

report of the resolutions committee

The members of the Resolutions Committee met on June 20, 2024 to consider resolutions proposed by member districts for consideration at the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Association. Members present were: Jason Fraser, MASC President-Elect, Chair (Plympton and Silver Lake Reg.); Mildred Lefebvre, MASC President (Holyoke); Beverly Hugo, Life Member; Robert Swartz, Gardner; Tony Mullin, Westwood; Jessica Corwin, Sunderland and Frontier Reg.; Jorge Vega, Brockton; Kathryn Hubley, Quincy.

The following resolutions were moved forward by the Resolutions Committee and approved by the Board of Directors.

RESOLUTIONS ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

RESOLUTION 1: DEVELOPMENT OF AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE HIGH-STAKES MCAS TEST

(Sponsored by the MASC Board of Directors)

WHEREAS access to a high-quality, publicly funded education is a guaranteed right written into the Massachusetts Constitution; and

WHEREAS an effective public education program meets the needs of students who present a variety of abilities and learning styles; and

WHEREAS a successful system of public education nurtures and supports students and offers opportunities for growth along a continuum that begins in preschool and extends through higher education; and

WHEREAS the goal of public education is to teach students how to be critical thinkers, engaged citizens and lifelong learners; and

WHEREAS the use of MCAS has restricted curriculum and narrowed the focus of education in our public schools; and WHEREAS the use of MCAS has impacted student emotional wellbeing; and

WHEREAS MCAS testing has unjustly targeted communities with underfunded public schools for state takeovers that have failed to improve student performance by any measure; and

WHEREAS using MCAS testing as a high-school graduation requirement has prevented or delayed countless students from earning a diploma, either interrupting or derailing education or career plans.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED urges Massachusetts to develop a wider, more consensus-built strategy for an evaluation system with meaningful input from legitimate stakeholders.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that MASC urges the state Legislature to launch a comprehensive evaluation to investigate the extent of biases pertaining to MCAS testing and make these results public.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that MASC urges Massachusetts to enact a moratorium on MCAS testing effective immediately.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that MASC urges Massachusetts to develop an alternative to the high-stakes MCAS tests.

RESOLUTION 2: INCREASE COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE AGE

(Sponsored by the Brockton School Committee)

WHEREAS compulsory school attendance refers to the minimum and maximum age required by each state in which a student must be enrolled in and attending public school, or some equivalent accredited education program defined by law; and

WHEREAS an increased compulsory attendance age reflects the realities of the 21st century, with an increased need for higher levels of education; and

WHEREAS an increased compulsory attendance age improves economic and social mobility across the lifespan and counters childhood poverty by enabling students experiencing poverty to stay in school longer and complete their education; and

WHEREAS an increased compulsory attendance age aims to reduce racial and class disparities in education attainment; and

WHEREAS economic statistics show high school dropouts are more likely than graduates to be poor, unemployed or wind up in jail; and

WHEREAS a growing body of research indicates that increasing the minimum school-leaving age to 18 not only increases high-school graduation rates but also significantly improves the life outcomes of students who otherwise would have become dropouts; and

WHEREAS we are responsible for ensuring all children of the Commonwealth receive a high-quality education; and

WHEREAS graduation rates and post-secondary opportunities have been proven to improve when students are required to remain in school until eighteen years of age; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC recommends that the Massachusetts legislature increase the compulsory attendance age from sixteen to eighteen.

RESOLUTIONS ON STUDENT SAFETY

RESOLUTION 3: SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS

(Sponsored by the Framingham School Committee)

WHEREAS safety and well-being of our students, teachers, and staff is a top priority in schools and keeping them safe from the threat of gun violence should be the responsibility of all adult stakeholders at each of our school sites; and

WHEREAS in the United States, gun violence is the leading cause of death in children and teens¹, and

WHEREAS approximately 1200 children and teens die by gun suicide each year, and over 80 percent of children under age 18 who died by firearm suicide used a gun belonging to a family member, and

WHEREAS in incidents of gun violence on school grounds, up to 80 percent of shooters under the age of 18 obtained their guns from their own home or that of relatives or friends³; and

