

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES

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# **SCHOOL COMMITTEE ASSOCIATION RESEARCH PAPER REVEALS CHARTER SCHOOLS UNDER-SERVING HIGH RISK, ELL, AND SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS**

Boston—Massachusetts charter schools are not serving students with complex special educational needs and English Language Learners according to a report issued today by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC). In addition, the report, titled “Who is Being Served,” cites significant loss of enrollment among students, mostly boys, as they advance through the grades in many urban and non-urban public schools, and a lower number of economically disadvantaged children in general.

According to Patrick Francomano, President of MASC and a member of the King Philip Regional School Committee, who authorized the research conducted by Dr. Kathleen Skinner, “some charter schools disregard the rules without any consequences or public accountability.” He also cited data indicating that, while some charter schools enrolled high numbers of special education students, “it is highly likely that those special education students are at lower risk and have fewer needs than would be found in the general special education population in a public school district.”

Francomano testified today along with Margeaux Weber of the Barnstable School Committee, who cited more serious violations on Cape Cod where charter schools have a significant imbalance of low income children and a virtual absence of students who are learning the English language.

Jacob Oliveira, MASC President-Elect and Ludlow School Committee member, called for more local oversight. “We are not opposed to charter schools,” he explained, “but when charter avoid high risk kids and when students who aren’t working out in charters are returned to the sending districts, it gets more difficult for city, town and regional school departments to close the achievement gap. The local districts get punished for not closing the achievement gap fast enough when, in fact, they are taking on a larger pool of higher needs students every year.”

Oliveira also called for greater local oversight of charter schools, including greater accountability to local school committees and a fair funding formula.

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