

## **MASCD Convenes Task Force on High School Redesign**

December 12, 2006

Dear Transition Team Members,

I wrote to you last week urging Governor-elect Patrick to make educator quality his top priority. Improving the educator workforce is one of the most important things we can do to improve student achievement. However, when it comes to educating young adults, insuring that they have skillful teachers and principals is not enough. Massachusetts high schools need to be redesigned, and I urge the Governor-elect to convene a commission to develop a blueprint for high school reform.

The dropout rate has increased. Too many high schools fail to engage students in authentic and challenging work. Too many students fail to see the possibilities for their future. Too many students graduate without the skills they need for productive employment and citizenship. Too many students are ill-prepared for college study. We know what needs to be done to improve high schools so that all students will achieve at higher levels and be ready for success in college and beyond.

In the fall, MASCD convened a task force to address high school reform. The task force includes representatives from an array of constituent groups including practitioners, professional associations, legislators, business and policy organizations and the Department of Education (participant list attached). We acknowledge that there are positive practices in some high schools, and there are initiatives underway aimed at improving high schools. But there is no widespread sense of urgency to redesign our high schools, and no coordination of the disparate improvement efforts. The task force held its second meeting today, and we concluded that implementing our vision for high schools will require broad-based awareness of the need for change and leadership for redesign. We are committed to forming a coalition to improve the Commonwealth's high schools, a coalition that would proudly serve the Governor-elect.

Massachusetts Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development has over a thousand members – educators in all roles working at all levels – teachers, principals, curriculum directors, superintendents, college faculty and consultants. Our members are educational leaders who are actively involved in advancing the knowledge base on teaching, learning and leadership. We have a proud history of working collaboratively with like-minded organizations to achieve our goals. We are the state affiliate of ASCD, a global community of over 180,000 educators working toward the success of each learner.

We are committed to improving educator quality and to improving Massachusetts high schools. My colleagues and I look forward to working with you and the Governor-elect to address both.

Sincerely,

Mary Forte Hayes, Executive Director  
mfhayes@mascd.org  
MASCD  
19C Oak Street  
Wellesley, MA 02482  
Voice/Fax 781-237-7881