WHEREAS an estimated 4.6 million American children live in households with at least one loaded, unlocked firearm² and every year²; and

WHEREAS research shows that secure firearm storage practices are associated with up to a 78 percent reduction in the risk of self-inflicted firearm injuries and up to an 85 percent reduction in the risk of unintentional firearm injuries among children and teens⁷; and

WHEREAS evidence strongly suggests that secure firearm storage is an essential component to any effective strategy to keep schools and students safe⁶;

WHEREAS the US Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center recommends the importance of appropriate storage of weapons because many school attackers used firearms acquired from their homes; and

WHEREAS, across the country, lawmakers, community members and local leaders are working together to implement public awareness campaigns, such as the Be SMART Program, which is endorsed by the National PTA and encourages secure gun storage practices and highlights the public safety risks of unsecured guns; and

WHEREAS secure storage of firearms is a legal requirement in Massachusetts pursuant to G.L. Chapter 140, sections 131L and 131C, and failure to comply with secure storage laws can lead to criminal prosecution, jail time, fines, and/or revocation of FID card or license, depending on the offence; and

WHEREAS the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends storing firearms unloaded and locked, with ammunition locked separately to reduce risks of injury to children; ⁹

WHEREAS in order to continue with preventive measures to increase student and school safety we must act now.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC recommends all districts direct their Superintendent and staff to create an appropriate communication to parents and guardians that explains the importance of secure firearm storage to protect children and teens from unauthorized access to unsecured firearms, and their legal obligations consistent with Massachusetts safe storage law.

FURTHERMORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC urges other communities to work with their local law enforcement agencies, health agencies and non-profit organizations to collaborate and increase efforts to inform District parents and guardians of their obligations regarding secure storage of firearms in their homes and vehicles.

References:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death, Injury Mechanism & All Other Leading Causes. Data from 2020. Analysis includes children and teens aged 1 to 19.
2. Matthew Miller and Deborah Azrael, "Firearm Storage in US Households with Children: Findings from the 2021 National Firearm Survey," JAMA Network Open 5, no. 2 (2022): e2148823, <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.48823>
3. Everytown for Gun Safety. #NotAnAccident Index. 2020. <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/notanaccident/> Analysis includes incidents that occurred between 2015 and 2019.
4. Everytown for Gun Safety. #NotAnAccident Index. 2020. <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/notanaccident/>. Analysis includes homes of the shooter, the victim, relatives' homes, friends' homes, and "other" homes.
5. "Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death. A yearly average was developed using five years of the most recent available data: 2016 to 2020. Children and teens aged 0 to 19.
6. Johnson RM, Barber C, Azrael D, Clark DE, Hemenway D. Who are the owners of firearms used in adolescent suicides? Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior. 2010;40(6):609-611. Study defined children as under the age of 18.
7. Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, American Federation of Teachers, and National Education Association, "Keeping Our Schools Safe: A Plan for Preventing Mass Shootings and Ending All Gun Violence in American Schools," 2020. <https://everytownresearch.org/report/preventing-gunviolence-in-american-schools/>
8. Grossman DC, Mueller BA, Riedy C, et al. Gun storage practices and risk of youth suicide and unintentional injuries. JAMA. 2005; 293(6):707-714.
9. M.J. Bull, et al., "Firearm-related Injuries Affecting the Pediatric Population," Pediatrics 105, no. 4 (2000): 888-895.

RESOLUTION 4: SCHOOL BUS STOP ARM SURVEILLANCE ACT AND ENFORCEMENT PENALTIES

(Sponsored by the Peabody School Committee)

WHEREAS it is against the law in Massachusetts to pass a stopped school bus with the stop arm extended and flashing lights while student passengers embark and disembark the bus. Unless witnessed by a police officer, the penalties for passing a stopped school bus are minimal. The danger to the passengers is extraordinary, and can prove fatal; and

WHEREAS a survey conducted in 2022 by the National Association of State Directors of Public Transportation Services (NASSDPTS) found that motorists illegally pass stopped school buses: "Throughout a 180-day school year sample results point to more than 41.8 million violations per year among America's motoring public;" and,

WHEREAS technical advances have now made public digital video violation detection monitoring systems to detect drivers failing to stop for school busses; and

WHEREAS penalties for passing a stopped school bus utilizing a digital video violation monitoring system need to be commensurate with the same penalties imposed for such action if witnessed by a police officer.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees calls on the Massachusetts legislature to enact legislation to pass into law the ability for cities and towns to install on all school busses live digital video detection monitoring systems for the purpose of enforcing violations against the owner of a motor vehicle whose vehicle failed to stop for a school bus when required to do so by law.

