

Education aid at historic high in Governor's proposed budget

Governor Maura Healey filed her FY24 recommended budget (H.1) on Wednesday, March 1. This later filing is due to the additional time given a new governor to make their recommendation to the state legislature.

State chapter 70 aid is funded statewide at \$6.5 billion. This historic high funds the third of six years of the state moving to the new goal levels in the Student Opportunity Act. House 1 includes 100% effort reduction, a \$30 per pupil minimum increase, and the standard 41% funding of foundation through state means. The foundation budget calculation is based on the capped 4.5% inflation in the law; health insurance inflation is 5.15%. MASC remains committed along with MASS, AFT-MA, and the MTA to advocating for a higher and more realistic rate



of inflation.

The circuit breaker account is funded at \$503M. As members are aware, out-of-district tuition for placements is rising by 14% this coming fiscal year; MASC will continue to advocate for an appropriate calculation and funding of this important reimbursement to districts.

Charter reimbursement is level funded at \$243M. This, however, does represent full funding of the account, continuing the commitment made under the Student Opportunity Act to fund not only the initial year of reimbursement, but all three.

Regional transportation reimbursement is funded at \$97M, as we regain stability in regular transportation.

Representing a significant increase, House 1 funds non-resi-

dent transportation at \$5.1M, an increase from \$250,000 in FY23. This is intended to meet projected need. Homeless student transportation also is proposed for an increase to \$28.6M from \$22.9M. The early college account sees a proposed \$3M increase to \$13M. Similarly, the Governor has proposed \$5.8M for innovation pathways, an account funded at \$4.8M this current year.

METCO is proposed at \$28.9M from \$29.4M in the current year. Rural aid, funded for this year at \$5.5M is proposed at \$7.5M. While Governor Healey has expressed a commitment to continuing universal free school lunch, the FY24 House 1 budget does not include funding for that. Governor Healey has stated that it will be funded in a future supplemental state budget.

MA Legislative Committee Chairs/Members Announced

Earlier this month Senate President Karen Spilka and House Speaker Ronald Mariano announced their appointments to lead joint legislative committees. Those of particular interest to MASC members are listed below. The full list of legislative committees can be found at <https://malegislature.gov/Committees>.

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Women Who Made—and are Making—a Difference for MA Schools

In recognition of March as Women's History Month, the MASC Board of Directors has identified and celebrates the following outstanding Massachusetts women, past and present, who served on school committees who have made significant—often groundbreaking—contributions to students and families in the Commonwealth.



Roberta Doering, Agawam, President, MASC and NSBA

Ms. Doering broke barriers during her lifetime, serving 40 years on the Agawam School Committee. She served as President of MASC (1986) before moving

onto the Board of Directors of the National School Boards Association and in 1995 was elected that organization's President.



Edith Norse Rogers, Lowell, First MA Woman in Congress

One of the first women to serve on the Lowell School Committee, she was subsequently elected to Congress as a member of the US House of Representatives in a

district that, at one time, stretched Lowell as far south as Cambridge.



Elizabeth Valerio, Esq., MA COSA

A former teacher and Wrentham school committee member, Liz Valerio went to law school and has served as labor counsel to many school districts. She was among those who organized the Massachusetts Council of School

Attorneys and has been recognized as one of the state's outstanding labor attorneys.



Dr. Ogretta McNeil, Worcester, Pioneer in the Field of Clinical Psychology

Following her retirement as a Professor of Psychology at The College of the Holy Cross, Ogretta McNeil served several terms on the

Worcester School Committee. As a professor, she had a reputation for scholarly integrity and diligence in research. Among the students she mentored was Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. Dr. McNeill represented the Urban Division on the MASC Board of Directors.



Senate President Karen Spilka, Ashland

Ms. Spilka was a mediator who took on reform of the state's school financing system in the late 1990s as chair of the Ashland School Committee. In 2002 she entered the MA House of Representatives and moved to the State Senate

where she currently serves as Senate President.



Katherine Clark, Melrose, US House Minority Whip

Katherine Clark chaired the Melrose School Committee before heading off to the MA House of Representatives and later to the State

Senate. In 2013 she was elected to the 5th district seat in the US House of Representatives where she rose to the post of Assistant House Democratic Leader prior to becoming the House Democratic Whip in 2023.



