



## MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL SCHOOLS

8 Hillcrest Ave., South Hadley, MA 01075

Barbara Ripa, Executive Director  
413-535-2973 (Cell)

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MARS Annual Meeting

**Tuesday, May 8, 2018 from 9:30AM to 11:30AM**

**at Assabet Valley Regional Tech High School in the Lecture Hall**

Assabet Valley Regional Tech High School  
215 Fitchburg Street  
Marlboro, MA 01752

Minutes

- 1.0 Welcome Maureen Marshall – President
  - Maureen introduced Deputy Commissioner Wulfson for serving as interim Commissioner and for attending meeting.
  
- 2.0 Guest Speaker- Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson
  - Provided brief overview of new Commissioner Riley's background and vision;
  - Introduced Ruth Hersh, who will be replacing Christine Lynch;
  - Advised that the lease in Malden has been extended another 5 years;
  - Reminded everyone the millionaire's tax may be up or vote this fall if allowed on ballot, as will a reduction in sales tax;
  - Feels that the recent grass roots advocacy on 100% regional transportation reimbursement is misguided and taking attention away from important matters such as lack of funding for homeless transportation, new foster care transportation, non-resident vocational transportation, and special education transportation;
  - Feels that advocacy for 80% stable transportation reimbursement number is credible and obtainable;
  - Understands that the private transportation sector is dwindling, with lack of bids for contracts being made;
  - Offered some ideas such as multiple districts collaborating together to launch their own transportation, or lobbying the state to provide school transportation in the same manner that the fund MBTA;
  - Feels that the rural regional school discussions are very important, and understands that declining enrollments is a serious issue facing many districts;
  - Cautions that most regional school districts would not see much benefit, if any, from the implementation of the FBRC, unless the implementation was quite substantial;
  - Feels municipal districts with declining enrollments need to push to regionalize as it is very difficult for them to meet the strict state mandates with the total district



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enrollment and funding issues they face as they do not benefit from the economy of scale that larger regionals do.

Q: Any word on rural aid?

A: Hearing this should be attached to Senate bill.

Q: Charter schools funding?

A: Would love to have the discussion on Charter School funding, however the MTA has not been receptive to coming to the table on this issue in any capacity.

Q: Regional Bonus Aid?

A: There is a lot that needs to be explored for transitional aid, such as MSBA reconsidering their position on funding construction on school with declining enrollment, so two districts consolidating a school becomes difficult.

Steve Hemman spoke that grant money to explore regionalization is very helpful for districts who would otherwise not be able to afford doing so. Wulfson advised that the LtGov is big supporter of regionalization of services/education, and would be optimal person to direct advocacy to for grant money.

Q. Any long term plans or discussion with MMA and DOR on assessments not passing at town meetings, overrides failing?

A. No, but would be good idea. DESE provides mandate on MLC, but Proposition 2 ½ is prohibitive and legislators do not want to address changing it.

### 3.0 Election of MARS Board Members

- Maureen presented slate of members for consideration. Question on expiration date of director and executive director position. Motion to accept as presented was made and seconded; passed unanimously.

### 4.0 MARS FY18-19 Budget

- Steve presented brief overview of budget. Motion to accept as presented was made and seconded; passed unanimously.

### 5.0 MARS new website

- Steve advised new website created by Blackstone Valley will go live on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

### 6.0 2018-2019 MARS Meeting, Training and Professional Development Calendar

- Steve reviewed calendar and advised that the PD manual will be offered on thumb drive for future trainings.
- EOYR training to begin in June has 18 districts registered (24 people).



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### 7.0 Leadership Transition Plan

- Steven Hemman announced he will be stepping away from Assistant Director position in December, and over the course of July 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>, Maureen Marshall will shadow him to learn position to take over January 1<sup>st</sup>.

### 8.0 Update on Consultant work

- Steve briefly went over current consulting work contracts.

### 9.0 Adjourned – 10:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julianne Kelley