SPONSOR RATIONALE: The significant safety concerns present when a vehicle passes a stopped school bus embarking or disembarking passengers are endangering our students in Massachusetts. Presently, unless witnessed by a police officer, the penalties for passing a school bus are minimal. If the registration plate of the offending vehicle is reported by the bus driver, there is a minimal fine.

Requiring a police officer to witness the violation prevents appropriate law enforcement action from taking place, especially for repeat offenders. Allowing the installation and utilization of digital video detection monitoring systems on school buses will allow for appropriate law enforcement action, provide for monitoring and data pertinent to this safety concern, and serve as a deterrent to drivers who are contributing to this safety issue. Protecting the safety of our students is a paramount concern.

RESOLUTIONS ON SCHOOL FINANCE

RESOLUTION 5: ALIGNING TAXING AUTHORITY WITH THE REQUIRED LOCAL CONTRIBUTION

(Sponsored by the Arlington School Committee)

WHEREAS Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L. Ch. 70, Section 2), establishes a required local contribution which defines a minimum appropriation for education; and

WHEREAS one element of determining the required local contribution is local effort from property wealth, determined using a municipality's equalized valuation; and

WHEREAS the ability of municipalities to raise revenue is constrained by Proposition 2½ (M.G.L. Ch. 59, Sect. 21C) which limits the increase in levy limits by 2½% (plus new growth); and

WHEREAS the total statewide required local contribution in FY22 was \$6,827,673,657, in FY23 it was \$7,166,744,291, an increase of \$339,070,634 (4.97%); and

WHEREAS the total statewide required local contribution in FY23 was \$7,166,744,291, in FY24 it was \$7,566,302,116, an increase of \$399,557,825 (5.58%); and

WHEREAS the total statewide required local contribution in FY24 was \$7,566,302,116, and the FY25 Preliminary Chapter 70 Aid and Net School Spending Requirements released by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is projected to be \$7,969,443,892 an increase of \$403,141,776 (5.33%); and

WHEREAS increases in required local contributions in excess of 2.5% strains the budgets of municipalities without excess levy capacity,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees calls for the enactment of legislation that would increase a municipality's levy limit by the amount of increase of the required local contribution in excess of 2.5%, granting the municipality the ability to raise local revenues mandated by M.G.L. Ch. 70.

RESOLUTION 6: SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE THE FISCAL HEALTH OF RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

(Sponsored by the Deerfield, Sunderland, Whatley and Frontier Regional School Committees)

WHEREAS rural school districts in Massachusetts face daunting threats to their financial sustainability and thus to their ability to provide rural students with the same quality of educational opportunity enjoyed by students in other parts of the state; and

WHEREAS the Commonwealth has rightly touted the state's significant increase in education funding following passage of the 2019 Student Opportunity Act (SOA), however the most needy rural and declining enrollment districts have received less than 1% of that increase in funding; and

WHEREAS no fewer than four recent state and legislative commissions have reviewed the looming crisis facing rural schools and concluded that rural school districts are seriously under-resourced and under-funded; and

WHEREAS the most recent of these commissions was specifically created by the SOA "...to study and make recommendations concerning the long-term fiscal health of rural school districts that are facing or may face declining student enrollment..." including recommendations for, among other things, "expanding the rural school aid grant program" and "establishing and including a low and declining student enrollment factor within the foundation budget;" and

WHEREAS in its final report, issued in December 2022, the Commission on the Fiscal Health of Rural School Districts concluded that districts with very low student enrollments cost 16.7% per student more to operate than the state average and that small K-12 regional school districts cost 22.7% per student more to operate than their larger counterparts; and

WHEREAS rural school districts have closed schools, regionalized and shared services with other districts wherever possible in an effort to remain viable and serve their students.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC urges the Legislature to pass comprehensive legislation encompassing all recommendations from the Legislative Commission on the Fiscal Health of Rural Schools report: A Sustainable Future for Rural Schools.