Past Senate President Harriette Chandler, Worcester

A member of the Worcester School Committee in the 1980s, Chandler moved into the legislature, eventually becoming the first woman to lead the body. She held the title of Senate President Emerita when she retired in 2023.



Marjorie Hurst, Springfield, Community Activist and Editor

Together with her husband, Frederick, son Jason, and daughter-in-law Denise, Ms. Hurst was the first woman of color to take a leadership role in MASC, chairing the Minority Caucus and serving on the Board of Directors representing the Springfield School Committee. Marjorie and Fred created the leading newspaper for the African American Community in Western Massachusetts. Today, Denise follows the family tradition as a Springfield School Committee member and MASC Secretary-Treasurer.



Stacey Rizzo, MASC President 2023

MASC's current president was a long-time advocate for children and President of her local PTA. Trained in nursing, she has served 13 years on the Revere School Committee.



Jean Maguire, Boston, Founder of METCO

One of the leading advocates for the children of Boston, Jean Maguire was a founding member of METCO where she served as executive director for many years. During the most challenging days of the Boston desegregation process, Maguire served on the school committee providing a powerful voice for students and families.



Carol Doherty, Taunton, MTA President and State Legislator

Before joining the faculty of the Education Department of Northeastern University, Ms. Doherty was a teacher and union leader. She was

President of the MA Teachers Association in the mid-1980s before going into higher education. In 2009 Doherty was elected to the MA House of Representatives where she continues to serve.



Alice Peisch - Co-author of the Student Opportunity Act

School districts across the state enjoy the financial support of the Student Opportunity Act of 2018, a statute that ushered in the second major phase of education reform.

Among the key authors of the bill was former Wellesley School Committee member and town clerk, Alice Peisch, who went to the legislature in 2008, is currently the Assistant Majority Leader of the House.



Lucretia Peabody Hale, First Women on Boston School Committee 1874-76

It is not well known that even before the Constitution was amended to give women the vote, ladies were permitted to

cast ballots for their school boards. Ms. Hale, a distinguished descendant of many of the most famous names in American history (she was a direct descendant of Nathan Hale), was a noted writer and lecturer. Among those who were also elected to school committees were Ann B. Earle and Francis Baker of Worcester (1868) although Ms. Baker did not serve, and Alice Longfellow, daughter of the poet, in Cambridge (1880).



Henrietta Attles, First Black Female Committee Member in Cambridge, Led Voluntary Desegregation.

A leader of one of the city's leading African American Churches where her husband served as pastor, Henrietta Attles became, in 1980, the

first woman of color elected to the Cambridge School Committee. She took an active, conciliatory role making that city the first in the Eastern United States to desegregate voluntarily. She weathered the perfect political storm of desegregating, withstanding court challenges, addressing Proposition 2 ½ budget cuts, and developing a master agreement to resolve issues and forego a crisis.



Kathleen Sullivan Alioto, Boston, Played Constructive Role in Desegregation

As a member of the Boston School Committee, Ms. Alioto was among the most effective voices leading the effort to bring

families together during the tense era of school desegregation in Boston.



Ethel Troland, Malden, First President and Co-Founder, MASC

Ms. Troland was one of the original group of 27 school committee chairs who met at her home in Malden and founded MASC in 1947. A leader in community service, she was elected

to lead the Federated Women's Clubs of MA.



The author of this report is Virginia Simms George, a member of the Assabet Valley Vocational Tech. School Committee. A Virginia native and proud graduate of Virginia Union University, an HBCU school, she has fought discrimination and bias for over 60 years. Today she continues that work, speaking with students and leading MASC's initiatives on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. She is a member of the MASC Board of Directors as Chair of Division X (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion). She received a M.Ed from the University of Maryland in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling.

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NATIONAL NEWS

**BILL WOULD EXTEND FMLA
BENEFITS TO EDUCATION
SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS**

A bill to extend the Family and Medical Leave Act's (FMLA) benefit to about 2.7 million education support professionals has been reupped in the new Congress.

Last month, Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Illinois, and Rep. Sean Casten, D-Illinois introduced the ESP and School Support Staff Family Leave Act, which would grant protection to school support staff, such as janitorial staff, food service workers, bus drivers and clerical support staff. These workers would be eligible for FMLA protection if they work more than 60% of the total monthly hours expected for their role, in line with a 2009 provision for airline flight crew workers.

