on any but the wealthiest residents of Massachusetts,

WHEREAS the Foundation Budget Review Commission recommended additional revenue and securing a more equitable distribution of those funds, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees explore ways to promote social and economic equity through a ballot initiative whose purpose may include a state constitutional amendment, tax reform, protection of the state's neediest residents of all ages, and seeks additional revenue only from tax reform affecting the state's wealthiest residents.

Further, that the goal of such a ballot referendum would be to secure a stronger financial base to underwrite needed improvements in the infrastructure of the Commonwealth as well as the educational, social and economic wellbeing of its residents.

RESOLUTION 3: CHARTER SCHOOL REFORM

(Submitted by the MASC Board of Directors)

WHEREAS the possibility of the expansion of Commonwealth charter schools in Massachusetts poses a threat to the ability of public school districts to provide services to the children of the Commonwealth, and

WHEREAS in many cities and towns, Commonwealth charter schools are imposed upon communities over their objections and without regard to the impact such a charter school would have on the education of children in the public schools, and

WHEREAS without substantial reform of Commonwealth charter school financing; recruitment of students; accurate, unduplicated, and students who are no longer seeking to enroll but are alleged to be on charter school waiting lists; equitable charter school enrollment of representative segments of the population of economically disadvantaged, special education, and disabled students remediation of the adverse impact of charter school expansion cannot be addressed, and

WHEREAS these circumstances would be exacerbated by the approval by voters of a proposed ballot initiative to expand charter schools and to circumvent such safeguards as would address several of the inequities arising out of the expansion of charter schools in Massachusetts;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees urge the citizens of the Commonwealth to reject such a ballot initiative, and further,

That MASC seek legislative approval of a comprehensive set of reforms that includes:

1. Establishment of strict guidelines or regulations to require that charter schools enroll represent cross sections of students residing within the school service areas.
2. Reporting of accurate numbers of students who leave charter schools to return to the sending districts or district of residence.
3. Requiring the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to retain and report accurate data on enrollment of students with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, economic disadvantage, emotional disability and status as racial and linguistic minorities.
4. State requirements that any charter school authorized in a community without its consent be funded in full by the Commonwealth rather than by expropriation of Chapter 70 education aid from the sending cities, towns and regions.
5. State funding in full of any mitigation funds created to offset the loss of state funding for students who become students in charter schools

RESOLUTION 4: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF STUDENTS

(Submitted by the MASC Resolutions Committee)

WHEREAS various factors including the impact of poverty, family status, other social issues and academic pressures have contributed to a marked increase in the levels of stress and anxiety among students at all grade levels, and WHEREAS the expansion of standardized testing to a wider range of students and these tests to establish ratings for schools and districts has contributed to the growing concern among educators that students are exhibiting complications of adding stressful factors to their lives both inside and outside of school, and

WHEREAS advocates for students, including school committee members, school leaders, teachers and parents have identified that an effective strategy for children is to address social and emotional learning (SEL) by various tactics, and

WHEREAS in response to the demand for SEL, initiatives have been organized by several stakeholder groups including a collaboration of MASC, MASS, MIAA, MSSAA, MESPA, MOEC, and Teachers 21, and, in addition, a separate working group within MASC to identify available resources, new strategies, and tactics to promote the social and emotional wellbeing of children,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees shall be directed to deploy such resources of the Association independently and in collaboration with other organizations to gather resources, identify strategies, and improve public awareness of the importance of addressing student social and emotional well-being, and further that

MASC shall give consideration to such public policy initiatives that prioritize action by stakeholders and stakeholder groups, in collaboration with expert behavioral and health care providers, as the most effective entities for addressing strategies that are in the best interests of children.