RESOLUTION 7: FULLY ADJUSTING CHAPTER 70 AID FOR INFLATION

(Sponsored by the Everett School Committee)

WHEREAS Chapter 70 of the General Laws provides a structure for allocation of school aid based on the Foundation Budgets that reflects the needs and costs for Massachusetts school districts; and

WHEREAS the "Foundation inflation index" is an essential element of the school aid formula needed to maintain the purchasing power of district Foundation Budgets; and

WHEREAS the Chapter 70 Section 2 definition of the Foundation inflation index limits each annual adjustment to no more than 4.5% when inflation exceeds that amount; and

WHEREAS application of that limit or cap on the Foundation inflation index in fiscal years 2023 and 2024 has reduced the base used to calculate Foundation Budgets for fiscal year 2025 and future years by about 6% below what is needed to maintain the purchasing power of Massachusetts schools; and

WHEREAS a legislative change is needed to (1) fully reflect recent inflation in the Chapter 70 definition of the Foundation inflation index and (2) to eliminate the cap in future years, so as to restore the purchasing power of district Foundation budgets to reflect the intended resource allocations of the Student Opportunity Act.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC calls on the Massachusetts Legislature to advance legislation mandating Inflation Index "Catch Ups" to Chapter 70 Foundation Aid that fully accounts for realized inflation that has occurred since the passage of the Student Opportunity Act.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that MASC work with the Massachusetts Legislature to ensure in future years where realized inflation is above the 4.5% annual inflation cap, in subsequent years, Inflation Index "Catch Ups" are made to Chapter 70 aid and that realized inflation is used in the formulas to calculate Chapter 70 aid in perpetuity.

RESOLUTION 8: EQUITABLE FUNDING FOR NON-REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS WITH HIGH TRANSPORTATION COSTS

(Sponsored by the Plymouth School Committee)

WHEREAS many non-regional school districts face significant financial burdens due to the extensive transportation costs and longer routes required to serve their students; and

WHEREAS non-regional school districts do not receive financial reimbursement benefits as regional districts do, which creates an imbalance in funding and resources; and

WHEREAS providing equitable financial support to non-regional school districts will help ensure that all students in the state receive an equal opportunity for quality education; and

WHEREAS the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is committed to promoting fairness and equity in education and recognizing the unique challenges faced by non-regional school districts.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the State recognizes the financial challenges faced by many non-regional school districts, due to their higher transportation costs and longer routes. The State acknowledges that non-regional school districts should have access to financial support similarly to regional districts, when costs are extraordinary. A special fund shall be established to provide financial assistance to non-regional school districts with higher transportation costs. This fund shall be known as the "Extraordinary Routes Relief Fund."

The funds provided through this program shall be used exclusively to offset transportation costs, including but not limited to, the purchase and maintenance of buses, fuel costs, and driver salaries.

Eligible non-regional school districts may apply for grants from the "Extraordinary Routes Relief Fund" to cover a portion of their transportation-related expenses.

An oversight committee, composed of representatives from non-regional school districts, regional districts, and the State's education department, shall be established to ensure the fair and transparent allocation of funds from the "Extraordinary Routes Relief Fund."

The State shall conduct an annual review of the effectiveness and impact of this resolution to ensure that non-regional school districts are receiving adequate support to address their transportation challenges.

RATIONALE: Reimbursement suggestion: Circuit Breaker-Like Component:

- Create a “Circuit Breaker” threshold for exceptionally high busing costs, similar to Massachusetts’ approach for special education expenses.
- Once a district’s transportation costs exceed a certain percentage (e.g., 125%) of the statewide average, they become eligible for additional reimbursement.
- The state would reimburse a percentage (e.g., 40%) of the excess costs beyond the threshold.

Annual Reporting and Adjustment:

Require school districts to submit annual reports detailing their actual busing costs, the number of buses used, and the miles traveled. Based on these reports, adjust the reimbursements for each district to ensure they are aligned with actual expenses.