Lawmakers and supporters regard the FMLA, which was signed into law by President Bill Clinton 30 years ago – Feb. 5, 1993 – as landmark legislation that provided U.S. workers with job-protected leave. But they also see it as a stepping stone for expanding coverage to more workers and paid leave.

Currently, FMLA protects 56% of the workforce, and gaps in FMLA coverage leave out workers at small employers, folks working one or multiple part-time job positions and those re-entering the workforce or changing jobs. This means some of our most vulnerable workers are the least likely to be protected – people of color and low-wage workers, according to Rep. Lauren Underwood, D-Illinois. Alongside Sen. Tina Smith, D-Minnesota, Underwood reintroduced the Job Protection Act to close gaps in coverage for employees of small businesses, part-time workers and those either switching jobs or returning to the workforce

MCGOVERN BILL WOULD INCREASE FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENT FOR SCHOOL MEALS

With new legislation, U.S. Rep. James McGovern (D-MA) hopes to perma-

nently increase the federal reimbursement for school meals. His bill, HR 1269, is called the "Healthy Meals Help Kids Learn Act." The proposal would raise the federal reimbursement level for all free, reduced-price and paid-rate school meals by 45 cents for every lunch served and 28 cents for every breakfast served, with yearly adjustments.

During the Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health that the White House hosted in September 2022, legislators made a plan to address food insecurity across the nation. A conference like this has not been held in Washington for more than 50 years.

School meal reimbursement was one of the issues discussed. The bill, if passed, would provide flexibility, allowing school districts to make individual changes to better provide nutritious meals to students. According to McGovern, higher food costs are adding to the urgency of this legislation, and a permanent solution will give school districts certainty as they upgrade their meal programs and plan for the future.

Examples of what schools could do with higher reimbursements include having more purchasing power to buy food from local farms. Schools can also use the funds to their upgrade their kitchens, allowing them to better prepare meals. Another idea suggested is to provide children with backpacks filled with healthy food to take home during breaks and weekends.

McGovern is an advocate for universal free meals in schools for all students. He is working with the state Healey-Driscoll administration as well as the federal Biden-Harris administration to make universal meals a reality.

For now, McGovern said increasing the federal reimbursement for school meals is just one step toward larger goals of ending food insecurity and reducing poverty. To view the full text of HR 1269, visit bit.ly/3ZDrvSP.

RECENT (AND UPCOMING) MASC MAILINGS:

Policy Newsletter

MASC recently mailed to all school committee members, school superintendents and administrative assistants the March 2023 Policy Newsletter. The newsletter includes a list of updated policies that reflect the ongoing review the MASC field staff is conducting of the MASC Policy Reference Manual. The list includes policies that have been added to the Reference Manual; policies that have been removed from the Manual; and a list of policies it is suggested that you review, as the changes may be a result of legal changes, changes in practice or updating language to reflect more modern needs.

Individual updated policies have also been posted to the “Updated/New Policies” page on the MASC website, as well as a “track change” version of the revised Sections for your reference. Many of these changes, especially those that say “updated language” reflect grammatical changes, additions/emendations to legal references and cross references, or other minor edits.



Forms Booklet

It's that time of year again when the MASC Forms Booklet reminds members to prepare for upcoming Association events such as the MASC annual meeting and conference in November, at which time resolutions for legislative action will be considered; the incoming slate of Association officers and life members will be voted on; and other association awards will be presented. The booklet includes all the forms that you will need to nominate colleagues for special recognition; submit resolutions for the delegate assembly; complete officer nomination and President's scholarship application forms; and, new this year, nominate your outstanding administrative assistant professionals for the first-ever COSCAP Administrative Assistant of the Year award. This will be coming soon to your mailbox.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, April 29
MASC Charting the Course
Franklin County Technical School,
Turners Falls

Thursday, May 4
MASC DAY ON THE HILL
Morning program
9:00-11:30am
UMass Club, Boston
(NEW LOCATION this year)
Vocational School lunch event:
Noon-1:30pm
Great Hall, The State House
Visits with Legislators
Noon-3:00pm

Saturday, May 6
MASC Charting the Course
Shawsheen Valley Technical High
School, Billerica

Saturday, May 20
MASC Charting the Course
Southeastern Reg. Voc. Tech.,
South Easton

REGISTER NOW: www.masc.org

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