

## Conference 2021 is on the horizon

MA schools are back in session, full-schedule, in-person, for the first time in almost 18 months. Parents, teachers, students and school leaders could not be more enthusiastic—or more hopeful.

MASC is also looking forward to a return to pre-pandemic opportunities. These include welcoming members back to Hyannis for the 2021 MASC/MASS Joint Conference, which had to be cancelled last year for health and safety reasons.

As in the past the MASC/MASS Joint program will be held at the Resort and Conference Center in Hyannis, Wednesday, November 3-Saturday, November 6. Conference programming ends on Friday afternoon, followed by the MASC Leadership Dinner on Friday evening, and the annual Delegate Assembly on Saturday morning. Members can attend the conference either in-person, or virtually. Sessions will be recorded and streamed in real time so members can participate remotely and engage in session discussions and presentations with on-site attendees and guest speakers. MASC will make ALL the sessions available on the website to all registered attendees (on-site and virtual) through December. Many members have already indicated that they consider this a huge bonus: "In prior years, I could only attend one session per panel block. This year, I will be able to access all the other sessions that I



wanted to attend but was unable to. That is going to be a great benefit for my professional development and the information I can bring back to my district."

MASC and MASS conference planners are also working closely with the hotel to ensure the health and safety of all attendees. For the first time, registration has had to be limited in order to allow for social distancing and appropriate space for seating in sessions and at meals. There will not be an exhibit hall this year, and there will be fewer sessions in each time block to maximize spacing. Safety precautions including individual sanitizers/sanitizer stations and air purifiers in each of the meeting rooms will also be part of the program and attendees will be able to designate on their badges their degree of comfort with maintaining distance with other attendees. MASC is also requiring attendees to wear masks in all public areas during the event, except during meals.

As this Bulletin goes to press, on-site registration is, unfortunately, at capacity and we are not accepting new on-site registrations. However, our registrar is maintaining a "wait list" for members who would like to register to attend in person should cancellations occur. Of course, there

continued on page 5

## Maintaining Civility at School Committee Meetings

Most school committee meetings tend to be routine and can even be a little boring. But issues do come along that bring out passion and fill the meeting-room.

And this year, there seems to be no shortage of issues that are being raised at school committee meetings.

The question becomes, how do you maintain a civil discourse while discussing these hot-button issues?

Yes, Virginia, it can be a challenge. Caught up in the moment, as we have seen this summer, people sometimes have gotten angry, become emotional, and made personal attacks as they advocated for or against issues they care deeply about. Committee meetings can quickly get out of hand if the committee doesn't have—and follow—specific protocols for conducting meetings.

It boils down to requiring people to treat each other with respect, even when they disagree.

A good first step is to follow rules of parliamentary procedure and, in particular, Robert's Rules of Order. While these procedures can sometimes seem intimidating and overly formal, they provide a structure for conducting the meetings efficiently and fairly, with participation by the public.

But even when parliamentary procedures are followed, things can get chaotic if the committee chair doesn't enforce the rules and demand that speakers show common courtesy and

continued on page 3

# Diversity Grew from the Cities to the Suburbs over Past Decade

The 2020 US Census reveals a diversifying Massachusetts, and those changes stretch far beyond the state's burgeoning urban centers to touch nearly every single municipality from Salisbury to Sheffield.

Every single city and town in the Bay State except for one saw its share of white residents as a percentage of the local population decrease from 2010-2020, matched by corresponding increases in the share of residents identifying as Black, Hispanic or Latino, Asian or some other racial demographic, according to census data released earlier this month.

That nearly universal trend carried through cities where people of color already represented a majority of the population, small towns far whiter than the state average, and suburban communities that are rapidly becoming more multicultural.

In 2010, about 53% of Everett's residents and 83% of Avon's population were white. The white share of the population in both communities dropped 19 percentage points—the largest change in the state—by 2020, transforming Everett into a mostly nonwhite community; in Avon, almost four in ten residents are now people of color.

White residents still make up the largest subset, about 34%, of Everett's 49,000 residents. However, more than 28% of the city's population now identifies as Hispanic or Latino, up from 21% a decade ago.

The lone exception to the Bay State's pattern of becoming less white was Aquinnah, a tiny community on the western tip of Martha's Vineyard. Ten years ago, about 56% of the town's estimated 311 residents were white. In the 2020 census, that rate rose to nearly 63%.

Statewide, the white population shrunk over the past 10 years while that of most racial minorities grew, continuing long-running demographic shifts in both MA—which historically has been whiter than the rest of the country—and in the US as a whole.