This approach provides a systematic and fair process to reimburse school districts with extraordinary expenses, similar to the Circuit Breaker process for special education expenses in Massachusetts. The specific percentages, thresholds, and additional rates can be adjusted as needed to suit the State’s budget and educational priorities.

VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL SCHOOL GROUP

RESOLUTION 9: MSBA GRANTS EVALUATION FOR CHAPTER 74

(Sponsored by the Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee)

WHEREAS Chapter 74 Vocational-Technical & Agricultural High Schools incur higher costs to build Chapter 74 educational training spaces; and,

WHEREAS MSBA currently assesses all school building projects at equal value; and,

WHEREAS Vocational-Technical & Agricultural High School renovation/building costs are disbursed to sending districts impacting local budgets.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees calls upon the Massachusetts Legislature and MSBA to create an evaluated-tiered system to separately assess the cost of (1) elementary, (2) comprehensive high schools, and (3) vocational, technical and agricultural schools, resulting to true cost reimbursement for each school category.

RESOLUTION 10: EXPANSION IN CAPACITY IN CHAPTER 74 VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL PROGRAMS

(Sponsored by the Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee)

WHEREAS Chapter 74 vocational-technical schools in Massachusetts are experiencing unprecedented applications for admission and more students from their sending districts are being waitlisted; and,

WHEREAS students applying from sending districts being waitlisted is preventing non-member and school choice students from attending; and,

WHEREAS there are 92 schools in Massachusetts that have Chapter 74 programs, but there are gaps across the Commonwealth where students do not have access to a Chapter 74 program school; and,

WHEREAS Chapter 74 schools serve a higher percentage of students with IEPs and 504s, and who are more economically disadvantaged than their sending districts, and, Massachusetts is in need of more skilled trade workers to keep pace with both the growth of industry and the retirement of the current workforce, and, all students in Massachusetts deserve the opportunity to pursue the best secondary education available.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees calls upon the Governor and the Legislature to support the expansion of capacity at the current Chapter 74 schools, and to work with districts that lack access to vocational technical schools to create programs, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees calls upon the legislature to convene a special commission to consider changes to the current law and regulation relating to the overall authority of the Massachusetts School Building Authority, alternative overall financing structures, standards for project eligibility, appropriate financial assistance based on the nature of the school in the projects being considered, potential differential requirements for elementary, middle schools, comprehensive high schools, and vocational technical and agricultural schools, and other such matters as affects vocational and technical education.

EXPIRING RESOLUTIONS

The 2023 Delegate Assembly approved an amendment to the By-Laws that resolutions will expire at the conclusion of the Delegate Assembly three years after their adoption. Expiring resolutions may be reconsidered and readopted by the delegates at the annual meeting at which the resolutions would expire. The rationale for the amendment was that it:

- Permits three years of focus on resolutions which overlaps two legislative cycles.
- Provides an additional opportunity for school committees to be involved in the resolution process by championing resolutions that are set to expire.
- Allows the Association to affirm what’s important to the current membership by re-adoption.
- Clears expired, less relevant, or no longer supported resolutions for new priorities.

Following are the eleven resolutions set to expire this November, unless reauthorized by a vote of the Delegate Assembly.

BANNING POLYSTYRENE FROM SCHOOLS

(Submitted by the Silver Lake Regional School Committee District including the School Committees of Kingston, Plympton, and Halifax)

WHEREAS the US Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools was created in 2011 to recognize school efforts to reduce environmental impact and cost, improve the health and wellness of schools, students, and staff, and provide effective environmental and sustainability education; and

WHEREAS the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in conjunction with twenty other states joined together to form the United States Climate Alliance to support the Paris Agreement and through continued legislative and executive actions has demonstrated the Commonwealth's commitment to environmental protection; and

WHEREAS expanded polystyrene foam manufacturing process releases pollution into the atmosphere, expanded polystyrene foam has been shown to be non-biodegradable and has the ability to be persistent in the environment for thousands of years, expanded polystyrene foam breaks down into "pearls" which are often ingested by marine life and introduced into the food chain; and

WHEREAS expanded polystyrene foam is made with styrene, a chemical the Department of Health and Human Service has deemed as reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen, and the use of expanded polystyrene foam in food and beverage containers, especially containers holding hot or acidic food, have been shown to leach styrene into food and beverages;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC urge the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to ban the use of expanded polystyrene foam cups, bowls, plates and trays from Massachusetts Public Schools by the 2022-2023 school year.

