

## JOINT CONFERENCE UPDATE

It's a new school year. That translates to new challenges. More demands. Increased accountability. Decreased dollars.

For school leaders, the enhanced focus on student achievement—and documenting that achievement—has resulted in new requirements for educator and administrator evaluations and implementation of the national Common Core standards and the accompanying, much-debated PARCC assessment. Recent legislation has brought new regulations around student discipline and out-of-school suspensions. New initiatives designed to help every child succeed include Recovery High Schools, Innovation Schools, virtual schools, expanded options through educational collaboratives, home-school networks, and renewed focus on offering rigorous, 21st century skills-driven curricula at vocational-technical schools.

So you're now thinking: show me the money. And deliver our districts from (more) unfunded mandates.

And just to further add to the fiscal/regulatory uncertainties, the gubernatorial election in November may have considerable ramifications on future school district budgets.

While magic wands and fairy dust are in short supply, the opportunity to take control of these issues and manage the challenges is close at hand. The upcoming **MASC/MASS Joint Conference in Hyannis** will address these concerns and many others over the expanded four-day event, November 5-8.

The most ambitious conference program to date will feature more than 75 panel sessions, keynote programs



### School Leaders: Raising Student Achievement to New Heights

and featured guest speakers, as well as new sponsor-partner informational sessions that you can attend. Beginning on Wednesday, November 5 at noon, special strands will focus on fiscal and cost-savings initiatives as well as how collaboratives are offering new programs and services that can help districts remain cost-effective and competitive. Other highlights on the agenda are reports from districts who participated in a PARCC trial assessment this past spring; labor relations efforts to ensure an effective educator evaluation process; legal and legislative updates; fiscal and public relations concerns for regional and vocational schools; superintendent evaluation and succession planning; and a number of student-centered programs including leadership strategies for student achievement; the benefits of extended learning time; initiatives to help high-risk teens; student health and wellness programs; and a discussion around the devastating ramifications of student stress.

In addition to the full line-up of panels (check your mailbox for the recently mailed conference flyer or

view the complete schedule on the MASC website at [www.masc.org](http://www.masc.org)), the ever-popular exhibit hall will open on Wednesday afternoon with a record number of vendors. This year will also feature a new strand of sessions offered by some of our sponsor partners (titles and times to be announced in an upcoming mailing). And don't forget to join in the Bingo Game challenge with prizes, prizes, prizes for the lucky winners of the Bingo draw.

Featured speakers this year begin at the Keynote Dinner on Wednesday with radio/tv political commentator **Jim Braude** who will offer a post-election post-mortem. Thursday General Session speaker **Douglas Stone**, a noted author and professor at Harvard Law School, will share his insights on how to engage in difficult conversations and learn from feedback, be it professional, personal or political.

Also new this year is an entirely different Thursday evening dinner program. The conference planners realized that after two days of informa-

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Follow the Conference  
on Twitter

**MASC is on twitter!** You can read our twitter feed on the MASC website at [masc.org](http://masc.org) and follow us on twitter (@MASC\_Mike)! For the MASC/MASS Joint Conference we have created a twitter hashtag. When tweeting about the conference or looking for other folks' tweets, look for our hashtag - #MASCcon14.

**Join Twitter and let's have a social media conversation at the MASC/MASS Conference, November 5-8, 2014!!!**

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tion-packed sessions, attendees need time to relax, take it all in, and just sit for back for an evening. Well, you won't quite sit back, because dinner speaker **Jimmy Tingle**, a Somerville native and nationally known humorist/satirist is likely to have you laughing on the edge of your seats.

Not registered for Thursday night dinner yet? You might want to do that now ([www.masc.org](http://www.masc.org)), as seats are going fast.

Friday General Session speaker **Herman Boone**, former coach of the award-winning high school football team, the Titans, will share his experiences trying to mold a team out of a group of initially divisive and distrusting players. Friday luncheon guest speaker, Early Education and Care Commissioner **Tom Weber**, will discuss new initiatives his office is implementing to provide increased

access to programs and services to ensure every young child arrives at school prepared to learn and thrive.

Friday evening, the MASC Board of Directors will host the traditional Life Member/Leadership Awards banquet at which new and returning Life Members will be recognized and awards to the 2014 All-State School Committee and Lifetime Achievement recipients will be presented. (see box on page 4 for the list of this year's honorees.)

