



February 10, 2014

The Honorable Brian S. Dempsey, Chair  
House Committee on Ways and Means  
State House Room 243  
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

**American Federation of  
Teachers Massachusetts**

Thomas Gosnell  
President

**Massachusetts Association  
of School Committees**

Glenn Koocher  
Executive Director

**Massachusetts Association  
of School Superintendents**

Thomas A. Scott  
Executive Director

**Massachusetts Elementary  
School Principals'  
Association**

Nadya Aswad Higgins  
Executive Director

**Massachusetts Parent  
Teacher Association**

Mary Ann Stewart  
Immediate Past President

**Massachusetts Secondary  
School Administrators'  
Association**

Phillip Flaherty  
Assistant Director

**Massachusetts  
Teachers Association**

Paul Toner  
President

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**MassPartners**

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Administrator

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Reference: Requesting Support for H. 3722

Dear Chairman Dempsey:

The members of MassPartners are writing to request your support for House Bill 3722, An Act establishing an educational mandate task force. H.3722 is a redraft of several bills heard before the Education Committee, including H.459, which was given a favorable report by the Committee on October 28 and is now before the House Committee on Ways and Means. MassPartners is a coalition of the major education organizations in the Commonwealth and are united in support of this bill. This bill addresses the growing concern among educators, administrators, education leaders and local officials that the current state mandates imposed on our public schools and districts have become unworkable and perhaps even counter-productive.

MassPartners is concerned that the rules and regulations developed to implement education initiatives are often developed without sufficient input from practitioners and developed separately for each new initiative, as if one initiative has no relation to, or effect on, another. Developing rules and regulations within separate "silos" has resulted in an incomplete picture of the effect of various mandates on our schools and more importantly, on student learning.

For example, a cursory review of the increasing number of regulations and documents requiring action by local districts reveals that there were 5,382 multiple page documents on the website of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education between 2009 and 2013, an average of 1077 each year. In contrast over the previous 13 years there were 4,055 or an average of 312 each year. One of our current major initiatives saw 4,972 documents requiring action by educators over the past four years. These requirements use untold amounts of work time by educators all levels of our schools and districts.

We believe H.3722 is a productive step toward creating a more effective system of rules and regulations for schools and districts across the state.

As participants in the proposed educational mandate task force, we look forward to a series of steps that include: 1) evaluating every requirement to determine whether the costs in time and money are worth the value of the requirement toward improving student learning; 2) examining all of the mandates to consolidate and to eliminate duplicative or unnecessary requirements; and 3) developing a comprehensive plan that coordinates and clarifies the timelines, costs, and benefits of all mandates.

We want to be clear. Our desire is not to eliminate many of the important reform initiatives under way. Educator Evaluation, RETELL and Common Core alignment and PARCC are demanding and require a reasonable timeline for implementation. However, taking on these major initiatives with all other mandates is problematic. We are seeking long term relief that requires reviewing whether the mandates are necessary, whether there are redundancies, and whether the costs of implementing them have a positive impact on student learning and school operations.

We would be happy to provide additional information or to answer any questions that you and Committee members may have. MassPartners would appreciate your support of H.3722 and thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

*Signature page follows (scanned image)*

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The Board of Directors  
MassPartners for Public Schools