The state had about 235,000 more white residents in 2010 than it did in 2020, and the white share of the population dropped in that span from more than three-quarters to nearly two-thirds. Over the same period, the statewide Black share of the population increased from about 6 percent to 6.5 percent, the Hispanic or Latino share grew from 9.6 percent to 12.6 percent, and the share identifying as Asian rose from

5.3 percent to about 7.2 percent.

MA now has 13 municipalities where non-white residents outnumber white residents, five more than it did in 2010. The white share of the local population dropped below 50% in Everett, Lowell, Malden, Revere and Worcester over the past decade. With that change, white residents are now a minority of the population in six of the state's 10 most populous cities: Boston, Worcester, Springfield, Lowell, Brockton and Lynn. Fall River, which is about 71% white, is the only city in that top 10 list that is less diverse than MA as a whole.

And many smaller communities that were once homogenous have also undergone substantial demographic transformation.

In Hopkinton, a 28-square mile Metro-west community, more than 9 out of 10 of its residents were white in 2010; another 624 town residents identified as Asian.

Over the ensuing decade, the town's Asian population grew to about 3,300—a more than 400% increase, while the number of white residents remained virtually flat.

This change in the state's racial make-up could factor heavily into redistricting decisions that lawmakers will make in the coming months as they embark on the once-every-decade process of redrawing state legislative, congressional and Governor's Council boundaries.

## Enhanced safety net keeps many afloat

The percentage of Americans in poverty fell last year to the lowest level on record as a result of the trillions of dollars the government spent to cushion the effects of the worst economic crisis since the 1930s.

The US Census Bureau report issued this month noted that the supplemental poverty rate, which includes several forms of government assistance, declined to 9.1% from 11.8% the year before. The measure, which includes stimulus payments, Social Security, and housing subsidies, was

introduced in 2009.

The official poverty rate, which doesn't factor in major aid programs to assist low-income families, increased to 11.4%.

At the same time the poverty rate fell, however, the number of people across the country working full time dropped more sharply than at any time since the late 1960s, and median income declined for the first time in nearly a decade,

In Massachusetts, the poverty rate accounting for government aid is

9.4%, according to a three-year average, while the official rate, which doesn't reflect geographic differences such as housing costs, is 8.2%. The median household income in Massachusetts last year was \$86,725, down from \$87,707 in 2019.

The stimulus checks, which provided \$1,200 payments to millions of Americans last year, saved 11.7 million people from poverty, according to the census. Unemployment insurance, which was also expanded, kept 5.5 million out of poverty. Social Security continued to be the big-

**continued on page 4**

# Civility at School

continued from page 1

decorum. It's important to keep the discussion focused on the issue being debated and avoid degenerating into personal attacks.

The committee chair should cut off discussion that becomes too personal or disrespectful and make clear that the behavior is the problem—not the speaker's opinion. Sometimes, if conversations get too heated, the chair might even need to call for a break to give people a chance to calm down and restore order.

Maintaining order is important not only to conducting business efficiently but also to creating an atmosphere where people feel safe to participate. When meetings devolve into loud, rowdy gatherings, many people become afraid to voice their opinion, worried that they may become the target of ridicule or personal attacks. Some may even feel physically afraid.

By following established rules and treating all people with respect, the committee can encourage active participation at their meetings in a way that allows for intensive discussion without turning the meetings into battlefields.

**Following are some other suggestions for maintaining civility at committee meetings from the Institute for Local Government ([www.ca-ilg.org](http://www.ca-ilg.org)).**

- **Post any guidelines for public comment in the meeting room and/or print them on the agenda, along with going over them before public comment starts.**

- **Have people sign up to speak and call on them in order.**

- **Set a time limit.**

It's often best to limit the time allotted to speakers to three minutes or some other designated amount, so

that no one speaker can dominate the discussion. Assure people they all will be allowed a turn to speak. That can help prevent people from interrupting others out of fear they won't have an opportunity to give their opinion or rebut a comment.

To save time, remind people that if a previous speaker has already expressed their views, they could simply say they agree with the previous speaker. The goal is to create a culture where people are respectful of each other's right to voice an opinion and participate in the meeting.

- **Outline the process.**

It can help reduce tension if, at the start of the meeting, the committee chair outlines the process to be followed, including any limitations on public participation. Remind them to be respectful of others and that you will cut off any testimony that involves name-calling or is otherwise derogatory.

- **Listen, listen, listen.**

Listening is an important way committee members can show respect to speakers, as well as learn what they want to share. Members should listen with their whole bodies—making eye contact with the speaker, perhaps taking notes.

Members should show through their demeanor that they are really hearing and trying to understand what the speaker is saying, even if they don't agree with it. Nothing riles the public more than if it thinks the committee has already made a decision but is just going through the motions in hearing public testimony.