### EXPANDED FRIDAY-SATURDAY PROGRAM

Well aware of the time and financial constraints on many school committee members, the conference planning committee opted this year to expand the Friday-Saturday portion of the conference with a full day and a half of key sessions focused on school

leadership for those whose schedules make it impossible to attend the full conference. With the Delegate Assembly scheduled this year for Wednesday afternoon (instead of the usual Friday afternoon), there is a full slate of valuable programs on Friday and Saturday, ending with a **Student Voices Lunch on Saturday** where the guest speakers will be current and former MA student leaders who will engage members in a discussion about their educational experience: what worked, what didn't and how well they were prepared for college/work life. This is an important opportunity to hear from these students and how they believe school leaders can improve the school and learning environment.

Complete schedule of events online at [www.masc.org](http://www.masc.org)

## MASC NEWS

### MASC testifies on Common Core and PARCC at Local Government Advisory Committee Meeting

MASC President-Elect Patrick Francomano (King Philip Regional) and Vice President Jake Oliveira (Ludlow) presented compelling testimony to members of the Local Government Advisory Committee at its monthly meeting on September 9. Attendees included mayors and selectmen from communities across the state, as well as the members of the Governor's cabinet and members of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Francomano commented on the controversy that has arisen around the Common Core standards and the PARCC assessment system, suggesting that much of this has been driven by partisan politics. He added, however, that having gone through 20 years of education reform where it's pretty clear that no one really has the answers to:

- The best standards for curriculum and student achievement?
- The best way to turn around underperforming schools?
- Whether the schools that we have

labeled, if not demonized, for underperformance, are actually underperforming in a national sense?

- Is PARCC really an improvement, or just representative of "what's going around now"?
- Who is profiting from this new testing system and is the profiteering on education reform acceptable?

Oliveira noted that MASC has supported the Common Core and PARCC in part because the state accepted the Race to the Top funding and believe that it is a more effective strategy to help students think critically and creatively. However, he added, MASC is concerned about the following:

- As PARCC replaces MCAS in certain situations, how do we know that scores from this new testing concept will be calibrated appropriately so that they are not used to discredit school districts trying to adapt to new standards?
- How will we absorb the costs of obtaining the technology to administer the tests?
- Will test results be available in time to help students select the best courses and allow faculty to guide students appropriately?
- How will we actually assess whether or not the PARCC system is actually working?

**On Thursday, November 6 at the Joint**

**Conference in Hyannis, two sessions will focus on the Common Core and PARCC, including a discussion of the concerns around the new standards and test, and a report from three districts that piloted the test in the spring of 2014.**

### EVERYONE'S INVITED MASC Division III is hosting a timely informational session on Wednesday, October 1 in West Bridgewater.

The meeting will provide an overview of the resolutions to be debated at the upcoming Delegate Assembly; a discussion on Common Core and PARCC; and a model for members who have expressed interest in convening a "town hall-style" meeting in their districts to get comments and set priorities around changes to the Chapter 70 funding formula which will be considered in the upcoming months by the recently re-established Foundation Budget Review Commission.

The meeting will be held at the **Charlie Horse Restaurant in West Bridgewater from 6:00-8:00pm**. A light dinner will be served. To register: [www.masc.org/events-and-conferences](http://www.masc.org/events-and-conferences).

# 20th annual PRUDENTIAL SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY AWARDS

## Recognizing young people for outstanding volunteer service

Created in 1995, the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards recognize students in grades 5-12 who have made meaningful contributions to their communities through volunteer service. These prestigious awards, sponsored by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) are presented annually at the local, state and national levels.

Young volunteers can apply online at <http://spirit.prudential.com> or [www.nassp.org/spirit](http://www.nassp.org/spirit). Applications must be completed by November 4, 2014 and then submitted to a middle or high school principal. Paper versions of the application form are available by calling 877-525-8491.

Participating schools and local organizations will select Local Honorees in early November and present them with Certificates of Achievement. These honorees are then reviewed by a state-level judging committee, which will name the two top candidates from each state and the District of Columbia—one high school student and one middle level student—as State Honorees on February 10,

2015. These Honorees will receive \$1,000 awards and an all-expense paid trip to Washington DC with a parent for four days of recognition events May 2-5, 2015. In Washington, a national selection committee will name 10 of the 102 State Honorees as America's top youth volunteers of 2015. These National Honorees will receive \$5,000 and \$5,000 grants from The Prudential Foundation for the nonprofit charitable organizations of their choice.

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

#### ANY STUDENT WHO:

- is in grades 5-12 as of November 4, 2014 and is a legal resident of one of the 50 states or the District of Columbia.
- has engaged in a volunteer activity that occurred at least in part after September 1, 2013.
- completes an application and submits it to a school principal or the head of an officially designated local organization by November 4, 2014.