Passed on a voice vote - 2019

PERTAINING TO EDUCATOR DIVERSITY AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE

(Submitted by the Arlington School Committee)

WHEREAS current research clearly demonstrates that public school students benefit from a diverse teaching staff; and

WHEREAS Massachusetts school districts are challenged to attract a diverse teaching staff; and

WHEREAS attracting diverse candidates often involves recruiting candidates from outside Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS Massachusetts licensure requirements, including the MA Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) requirements, serve as a disincentive for candidates looking to relocate to take a teaching position; and

WHEREAS test administration is conducted in centers that are often inaccessible without a car; and

WHEREAS the cost of testing can be a barrier to potential applicants; and

WHEREAS there is no evidence that MTEL is a reliable or valid measure of successful practice as an educator; and

WHEREAS school districts are capable of selection qualified candidates for teaching positions, as well as supervising, evaluating, and deciding on whether to retain the services of probationary candidates; and

WHEREAS the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education governs educator licensure in Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS practicing educators and school committee members are prohibited from serving on the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education; and

WHEREAS the teaching profession is the only profession or trade in Massachusetts where the holders of a license are prohibited from serving on its governing board;

(PART A) THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC calls for the elimination of the MTEL and MA Performance Assessment of Leaders (MaPAL) as licensing requirements for educators; and,

(PART B) BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that MASC calls for the governance and licensure of professional educators be vested in a board comprised of licensed educators.

Part A passed on a 54-24 vote - 2019

Part B passed unanimously on a voice vote - 2019

FULL FUNDING OF TRANSPORTATION COSTS FOR STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE AND STATE CARE

(Sponsored by the MASC Board of Directors)

WHEREAS FY18 was the first year Massachusetts added the category of transportation for foster children educated in the school or district of origin and subject to transportation to its reporting of educational expenses by district, and the reported total was over \$3.2 million; and

WHEREAS federal and state law require the ability for students in foster or state care to stay not just in their districts of origin but also in their schools of origin; and

WHEREAS the nature of foster care and state care placements has changed significantly within the past several decades; and

WHEREAS school districts do not have control over whether a foster care student is placed into or removed from the district; and

WHEREAS Chapter 7 of Chapter 76 of the MA General Laws, established over a century ago, obligates the Commonwealth to reimburse districts for the cost of educating students in

foster care and state care;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Commonwealth should reimburse transportation funding for children in foster care and state care. DCF and DESE must complete the process to provide proper documentation for the Commonwealth to receive reimbursement for transportation and expenses under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that MASC advocate to the Massachusetts General Court to properly calculate and assume the full expense of providing educational services to students in foster care and state care including the costs of assessments, regular day and special education services as well as out-of-district placements, transportation and mental health.

Adopted as presented on a voice vote - 2019

POVERTY AND CHILDREN

(Submitted by the Framingham School Committee)

WHEREAS one third of the children in Massachusetts are living in or near poverty; and

WHEREAS the perils of poverty include putting students and families at risk for health, social and emotional, and educational disadvantages; and

WHEREAS students in poverty and at social and emotional risk face obstacles and impediments to their success that others students do not confront; and

WHEREAS there is a direct link between poverty and student and district academic performance, demanding our attention and our diligent efforts to address them; and

WHEREAS the eradication of poverty among children is essential to generating a strong economy and vibrant society;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees will prioritize, as a matter of its public policy agenda, and file for supporting legislation to support the eradication of poverty among children in Massachusetts and advocate for social and economic justice for students and their families that will include:

- Support for a revenue stream that supports social and economic priorities for children and families.
- Support for state programs and services that serve children at greatest social and emotional risk which are easily accessible to students and families.
- Advocacy for nutrition programs that eradicate hunger among children.
- Advocacy for healthcare, including vision, hearing, dental and mental health through accessible service providers.
- Support pre-kindergarten programs for all children.
- Advocacy for increasing educational opportunities for children to grow both inside and outside of school.

