



MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

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September 12, 2024

Governor Maura Healey
Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll
Senate President Karen Spilka
Speaker of the House Ronald Mariano
Patrick Tutwiler, Secretary of Education
Katherine Craven, Chair, and Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Russell Johnston, Acting Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
Sen. Jason Lewis, Co-Chair of the Joint Committee on Education
Rep. Denise Garlick, Co-Chair of the Joint Committee on Education

Distinguished Leaders of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts:

In November, the voters of Massachusetts will decide on an important ballot question about the use of the Grade 10 MCAS exams as a statewide requirement for high school graduation. **The Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (M.A.S.S.), representing 529 Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents from school districts across the Commonwealth, recently voted to oppose Question 2.** We are urging our members and the electorate to vote No on this ballot question, because we believe that it would undermine the high standards that are the cornerstone of Massachusetts' successful work in education reform over the past thirty years.

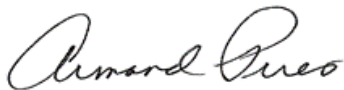
In voting to oppose Question 2, members of the M.A.S.S. Executive Committee stated that their primary objection to the measure is that it fails to stipulate a replacement for MCAS as a statewide standard for earning a high school diploma. If Question 2 were to pass, there would be no standard by which every student in Massachusetts demonstrates readiness to graduate, which will inevitably exacerbate inequity among marginalized student groups.

At the same time, the M.A.S.S. Executive Committee asserts unequivocally that **Grade 10 MCAS exams alone are insufficient as the statewide standard for high school graduation.** For many years, we have urged State leaders to adopt a more comprehensive set of requirements for students to demonstrate competency. In the last legislative session, we proposed a bill that would have explored multiple modes beyond MCAS for assessing student learning and holding schools and districts accountable for student success, including graduation requirements. Although that bill ultimately did not pass, we are grateful for the support it received from many legislators and other State leaders who recognize the dangers of overreliance on MCAS exams alone. However, we remain frustrated that State leaders have demonstrated almost no willingness to adapt and update the standards-based system to meet the changing needs and realities facing students, families, schools, and communities today.

Therefore, while conceding the need to maintain MCAS as a graduation requirement rather than no standard at all, we are writing to **insist once again that education and political leaders at the State level take seriously the repeated calls from our organization and many others to launch an inclusive process for developing and adopting alternative measures.** If Question 2 is defeated, as many of you have indicated you believe it should be, we simply cannot settle for the *status quo* moving forward. Regardless of the outcome of Question 2, **we are asking for your commitment to updating the graduation standards through the legislative process,** rather than by a ballot question, using sound research and extensive input from stakeholders across the state.

We look forward to working with you over the next eight weeks to educate the people of Massachusetts about the importance of maintaining high standards to prepare our graduates for success after high school. We also look forward to beginning the critical longer-term work after Election Day of adopting graduation standards that are more equitable and not reliant on standardized tests alone.

Sincerely,



Armand Pires
President, M.A.S.S.
Superintendent, Medway Public Schools



Mary M. Bourque
Executive Director, M.A.S.S.
Former Superintendent

cc: M.A.S.S. Executive Committee:
John Antonucci, Superintendent, North Attleborough Public Schools
Brian J. Blake, Superintendent, Ipswich Public Schools
Irwin Blumer, Former Superintendent
Susan Charochak, Superintendent, Beverly Public Schools
Eric Conti, Superintendent, Burlington Public Schools
Karen Crebase, Superintendent, Hopedale Public Schools
Linus J. Guillory, Superintendent, Brookline Public Schools
Dianne Kelly, Superintendent, Revere Public Schools
Jay Lang, Superintendent, Chelmsford Public Schools
Maureen Lynch, Superintendent, Whittier Regional Vocational Technical School
Barbara Malkas, Superintendent, North Adams Public Schools
Jeffrey J. Marsden, Superintendent, Medfield Public Schools
Christine McGrath, M.A.S.S. Director of Support Networks, Former Superintendent
Anne McKenzie, Superintendent, Hadley Public Schools
Amy McKinstry, Superintendent, Northbridge Public Schools
Aaron Polansky, Superintendent-Director, Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical School
Kerri Anne Quinlan Zhou, Superintendent, Bourne Public Schools
Michael Richard, Superintendent, Lee-Tyringham Schools
Jeffrey Schoonover, Superintendent, Somerset Public Schools & Somerset-Berkley Regional School
Thomas Scott, M.A.S.S. Director of Finance and Member Services, Former Superintendent
Sheryl Stanton, Superintendent, Mohawk Trail Regional Schools