### PLEASE SHARE WITH YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY.

## An invitation to attend

### Suburban Coalition Meeting

Thursday, October 16, 2014 7:30-9:00pm

Newton Marriott, 2345 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA

Sponsored by Divisions I, II, III, IV and IX

Join Michael Widmer (President, MA Taxpayers Foundation), Representative Thomas Conroy and other distinguished panelists at this Suburban Coalition meeting, co-sponsored by MASC, at which panelists will discuss the upcoming election and its impact on local communities. How will various outcomes affect state priorities? How will they affect school committees as local officials? What are likely to be the priorities of the next legislative session, and how can locally elected officials advocate effectively. Join this discussion that will help you understand and plan for the future.

**To register, contact:** [dorothyprasser@suburbancoalition.org](mailto:dorothyprasser@suburbancoalition.org)

Please feel free to invite other elected officials from your community or neighboring communities to join you.

The Suburban Coalition is a statewide organization of School Committees, Selectmen, Finance Committees and other local officials that jointly advocates for the resources, funding and support at the state level to sustain vibrant communities throughout the Commonwealth. For more information, visit [suburbancoalition.org](http://suburbancoalition.org).

## TOOLS for SCHOOLS

As a corollary to the National School Boards Association's partnership with Fox Searchlight Pictures (FSP), New Regency, Penguin Books and the Montel Media Group around the Oscar-winning film **12 Years a Slave**, an educators toolkit for the film is being offered free of charge to any public high school in America. The intent is to inform high school level teaching and learning around the evils of slavery and the poignant lessons the film portrays.



**FSP has added a button for educators at [www.12yearsaslave.com](http://www.12yearsaslave.com) where all that is required to request the toolkit is completion of a simple, online form. Buttons are now "live":**

### Each FREE Educator's Toolkit includes:

- One (1) Full Length DVD Copy of the Movie (airline version)
- One (1) Copy of the Penguin Paperback Book\*
- One (1) Printed Study Guide
- One (1) Letter from Director Steve McQueen

### This is an 'opt in' process for school districts. Before requesting a toolkit:

**1. Know and follow school district policy:** Local faculty should abide by school district policy and procedure on showing non-curricular material such as feature films.

**2. Obtain site-based approval:** Educators should gain advance permission from their high school principals.

\*While supplies last. Penguin is donating 1,000 books, once supplies run out, each teacher package will include information on how teachers can purchase an exam copy of the book for \$5 as well as a link to download the Google e-book version for free.

## Lifetime Achievement and All-State School Committee Award winners announced

On **Friday, November 7** at the annual joint conference Life Member/Leadership Awards Banquet, the following MASC members will be recognized for their contributions to the Association and to the students and school community in their districts.

### LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

**Stephen Bannon**, Berkshire Hills Regional

**Marie Christie**, Stoneham

**Keith Wortzman**, Randolph

**Nancy Burdick**, Hopkinton

**Timothy Lepore**, Nantucket

**Joaquim Nobrega**, Greater New Bedford Reg. Voc. Tech.

### ALL-STATE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Division I: **Kristin Thorp**, Melrose

Division II: **Malcolm Astley**, Wayland

Division III: **Donald Williams**, Old Colony Reg. Voc. Tech.

Division IV: **Mayor Mark Hawke**, Gardner

Division V: **Lori Loughlin**, Quaboag Reg.

Division VI: **Vito Valentini**, Southern Berkshire Reg.

Division VII: **David Bloomfield**, Cape Cod Reg. Voc. Tech./Mashpee

Division VIII: **Randall Durrigan**, Greater New Bedford Reg. Voc. Tech.

Division IX: **Mayor Lisa Wong**, Fitchburg

## CALENDAR of Events

### October 1 (W)

#### Division III meeting

Charlie Horse Restaurant

West Bridgewater, MA

6:00-8:00pm

### October 9 (Th)

#### Division VI Meeting

Pittsfield High School, Pittsfield MA

Guest Speaker: Rep. Alice Peisch,

Education Committee Co-Chair

4:30-6:00pm

**ALL MASC MEMBERS ARE INVITED**

### October 17-19 (F-Su)

#### NSBA Northeast Regional Meeting

Mystic, CT

### November 5-8 (W-Sa)

#### MASC/MASS Conference

Hyannis, MA

**MASC**

One McKinley Square  
Boston, MA 02109

Massachusetts Association of School Committees