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UPDATE...

September 2018

Gubernatorial candidate interviews online



(L-R) Shawn Moody, Janet Mills, Terry Hayes, Alan Caron

All four candidates for governor – Shawn Moody, Janet Mills, Terry Hayes and Alan Caron – came to the MSMA offices on Sept. 5 to respond to questions regarding public education policy and funding.

What follows is a synopsis of their comments. You also can listen to the full interviews by clicking on: [Gubernatorial Candidate Interviews](#)

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MSBA Delegate Assembly

This year's Delegate Assembly is scheduled for 3:25 p.m., Thursday, October 25, the first day of the MSMA Annual Fall Conference, in the Kennebec/Penobscot Room. **It will be preceded by a Delegate Assembly preview from 2:10 – 3:15 in the same room.**

Governance and policy decisions affecting MSBA are dealt with at the Delegate Assembly. The importance of each School Board being represented at the Delegate Assembly cannot be overstated. The following information about the Delegate Assembly is to inform your School Board of the importance of electing a Delegate.

According to Article VIII of the Constitution, the Delegate Assembly is the policy making body of the Association. The Delegate Assembly has four specific powers.

1. It adopts resolutions that express the beliefs and purposes of the Association.
2. It transacts such other business as presented to it prior to the opening of the Delegate Assembly by any delegation or the Executive Board of Directors.

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45th Annual Fall Conference Maine ♥ Public Education

The 45th Annual MSMA Fall Conference is celebrating the incredible work schools do every day with the theme of “Maine ♥ Public Education” and supports the mission of life-long learning with an impressive lineup of clinics and speakers and opportunities for those attending to share and learn from one another.

The conference is scheduled for Thursday and Friday, Oct. 25 and 26, at the Augusta Civic Center, with registration available through the superintendent's office.

The keynote speaker on Thursday is Jamie Vollmer, an inspiring author and advocate who works to halt the erosion of public trust and builds support for public schools. His keynote is based on the themes presented in his book, “*Schools Cannot Do It Alone*”, proclaimed by the American School Board Journal as “One of the top ten books of the year.”

Friday's keynote will be an on-stage discussion between Education Committee Chairman Sen. Brian Langley and Educate Maine Executive Director Ed Cervone. The two will talk about the urgency for Maine's public schools to partner with the business community to address the state's worker shortage and the need for a sustainable educational plan that assures students have an equal opportunity to learn regardless of where they live.

There are close to 20 legal clinics including employee rights in the age of social media; managing public comments at board meetings; latest law on service animals; collective bargaining; and, the always popular “Year in Review”.

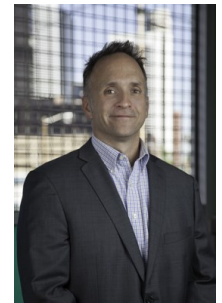
There also will be clinics to introduce members to a shared platform of ideas and recommendations, entitled “Quality Public Education for All Maine Children”. It has been endorsed by the Maine School Boards Association Board of Directors and Maine School Superintendents Association Executive Committee, and resolutions supporting it will be considered by the Delegate Assembly. MSSA members will vote



Jamie Vollmer



Sen. Brian Langley



Ed Cervone

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MSBA Proposed Resolutions

The MSBA Board of Directors has forwarded the following resolutions for consideration at the MSBA Delegate Assembly on Oct. 25.

CDS Move to Public Schools (Section 4)

The Maine School Boards Association supports the eventual move of programs for 3-to-5-year-olds into public schools, but only if it is well planned and appropriately funded by the state.

We call on the 129th Legislature to convene a task force to inform that plan. Public school staff must be involved, as well as current staff of Child Development Services, DOE leadership, and other appropriate stakeholders. State funding must be adequate to hire staff and provide appropriate services to all eligible children to avoid the kind of shortages documented under the current system. One of the task force's goals will be to develop a detailed funding plan. The goal must be to take the current program and improve it where necessary so our youngest students receive the services and interventions they need to be successful as they move through the public school system.

Rationale

A proposal to move CDS-services for 3-5-year-olds into public schools failed in the 128th Legislature largely because it lacked detail. Our association supported the concept then as it does today because a school based model minimizes disruption for children and is a logical extension of our existing pre-kindergarten programs. It also gives public schools the opportunity to intervene early when learning and behavioral problems are identified. CDS-like programs are offered through the public school system in most other states. Our support is contingent on the state funding required to provide these services in school or in an appropriate outside placement because we cannot continue to have the kind of shortfalls that have plagued CDS in the past or ask local taxpayers to pick up any of these costs.

