

MANS&C QUARTERLY

Massachusetts Association of Nonprofit Schools and Colleges

20 Newton St.

Brookline MA

02445-7498

www.mansac.org

SPRING 2008

PRESIDENTS' LETTER



On May 12, MANS&C members and guests were honored to have Senate President Therese Murray as the special guest at our annual Government Relations Meeting. Sen. Murray, one of the state's most powerful political leaders, shared her insights on the latest developments on Beacon Hill, graciously answered questions and spoke informally with our members and guests.

She also indicated that our concern with a budget amendment that would tax institutions with endowments of \$1 billion or more came through "loud and clear."

Access to the state's most influential political leaders is only one of the many benefits of MANS&C membership.

This newsletter, for example, includes helpful articles on the most effective way to contact your state legislators and tips for meeting face-to-face with elected officials.



Our Web site, www.mansac.org, also provides guidelines to help our institutions create Community Impact Statements, which detail the economic and social contributions they make to their local communities. Community Impact Statements are perhaps the single most important tool we have to counter accusations that we are not paying our fair share to our communities.

To better serve our members, the two of us will be sharing the duties of president for the coming year:

As co-president, Julaine will be the liaison to members in Western Massachusetts, while Bruce will work with the members in the eastern part of the state. The MANS&C executive board also will hold meetings in various locations throughout the state to make it more convenient for our members to attend.

We're looking forward to an exciting year. We welcome your suggestions and are always willing to address your questions or concerns. Please feel free to contact either one of us at any time.

Bruce T. Amsbary
b.amsbary@rivers.org
339-686-2221

Julaine McInnis
jmcinnis@walnuthillarts.org
508-650-5015

MANS&C Board Elects New Officers

The MANS&C executive board elected a new slate of officers and board members at its annual meeting on April 21. Officers for the 2008-09 year are:

Co-presidents – Bruce T. Amsbary and Julaine McInnis
Vice President – William J. Conley
Treasurer – Barry F. Monahan
Secretary – Roberta B. Whiting

Board members for the coming year are:

Matthew Derr	Chris Rosell
Robert P. Gittens	Maggie Striebel
Edward M. King	James R. Tracy
Barbara MacLeod	B. Lee Wicks
William F. Phinney	

Invited guests to MANS&C monthly board meetings include Carol Peterson and Steve Clem from the Association of Independent Schools in New England (AISNE) and Robert J. McCarron from the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts (AICUM).

MANS&C Hosts Senate President Murray at Annual Government Relations Meeting

Acknowledging MANS&C's objections to taxation of colleges with \$1 billion-plus endowments, Senate President Therese Murray said the issue is only a discussion at this point – but one that needs to take place.

Speaking at the MANS&C Government Relations Luncheon on May 12, Murray asked, "When does a nonprofit cease to be a nonprofit and how much should they give back to the community?" The questions apply to all nonprofits, not just educational institutions, she added.

The House recently debated the issue of taxing nonprofit organizations that have endowments of \$1 billion or more and then asked the Department of Revenue to study the issue.

Murray, considered one of the state's most influential political leaders, also outlined some of the major issues of the session.

"As we continue to hear sobering news about our economy, the legislature and the administration continue to make great strides with major reforms and targeted investments for long-term growth," she told the 100 MANS&C members and guests in attendance.

The state has made great advances in clean energy, she said, pointing to the biofuels task force recommendations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; the oceans management bill; and the clean energy bill, which will improve the state's energy structure.

Murray added that significant benefits already are being seen as a result of the new life sciences bill. The bill provides tax incentives for companies committed to growing their businesses in Massachusetts.

"Health care is another critical area for our state," she said. "Our initial reform efforts have been successful, but we must do more to improve access while bringing down costs." The senate health care bill now under consideration seeks to cut costs and increase access to primary care, she noted.

Murray also touched on the recently passed transportation bond bill, the new corporate taxes bill and budget discussions.

A Democrat who represents the Plymouth and Barnstable District, Murray was first elected to the senate in 1992 and became chairwoman of the Senate Ways and Means Committee in 2003. In March 2007, she became the first woman to be elected president of the Massachusetts state senate.

As a senator, she has continually fought for more equity in education funding, better access to affordable healthcare, affordable housing and quality improvements in public safety. She also has worked to ensure that the needs of veterans and senior citizens are met.

For the full text of Murray's formal remarks, go to www.mansac.org.



MANS&C President Bruce Amsbary and Senate President Therese Murray

Legislative Report



Activity on Beacon Hill speeds up in the spring, as committees face deadlines to decide whether bills should be brought to the House and Senate floor for debate and legislators grapple with the governor's budget.

In recent weeks, MANS&C Legislative Counsel John J. Spillane, working in partnership with other organizations, helped to successfully turn away a wide range of bills that would have

had serious financial implications for our members or eroded our Dover Amendment rights.

House Bill 820 and **Senate Bill 151** proposed eliminating the legal protections of the Dover Amendment for nonprofit schools, colleges and universities by strengthening the review powers of local planning boards and allowing them to stop projects. Both bills were set aside for further study, effectively killing them for the remainder of the session.