- **Separate people from the problem.**

Name calling, personal attacks and questioning people's motives only raise tension instead of moving the conversation forward. The committee chair should immediately stop any discussion where this happens and remind the speaker to focus on the issue, not personalities.

- **No applause or heckling allowed.**

Ask people not to clap, cheer, or boo the testimony of different speakers. It can be intimidating for people to share views that they fear will draw boos and ridicule. It can also encourage speakers to focus more on getting applause than in making their point in a respectful manner.

- **Call a recess.**

If people ignore the rules, start interrupting other speakers and things get out of hand, the committee chair should call a recess. A short break can calm things down and help restore order. If a recess does not work, it may be necessary to remove a disruptor from the meeting. Another option is to end the meeting.

- **Walk the talk.**

Committee members need to follow the same rules of courtesy and respect as they expect the public to follow. These include:

- Limiting statements during discussions to those that move the conversation forward

- Keeping remarks brief, to the point, and non-repetitive of comments others have made (other than to note agreement)

- Avoiding personal attacks (in public and private) and otherwise adhering to the strategies described above.

If civility issues continue to plague your board, call MASC or your field director to discuss options.

*This article has been adapted from one that appeared in the September, 2021 issue of the CABE (CT Association of Boards of Education) Journal.*

# MASC Listserv Protocols

The MASC listserv is intended to be a place where school committee members can ask questions, share ideas, and engage in discussion and debate. The listserv is a great way to benefit from the experiences of school committee members in other districts, to learn from each other, and to participate in ongoing conversations on important topics related to school committee work. We at the Association rely on listserv members to maintain high standards of collegiality as well as principled dissent and disagreement in listserv discussions. In order to ensure the best possible experience, we have established some basic protocols for participation. These protocols will be posted periodically as a reminder to participants.

## The Protocols

- Openly share your questions, experiences, ideas, and knowledge so we can all grow together.
- Discussions on the listserv are meant to stimulate conversation. Use discretion in keeping the listserv a place where members can comment without fear of ridicule, excessive sarcasm, or personal attack.
- Treat listserv postings as intended for the exclusive enlightenment of our members. They should not be shared outside the listserv without the expressed permission of the contributor. Members should understand that messages nonetheless may be shared outside the membership.
- Topics on the listserv should remain related to those related to school committee work. It is not a place for commercial messages or soliciting business.
- All messages should be signed with the sender's name and the name of their district and their email.
- By joining the listserv, members agree to abide by these protocols. Current members, by continued participation on the listserv, likewise agree to abide by these protocols.
- Listserv participants who violate these protocols may be suspended or removed from the listserv by MASC's Executive Director.

As with all our work, student achievement, driven by the goal of equity, is at the center. The Massachusetts State Constitution guarantees that all students are entitled to a comprehensive education which will prepare them for participation in a democracy.

---

## Enhanced Safety

### continued from page 2

gest antipoverty measure, preventing 26.5 million people from falling into poverty.

Job losses last year were staggering. The number of people working full time and year-round dropped by about 13.7 million, and a disproportionate number of those experiencing cutbacks were lower-wage workers.

More men than women lost full-time year-round employment last year — 7.5 million and 6.2 million, respectively. Overall, though, median earnings of all women decreased by 1.2%, while men didn't experience a statistically significant drop, suggesting that more women cut back or gave up part-time jobs, possibly due to caregiving.

Median household income

dropped across all racial and ethnic groups between 2019 and 2020, falling 4.5% for Asian households, 2.7% for non-Hispanic whites, and 2.6% for Hispanic households. The income difference for Black households was not statistically significant, though the Black population has the highest poverty rate among the major ethnic groups, at 19.5%.

In Massachusetts, the pandemic has had a significant effect on low-income workers. From January 2020 to June 2021, employment rates for people in Massachusetts making below the median wage, around \$37,000 a year, fell 11.1%, while employment rates for those making more rose 2.6%, according to Opportunity Insights, a research organization at Harvard University.

At Economic Mobility Pathways in Boston, the low-income clients served

by the antipoverty nonprofit have struggled as the pandemic wears on. In the fiscal year that ended June 2019, more than half the agency's 1,300 clients were able to increase their earnings from work by 10% or more. Last year, only 44% were able to do so. And in fiscal year 2021, just 23% managed to make 10% more. With the high cost of living in the Boston area, which has some of the highest child care and housing costs in the nation, a family with one adult and one child needs an income of more than \$80,000 a year to cover basic living costs, according to the MIT Living Wage Calculator.