School Safety (Section 2)

To support a public school's responsibility to keep children safe, the Maine School Boards Association advocates the following comprehensive approach: Ongoing risk assessments not only for active shooter attacks but other disruptors that could put students or staff at risk; Increase focus on social and emotional support; Training on early warning signs around student perpetrators of violence and programs like "Say Something", which encourage students to go to an adult with their concerns about a potentially violent peer; Increase funding in the Revolving School Renovation Fund that includes school safety projects as priorities; and, Support for state and federal funding for School Resource Officers where appropriate. We also support tasking the Department's Facilities Office to advise, collect and disseminate best practices on keeping children safe.

Rationale

The frequency and ferocity of school shootings in this calendar year alone have put school safety top of mind for school boards and the public. Standard practices have changed based on experiences during these tragedies, and we are gaining awareness of early warning signs in the cases where students are the perpetrators. School Boards need to support an informed and comprehensive approach to make schools as safe as possible, including mental health interventions.

Gun-Free Schools (Section 2)

The Maine School Boards Association supports the current state ban on guns, loaded or unloaded, on school property and opposes any legislative attempts to amend that prohibition. The ban is both symbolic and practical. It affirms ours and the nation's belief that schools should be safe havens and does not invite intended or unintended tragedy by allowing loaded guns on school grounds. Suggestions that schools can somehow monitor whether guns in cars are safely locked and unloaded are unworkable.

Rationale

MSBA testimony against the most recent attempt to water down Maine current statute prohibiting guns on school grounds described the ban as a "bright line" and our first line of defense against horrific school shootings. The association understands the ban alone does not prevent violence, but it reinforces that school grounds are supposed to be safe havens, and we must not give up on that vision. The argument the ban inconveniences hunters is understood since many Maine families have hunting traditions, but the prohibition has been in effect for nearly 30 years and we believe hunters are used to making accommodations.

Proficiency-Based Diplomas (Section 4)

The Maine School Boards Association supports the ongoing work toward the implementation of proficiency-based diploma systems in Maine schools. The work to improve proficiency-based systems must be done by educational stakeholders and be in the best interest of all students. The system must be explained well in our schools and in the community. Critical elements include: teacher training; multiple pathways to accommodate all learners; capacity to offer quality instruction in designated content areas; and, the ability to support struggling students and challenge those who exceed proficiency goals.

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MSBA Proposed Resolutions

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Rationale

The proficiency-based diploma system currently in law is grounded in the state's standards of Learning Results adopted in the early 1990s. School districts are at different places in implementing the system, and a law passed at the end of the legislative session makes the system optional. We believe that was a step backward for students who should be given the time and support needed to master one level of coursework before moving onto another. It is incumbent on school leaders to adopt a workable and more easily understood definition of a proficiency-based diploma and address areas of concern, including the grading system and format of a transcript. As a state we cannot give up on the goal of making sure all our students are prepared for success in work, post-secondary education and life.

Special Education Reform (Section 4)

The Maine School Boards Association believes the special education system created by Congress more than 40 years ago needs to be reviewed and amended on the federal and state level to assure all student needs are being met. A task force created as a result of an MSBA resolution in 2016 has made reasonable proposals for change at the state level. Legislation should be introduced in the first session of the 129th Legislature to implement those changes. This resolution also directs the MSBA officers to urge Maine's congressional delegation to support reforms recommended by the National School Boards Association when the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is brought up for reauthorization and fully fund the promised federal share of costs.

Rationale

We must find better ways to serve our students with special needs and control escalating costs. The Special Education Task Force that met last year had these recommendations that should be considered.

Remove barriers between special education and general education and create an integrated inclusive system; use the Response to Intervention system early and more broadly to address issues when students first enter school; mitigate shortage of special education teachers by promoting a dual certification program at the university level; explore and address the costs associated with special education litigation and identify ways to mitigate those costs; push for an education-friendly system to help school districts bill for Medicaid/MaineCare reimbursement.

Starting Teacher Pay and Longer School Year (Section 2)

The Maine School Boards Association supports a law change to lengthen the school year to 180 instructional days and 10 days for professional development because there is not enough time in the current calendar to accomplish all that is needed and required. In conjunction with a longer school year, we also support a law change calling for additional state funding to raise the starting teacher salary to \$40,000. Our hope is that salary will help attract and keep more teachers in the profession and make working in the rural parts of our state a more economically viable option.