MANS&C also was successful in having the following bills set aside for study:

- **HB 2855** and **HB 146**, giving local communities the right of first refusal when schools sell property or want to convert it to residential, industrial or commercial use.
- **HB 2868**, limiting the total tax exemption for an educational institution to a percentage of the equalized valuation of all real estate within the same assessment classification.
- **HB 2922**, forcing schools to make payments equal to the amount they would have paid in property taxes. Payments could be in-kind.

- **HB 3043**, making land no longer used for educational purposes subject to taxes for the previous four years, dating from the year it became non-exempt. Tax exemptions for educational institutions would have been set at 75 percent of the fair commercial tax rate.
- **HB 3065**, stipulating that land no longer used for educational purposes would be subject to "rollback taxes" for the year it ceased to be tax-exempt and for the preceding four years.
- **HB 3168**, requiring nonprofit institutions with endowments or net worth of more than \$500 million to pay local property taxes.

Members of the House and Senate often tack on last-minute amendments to the budget in an attempt to bypass committee hearings and extensive debate. This year, a particularly troubling last-minute amendment proposed taxing private universities that have endowments of more than \$1 billion, which would include Boston University, Harvard and Wellesley College.

The sponsor of the amendment was State Rep. Paul Kujawski, a Democrat who represents Douglas, Dudley, Uxbridge, Webster and parts of Oxford.

The amendment was hotly debated on the House floor before being modified to require the Department of Revenue to study the matter. For the time being, it appears that the issue is no longer a threat. But the debate indicated that taxation of universities with large endowments will continue to be on legislators' minds for the foreseeable future.

Spillane will continue to closely follow this and all other bills of concern to our members.

You may access the full text of any Senate bills at <http://www.mass.gov/legis/billsrch.htm> and House bills at <http://www.mass.gov/legis/hbillsrch.htm>. To track the history of any bills, go to <http://www.mass.gov/legis/ltsform.htm>.

Sen. Antonioni is Honored with First John W. Spillane Award

One of the state's leading proponents of education reform, State Sen. Robert A. Antonioni of Leominster, was presented with the first John W. Spillane Award for Leadership in Education on May 12 at the MANS&C Government Relations Luncheon.

The MANS&C executive board created the award to honor Legislative Counsel John W. Spillane, who passed away in December after serving MANS&C in that capacity for 25 years.

Antonioni is co-chairman of the legislature's Education Committee and will be leaving the senate after his term ends in January to take over his father's law practice in Leominster. He has been a senator since 1992.

In presenting the award, MANS&C Treasurer Barry F. Monahan called Antonioni one of Spillane's staunchest allies in the legislature. "He shares John's belief in the importance of the Dover Amendment and has worked to protect our institutions' independence," Monahan said.

Under Antonioni's leadership, more than \$7.3 billion in additional state funding has been benefited public education in Massachusetts. He supports school choice options and has led comprehensive special education and bilingual education reform.

Senate President Therese Murray, who presented him with the award, called this "a bittersweet moment."

"I'm certainly happy to see Senator Antonioni receive the much-deserved leadership in education award, but his contributions and leadership will be sorely missed in the senate," she said.

In addition to his work to advance education, Antonioni is chairman of the Joint Committee on Mental Health and has worked for greater mental health funding, specifically for suicide prevention.

Monahan noted some of the personal ties between the senator and Spillane. Both were graduates of the College of the Holy Cross, and Antonioni's father was a law school classmate of Spillane.

He noted that when Antonioni leaves office, public and private education in Massachusetts will be losing its biggest champion. "But the improvements he created will benefit this state for many years to come," Monahan said.

Spillane's wife, Rosemary, and sons Joseph, John J. and Michael Spillane were in the audience for the award presentation. John J. Spillane has taken over the duties of MANS&C legislative counsel, assisted by his brother, Michael.



Left to right: Senate President Murray, Barry Monahan, Sen. Robert Antonioni and Bruce Amsbary

Tips on Contacting Your State Legislators, Other Elected Officials

What is the most effective way to express your concerns about pending legislation to your state senator or representative?

E-mail?

Wrong. Like many of us these days, state legislators are finding themselves inundated with e-mail. According to a February 28 Boston Globe article, their mailboxes are so full of constituent complaints, mass mailings and spam, that many of them are unable to personally reply or even read everything.

In fact, their system's limited storage capacity may even prevent your e-mail from getting through.

The best way by far to get a state legislator's attention is with a handwritten note or letter, according to State House observers. Handwritten correspondence is an indication that someone cares enough about an issue to take the time to write.

Form letters may be the simplest way for you to make your wishes known to your state officials, but they lose their clout when a legislator receives a stack of letters, all of them worded the same.

If you simply don't have the time to write a personal note, send an e-mail and then follow up with a phone call to his or her office. Talk to an aide if the legislator is unavailable, and explain your concerns.

And remember, a handwritten thank you for a particular vote or support for an important issue can be very powerful. Like everyone, legislators love a pat on the back.

To find your state legislators' names and contact information, go to www.mansac.org and click on *Important Links*.