*Information in this article was first reported by Katie Johnston in The Boston Globe.*

# conference guest speakers

## Wednesday Keynote Dinner



Jeffrey Riley  
Commissioner of Education, DESE

## Thursday General Session



Maurice "Mo" Cunningham  
Professor, Political Science,  
U.MA-Boston

## Thursday Dinner



Jennifer Hedrington  
MA 2021 Teacher of the Year

## Friday General Session



Nadja Reilly  
Psychologist, William James College

## Friday General Session



Carolyn Casey  
Executive Director, Project 351

## Friday Lunch



Alan Charles Geller,  
Senior Lecturer, Social & Behavioral  
Sciences  
Harvard School of Public Health

## DELEGATE ASSEMBLY UPDATE

The Delegate Assembly will be held on Saturday, November 6 at the Resort and Conference Center in Hyannis, beginning at 9:00am. **Delegates will be able to participate either on-site in Hyannis, or virtually via Zoom.** If you will be participating from a remote location, please email that information to MASC Field Director Jim Hardy who will be coordinating the virtual component of the meeting. His email is: [jhardy@masc.org](mailto:jhardy@masc.org).

**On Thursday, September 30, MASC will hold an all-division meeting virtual program at 6:00pm that will review the nine resolutions that will be debated and voted at the Delegate Assembly.** Sign up for the meeting on the website.

On Friday, October 22, the Learning Lunch program will review how to access the conference program and sessions via Zoom as well as training for delegates who will be participating at the assembly remotely.

Resolutions are printed in the MASC Delegate Manual which has been sent to all members. They are also posted on the MASC website.

## Conference 2021 is on the horizon continued from page 1

is no cap on virtual attendance and we encourage members to consider virtual participation as an option.

The Delegate Assembly will also be held in hybrid format, with delegates choosing whether they wish to participate on-site or via Zoom. Resolutions are included in the 2021 Delegate Manual which has been sent to all current and life members. Resolutions are also posted on the MASC website.

A more detailed conference update notice is being sent to all school committee members and superintendents, detailing session and keynote presentation

topics and a meal registration reminder. One meal/event change that we reluctantly had to adjust to was the postponement this year of the traditional Life Member Dinner. There will be a dinner event on Friday evening for attendees and members who will be staying over for the Saturday Delegate Assembly and we look forward to welcoming all our Life Members back in 2022.

For more information, check the MASC website or email us. For questions about registration: [scheesman@masc.org](mailto:scheesman@masc.org). For programming questions: [jhandy@masc.org](mailto:jhandy@masc.org)

ALL ON-SITE CONFERENCE ATTENDEES, GUESTS, SPEAKERS AND STAFF WILL BE REQUIRED TO WEAR MASKS IN ALL PUBLIC AREAS, EXCEPT DURING MEALS, IRRESPECTIVE OF VACCINATION STATUS.

## 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. Time and location of the presentation of these awards will be announced in an upcoming Bulletin.

### LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Don Ayer, Nashoba Valley  
Mary Barclay, Montachusett Reg. Voc. Tech.  
Lori Hampsch, Hopedale  
Ted Hoegler, Tri-County Reg. Voc. Tech.  
Beverly Hugo, Framingham  
Mark Linde, Southeastern Reg. Voc. Tech.  
John Nunes, Dartmouth  
Stephen Udden, Southeastern Reg. Voc. Tech.

### ALL-STATE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Division I: Mel Webster, Amesbury  
Division II: Carrie Normand, Somerville  
Division III: Rebecca Sherlock-Shangraw, Weymouth  
Division IV: Sally Cragin, Fitchburg  
Division V: Michael Knapp, Belchertown  
Division VI: Tara Jacobs, North Adams  
Division VII: Terry Russell, Monomoy  
Division VIII: Robert Wilby, Bay Path Reg. Voc. Tech.  
Division IX: Jody Almeida, Taunton  
Division X: LaTonia Monroe Naylor, Springfield

## Upcoming Events

**Thursday, September 30**

**All Division Meeting** (virtual)  
6:00pm  
MASC Annual Meeting  
Resolutions Review

**Friday, October 1**

**Learning Lunch**  
Noon-1:15pm  
Setting Goals for your  
FY23 Budget

**Saturday, October 2**

**Charting the Course**  
8:00am-4:00pm  
Bay Bath Voc. Tech., Charlton

**Friday, October 22**

**Leadership Lunch**  
Noon-1:15pm  
Technology review for Joint  
Conference

**Wednesday, November 3-**

**Saturday, November 6**  
**MASC Joint Conference**  
Resort and Conference Center,  
Hyannis

**Saturday, November 6**

**MASC Delegate Assembly**  
9:00am  
Resort and Conference Center,  
Hyannis

Register for all events on the MASC website: [www.masc.org/events-and-conferences](http://www.masc.org/events-and-conferences).

**MASC**

Massachusetts Association of School Committees  
One McKinley Square  
Boston, MA 02109