Originally adopted in 2015

Re-adopted on a voice vote - 2019

ACCESS TO MENSTRUAL SUPPLIES

(Submitted by the MASC Resolutions Committee)

WHEREAS schools have an obligation to serve all students equitably. Every student deserves the reassurance that their school restrooms are outfitted with necessities to accommodate their biological needs. Yet, for roughly half the US student population, there is a glaring exception to this commitment: menstrual hygiene products; and

WHEREAS menstrual hygiene products are basic necessities, and the inability to access them affects a student's freedom to study, to be healthy, and participate in society with dignity. Studies have shown that when students lack access to menstrual hygiene products they skip or miss class, face embarrassment or objectification because of period stains, and are limited both academically and socially; and

WHEREAS no student should miss a day of school because they feel ashamed, or they do not have access to menstrual products;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC work with state and federal legislatures to provide additional funding to provide free access to menstrual products from the school nurse and in restrooms and locker rooms.

Approved as presented - 2019

CHARTER SCHOOL REFORM

(Sponsored by the MASC Board of Directors)

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

WHEREAS charter schools are always fully funded by the sending districts enrolling students there while the charter school mitigation fund is subject to appropriation and has not been fully funded in years; and

WHEREAS charter schools may retain up to 20 percent of their operating budget and capital costs in reserve funds, regional schools may retain only 5 percent of any surplus funds in reserve, while district schools must return 100 percent of any unspent funds to their municipality; and

WHEREAS without substantial reform of Commonwealth charter school financing, recruitment of students, 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 schools cannot be addressed.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees seek legislative action to both address the deleterious effects of charter school funding on certain municipalities and school districts across the state and approve a comprehensive set of reforms that includes:

- Establishment of strict guidelines or regulations to require that charter schools enroll representative cross sections of students residing with the school service areas.
- Reporting of accurate numbers of students who leave charter schools to return to the sending districts or districts of residence.
- Requiring MA DESE 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.
- State requirements that all charter schools be funded in full by the Commonwealth rather than by expropriation of Chapter 70 education aid from the sending cities, towns and regions.
- State funding in full of any mitigation funds created to offset the loss of state funding for students who become students in charter schools.

Approved on a voice vote - 2019

CLIMATE CHANGE

(Sponsored by the MASC Resolutions Committee)

WHEREAS we believe America is a great nation and has a proud heritage of addressing humanity's most pressing problems; and

WHEREAS we believe it is important to advocate for climate action leading to climate restoration to curtail one of the greatest threats facing communities throughout the world; and

WHEREAS we believe that climate change is not a partisan issue and that local, state and national policies should be guided by the best available science; and

WHEREAS there is a broad scientific consensus among climate scientists that human activities, contributing to increases in greenhouse gas emissions, are the dominant cause of climate change; and

WHEREAS children represent a particularly vulnerable group because greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere will continue to accumulate over the coming decades and will profoundly impact our current students throughout their lives, as well as the lives of future generations; and

WHEREAS MASC recognizes climate change as a generational justice and human rights issue; and

WHEREAS climate change is a social justice and equity issue. While climate change impacts all people and disproportionately impacts all young people and future generations, it disproportionately affects people of color and people in poverty, thereby exacerbating existing inequities and limiting equality of opportunity which is a foundational aspiration for modern America; and

WHEREAS the global impact, urgency, and magnitude of the challenge of addressing climate change calls for lead-

ership in all sectors of society, all institutions and all elected leaders; and

WHEREAS national and state elected leaders working in a bipartisan fashion to enact carbon pricing policies could quickly and substantially reduce human-made greenhouse gas emissions; and

WHEREAS MASC recognizes and understands the significant negative impact that rapid and ongoing climate change has on America's schools, students, and their communities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC calls on Congress to take swift and effective action on climate change to protect current and future students, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that MASC advocates for infrastructure needs and state and federal emergency funding for disaster relief caused by natural catastrophes and extreme weather events.

