

**MARS Meeting**  
**at the**  
**MASC/MASS Annual Conference**

**November 1, 2017**

**10:00 am**

**1. *Welcome and Introductions – Barbara Ripa***

Barbara explained to the participants that she is now the Executive Director of MARS and Steve Hemman is the Assistant Director. All participants introduced themselves. Barbara explained that the MARS group supports Superintendents, Business Officials, and School Committee Representatives.

**2. *OPEB – Steve Hemman***

OPEB is a school district responsibility. Steve shared the survey results from districts who responded to allow participants to understand how other districts are addressing their OBEB trusts. It is very important for districts to start to address their liability and auditors will be looking for trusts. There are companies available to assist in setting up a trust.

**3. *MARS Professional Development/Training – Steve Hemman***

Steve reviewed the training offerings from MARS:

- a) Regional School District Operations for new Superintendents, School Committee Members and Business Administrators – September, October, and December each year, and a thorough notebook is provided.
- b) End-of-Year Report Training – ½ day in June and full day in Fall, along with emails in Summer to help keep Business Offices on track in completing the report. This training is important for Superintendents as well as Business Managers, and a notebook is provided.
- c) Preparing documents for DOR – E&D – MARS is developing training with Mark Abrahams and it will be a set cost for the school district.

**4. *MARS Consulting Group – Steve Hemman***

Steve outlined the Consulting Group's services in the following areas:

- a) Updating Regional Agreements – many are very dated or were never approved by DESE
- b) Strategic Planning – most consultants are former regional school superintendents
- c) Assessing district members town financial health
- d) Assessment methodology: Statutory or Alternative
- e) Providing presentations to member districts – there have been many requests from districts trying to understand issues around deregionalizing

5. *Presentation: Understanding Your Member Town Financial Situation – Julie Kelley & Stacey Jackson*

Julie and Stacey reviewed the components which are critical for Superintendents and School Committee Representatives to understand regarding their town and district finances. A completed report is available for \$500/town. The determination of MLC based on Combined Effort Yield was discussed, and participants were encouraged to ask their legislators to support Senate Bill S.217, to establish a commission on regional school district foundation budgets.

6. *MARS Communication Tools – Steve Hemman*

Steve advised participants that MARS now has a Facebook page, Twitter account, and YouTube page. The YouTube page currently includes several training videos and will include the presentation that State Auditor Suzanne Bump recently made to MARS on the funding of regional school districts as well as the panel discussion on bond ratings scheduled for the afternoon session. Additionally, there will be a MARS listserv for Superintendents, Business Managers, and School Committee Representatives.

Adjournment at 11:19am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Stacey Jackson  
MARS Consultant