**Primer on School Finance Resources**

**Introduction**

Effective management of the district’s financial resources is critical to your success. Superintendents must be able to monitor the health of the district’s fiscal systems. In collaboration with their business managers, they need to be able to allocate resources effectively, and develop and present the district’s annual budget to school committees, boards of selectmen and other local officials in a clear and convincing manner.

Retired DESE School Finance Administrator Roger Hatch has recently joined MASS as a financial consultant. Working in partnership with the Massachusetts School Business Officials (MASBO), Roger leads MASS’ efforts to support your work in the area of Financial Management. Roger can be reached at [rmhatch@verizon.net](mailto:rmhatch@verizon.net).

Currently available MASS and MASBO resources include:

**Chapter 70 Webinar: an annual live webinar and archives**

Along with Margaret Driscoll of MASBO and Paul Andrews of MASS, Roger developed a webinar to coincide with Governor Baker’s proposal for FY Chapter 70 School Aid. This session addresses each district’s spending requirement for the upcoming school year and equips the superintendent with knowledge and skill to explain to internal and external stakeholders the details and implications of next year’s Chapter 70 funding. A recorded version of the January 2017 webinar is available on the M.A.S.S Web Site [www.massupt.org](http://www.massupt.org). Click on the Professional Development Tab. Registration information for future webinars will be available at this location.

**DESE Finance Web Page Video**

Available on the MASS website under Professional Development, MASS Video Series, *Webisode #1: ESE Finance Web Page* features retired superintendent David Tobin and Roger Hatch when he still worked at DESE. The video describes resources on school finance available on the DESE website, with a focus on Chapter 70. Chapter 70 resources include information about specific school districts. Because these resources can be accessed by the public, MASS especially wanted to produce this video to ensure that Superintendents are knowledgeable about the Chapter 70 resources on the DESE website and can engage in informed discussions with local stakeholders.

**M.A.S.S. School Finance Tutorial Program**

Roger Hatch also offers individual sessions to examine district fiscal capacity and spending requirements. Recognizing that districts may face special circumstances, this program is designed to meet the individual needs of each superintendent. The format can be a one-to-one session or can include an entire central office and/or leadership team. Superintendents may schedule a session by emailing Roger directly at **rmhatch@verizon.net.**

**Budget Planning Finance Sessions at the M.A.S.S. Summer Executive Institute**

Each year in July superintendents are invited to a special program on the Tuesday before the official start of Summer Executive Institute on Wednesday. New and veteran superintendents meet with a skilled former superintendent and business manager in a confidential session to learn fundamentals about their district’s financial conditions. Superintendents may invite their business manager or another administrator to join them. **Superintendents may register for these sessions when they register in the spring for the Executive Institute.**

**Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) Consulting Services**

MASBO provides a variety of consulting services on operational and financial management of schools. Below are three of its most popular services.

**MASBO Financial Operations Review**

MASBO offers a comprehensive look at a district’s financial processes, its reports and controls, and its management, including accounts payable and receivable, procurement, budgeting and reporting, and revenue based programs. A MASBO team conducts a 2-3 day on-site review and produces a comprehensive report summarizing the existing financial conditions and providing detailed recommendations.

**MASBO Targeted Consultation**

In addition its comprehensive review, MASBO will provide consultation in targeted areas such as Food Services, Transportation and Energy Management Services.

**MASBO Analysis of Benefits and Compensation**

MASBO can provide districts with an analysis of its benefits and compensation, benchmarking the district’s practice against similar districts.

Members should contact MASBO Director Margaret Driscoll at mdriscoll@**masbo**.org for more information about these and other MASBO services.

**Foundation Budget Review Commission**

MASS was represented on the Foundation Budget Review Commission formed by the Legislature in 2015. The Commission issued findings in 2016 that call for significant overhaul. Legislation to implement key Commission findings has been introduced in the 2017 legislation session.The Commission’s Report can be found on the DESE website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/chapter70/FBRC-Report.pdf>.

**Additional Resources**

The following resources may be useful for members who are seeking information related to regional schools, regional vocational schools and collaborative programs.

Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools [www.massregionalschools.org/](http://www.massregionalschools.org/)

Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators [www.mava.us/](http://www.mava.us/)

Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives [www.moecnet.org/](http://www.moecnet.org/)