Approved on a voice vote - 2019

MANDATORY RECESS

(Sponsored by the MASC Board of Directors)

WHEREAS due to regulations promulgated by Massachusetts Education Reform of 1993 which excluded recess from time learning calculations and the federal No Child Left Behind Act which tied funding and local control of schools to standardized test scores, recess in many Massachusetts Elementary Schools has been diminished or eliminated to provide more time for academics; and

WHEREAS the CDC and the Society of Health and Physical Educators jointly stated that all students should be given at least 20 minutes of recess daily; and

WHEREAS research provided by the US Department of Health and Human Services has shown the benefits of recess to include improved social and emotional development, improved memory, attention and concentration, reductions in disruptive behavior in class and increased levels of physical activity;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC supports legislation calling for at least 20 minutes of uninterrupted, supervised, safe and unstructured free-play recess per day which cannot be excluded from structured learning time requirements and may not increase the total number of hours required in the school year for Massachusetts elementary school students.

Approved on a 96- 2 vote - 2021

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ANTI-RACISM

(Sponsored by the MASC Board of Directors)

WHEREAS as schools have the responsibility to equip students with their civil right of obtaining a free and appropriate public education, it is the responsibility of each

school to ensure we created a welcoming community for ALL students; and

WHEREAS it is the responsibility that every district provide to all district staff, including School Committee members, annual professional development on diversity, equity, and inclusion; and

WHEREAS every district will examine their policies for institutional and systemic racialized practices and implement change with sustainable policies that are evidence-based; and

WHEREAS every district will incorporate into their curriculum the history of racial oppression and works by black authors and works from diverse perspectives; and

WHEREAS we as school district leaders can no longer remain silent to the issues of racism and hate that continue to plague our public and private institutions;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that all the school districts in the Commonwealth should guarantee that racist practices are eradicated, and diversity, equity, and inclusion is embedded and practiced for our students, families, faculty, and staff; and

School Committee members should ensure that our school culture and that of every district in the Commonwealth is anti-racist, and acknowledges that all lives cannot matter until black lives matter.

Approved - 2020

PROHIBITING THE USE OF NATIVE AMERICAN MASCOTS
(Sponsored by the MASC Board of Directors)

WHEREAS the Massachusetts Association of School Committees passed a resolution last year resolving that all school districts in the Commonwealth should guarantee that racist practices be eradicated, and diversity, equity and inclusion be embedded and practiced for our students, families, faculty and staff; and

WHEREAS the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights called for an end to the use of Native American images and team names by non-Native schools in 2001, stating that "the stereotyping of any racial, ethnic, religious or other groups when promoted by our public educational institutions, teach all students that stereotyping of minority groups is acceptable, a dangerous lesson in a diverse society"; and

WHEREAS the American Psychological Association called for the immediate retirement of Native American mascots, logos and nicknames back in 2005, citing research showing that the use of Native American mascots (a) undermines the educational experiences of members of all communities; (b) creates a racially hostile learning environment for all students; (c) has a negative impact on the self-esteem of American Indian children; and (d) undermines the ability of American Indian Nations to portray accurate and respectful images of their culture;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC support legislation calling for regulations prohibiting public schools from using an athletic team name, logo or mascot which names, refers to, represents, or is associated with Native Americans, including aspects of Native American cultures and specific Native American tribes.

Approved on an 82-9 vote - 2021

FULL FUNDING FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

(Sponsored by the MASC Board of Directors)

WHEREAS it is the legal responsibility for public schools to provide a free and appropriate education for all students in the least restrictive environment; and

WHEREAS the cost to educate students with disabilities who qualify for special education services can be an extraordinary burden on the finances of our public schools, impacting the resources available to all students.

WHEREAS federal funding through IDEA is currently only providing approximately 15% of the extra cost to educate students receiving special education services, far less than the 40% promised in IDEA.

WHEREAS the IDEA Full Funding Act had been proposed to fully fund IDEA through an incremental, seven-year increase in funding which had both bipartisan and bicameral support.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees calls upon the Massachusetts Congressional to reintroduce and promote the passage of the IDEA Full Funding Act.

Approved - 2021