The Shore Country Day School group

Left to right: Perry Phinney, Bill Phinney & Susan Saltonstall from Dexter and Southfield Schools



Left to right: Robert Grenon of Holy Cross, MANS&C Vice President Bill Conley and MANS&C board member Ed King

Face to Face: Talking with Elected Officials

When you get the opportunity to meet personally with your state legislators or local elected officials, it's important to be prepared. The following helpful tips were adapted from suggestions by the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network and the Kansas National Education Association:

- **Be informed about the issue.** Be ready with accurate facts, figures and examples to back up your position. If possible, assemble data on how the issue that concerns you would affect the state, your legislative district or community, and your institution.
- **Be succinct.** Elected officials are often very busy people. If they have only a few minutes to talk with you, offer to mail or e-mail the data.
- **Be informed about the official.** It's helpful to have some background information – including his or her voting record and concerns. Try not to ask for a stand that may be unpopular with voters.
- **Be open and friendly.** Remember that this is an elected official who ran for office because he or she wanted to make a difference. Make your point, but also be prepared to politely listen.
- **Don't get sidetracked.** If he or she puts you on the defensive or asks you to prioritize your positions, don't agree to negative statements about a position or rush into choosing among priorities.
- **Don't be ashamed to admit you don't know something.** The best response is, "I'll find out and get back to you."
- **Find common ground.** Even if the official does not support your position, you may share common concerns and beliefs.
- **Say thank you.** No matter how brief the meeting or what the outcome was, thank him or her for the time by writing a handwritten note.
- **Don't give up.** Remember that your good cause is often competing with other good causes. Keep at it and appreciate any progress you make.

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Massachusetts Association of Nonprofit Schools and Colleges
20 Newton St.
Brookline MA 02445-7498

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS 2008-09
THE MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF NONPROFIT SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
(MANS&C)
20 Newton Street, Brookline, MA 02146-7498

Bruce T. Amsbary, Co-President

Director of Finance & Operations
The Rivers School
333 Winter Street
Weston, MA 02493
339-686-2221 Office
339-686-2238 Fax
b.amsbary@rivers.org

Julaine McInnis, Co-President

CFO/COO
Walnut Hill School
12 Highland Street
Natick, MA 01760
508-650-5015 Office
508-653-9593 Fax
jmcinnis@walnuthillarts.org

William J. Conley, Vice President

Director of Administrative Services
College of the Holy Cross
1 College Street
Worcester, MA 01610-2395
508-793-3423 Office
508-793-3565 Fax
wconley@holycross.edu

Barry F. Monahan, Treasurer

*Assistant Vice President for
Administration & Community Affairs*
Wellesley College
106 Central Street
Wellesley, MA 02181
781-283-2386 Office
781-283-3681 Fax
bmonahan@wellesley.edu

Roberta B. Whiting, Secretary

Director of Finance & Operations
Shore Country Day School
545 Cabot Street
Beverly, MA 01951
978-927-1700 Office
978-927-1822 Fax
rwhiting@shoreschool.org

Matthew Derr

*Vice President for
Institutional Advancement*
Boston Conservatory
Boston, MA
617-536-6340
mderr@bostonconservatory.edu

Robert P. Gittens

Vice President – Public Affairs
Northeastern University
Boston, MA
617-373-5805
r.gittens@neu.edu

Edward M. King

*Vice President, Gov. Relations
& Community Affairs*
Boston University
121 Bay State Road
Boston, MA 02215
617-353-9095 Office
617-353-2369 Fax
eking@bu.edu

Barbara MacLeod

Controller
Austin Preparatory School
Reading MA 01867
781-942-1342
bmacleod@austinprepschool.org

William F. Phinney

Headmaster
Dexter School
Southfield School
20 Newton Street
Brookline, MA 02146
617-522-5544 Office
617-522-8166 Fax
pphinney@dexter.org

Chris Rosell

Business Manager
Cambridge Friends School
5 Cadbury Road
Cambridge, MA 02140
617-354-3880
crosell@cfsmass.org

Maggie Striebel

Director of Human Resources
Northfield Mount Hermon School
206 Main Street
Northfield, MA 01360
413-498-3206 Office
413-498-3365 Fax
maggie_striebel@nmhschool.org

James R. Tracy

Headmaster
Cushing Academy
P.O. Box 8000
39 School St.
Ashburnham, MA 01430
978-827-7100
jtracy@cushing.org

B. Lee Wicks

Secretary of the Academy
Deerfield Academy
Deerfield, MA 01342
413-774-1593 Office
413-772-1100 Fax
lwicks@deerfield.edu

MANS&C STAFF MEMBERS

Legislative Counsel
John J. Spillane
23 Institute Road
Worcester, MA 01609
508-756-4342 Office
508-752-2344 Fax
spillanejj@spillanelaw.com

Communications Specialist

Ann Hall
ahall68@comcast.net

Webmaster

Brad Solomon
webmaster@bradsolomon.net

LIAISONS TO THE BOARD

AICUM
Robert J. McCarron, Esq.
www.masscolleges.org

AISNE

Steve Clem
Carol Peterson
www.aisne.org