Rationale

The majority of states in the country have 180 instructional school days, but Maine law requires only 175. There is not enough time in our school year to do all we have to do to help students succeed, in terms of instruction and support for their mental health and physical needs. Summer learning loss is real. If we are going to expect more of our students – and the changing workplace most certainly demands it – we have to give them more learning time. And, if we ever hope to address the achievement disparity for students coming from poverty, a longer year is needed. The five additional professional development days address the need for teachers to have more collaborative time and meaningful training and support.

School Attendance at Age 5 (Section 2)

The Maine School Boards Association understands how critical early education is to the success of students and believes Maine's current compulsory attendance age of 7 is too high and out-of-step with the rest of the country. MSBA supports a recommended age of 5, which is the typical age of kindergartners in the state, and compulsory attendance at age 6, and will advocate for a law change in the first session of the next Legislature.

Rationale

Currently 11 states have compulsory attendance at age 5; 25 at age 6; 13 at age 7; and, 2 at age 8. In reality, many Maine parents already are sending their children to kindergarten at age 5. Our concern is the children we are not seeing. Maine's growing pre-kindergarten program for 4-year-olds and the majority of five-year-olds enrolled in kindergarten are part of a robust, early-childhood program of which Maine should be proud.

Gubernatorial candidate interviews online

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Most important issue facing public education?

Moody: Supports a comprehensive performance-based pay system for teachers. Across-the-board pay breeds mediocrity. Need to understand why teacher morale is low and address issues.

Mills: There's a teacher shortage. Many are going to retire and too many earning teacher degrees here are leaving the state.

Hayes: Core mission of public education has been watered down because too many things being asked of schools that have nothing to do with teaching and learning, including social needs that have to be met like adequate food and clothing.

Caron: The way the world is changing, both in terms of the economy and family structure. We lack a vision or plan for the economy.

What works well in Maine's public education system?

Moody: Community College and University System can finally transfer credits between and among each other.

Mills: Decent high school graduation rate, but need to increase higher education completion rate. Early education opportunities, including pre-kindergarten, have increased.

Hayes: Teachers work well.

Caron: The system works well, but there's too much political interference. Need to settle on a direction and stick with it for 10 years.

Problems with public education?

Moody: Lack of consistent leadership in the Department of Education; too many commissioners and interim commissioners in recent years. We need a statewide teachers' contract. We need a vision i.e. educational plan.

Mills: Schools dealing with social and economic problems and families affected by opioid crisis, with parents not engaged. Lack of consistent leadership at the top of Department of Education and still a lot of disparities in school funding.

Hayes: There's a real disconnect between what's happening at the policy level and what's happening in the classroom. Teachers don't feel very well supported.

Caron: Reversing direction too quickly. Proficiency-based diploma law an example.

Balancing public education funding against property tax concerns?

Moody: Change the EPS funding formula; it's not working for some communities. Get rid of duplication of administration so more money can be put in the classroom. Share administrative functions with cities and towns.

Mills: Easy to say raise more general fund money, but need to deal with cost drivers in areas like special education. Circuit-breaker programs help, but there's no magic wand.

Hayes: Prioritize the list of where education money goes and put teachers at the top. Look at social service needs of students and don't charge them against the school budget. Expanding support for public education beyond the property tax would help, but previous tax expansions failed due to politics. Reconsider changing the 55 percent goal because it has never been met.

Caron: You're going to need more money from the state and revenue sources other than just the property tax. Expectation on education higher than ever and the money isn't. Need to grow economy to produce more revenue.

Support for minimum teacher salary of \$40,000?

Moody: Yes. Pay for it by cutting administrative costs.

Mills: Yes. It's been 12 years since it was raised to \$30,000.

Hayes: Yes, but do it in increments over two or four years. Made easier if we adopt a statewide teacher contract.

Caron: Don't know if \$40,000 is the number, but generally supportive of moving in that direction, as long as it's an average.

How can we make college more affordable?

Moody: Community College most affordable way to start. Look at increasing state funding for higher education.

Mills: Paid internships and jobs help; public-private partnerships; debt/loan forgiveness. Considering income-tax waiver for those who attend college here and stay to work for five years, or some specified number.

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Gubernatorial candidate interviews online

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Caron: Two years of free higher education for those who agree to stay in Maine for at least 10 years, with loan forgiveness pro-rated over those 10 years.

Mandatory school attendance at age 5 versus 7?

Moody: Doesn't like the word mandatory but believes children need to be in schools earlier.

Mills: Wouldn't have a problem with that.

Hayes: Support lowering age to 5.

Caron: Yes in favor of 5 and expanding pre-kindergarten.

Longer school year of 180 instructional days versus 175?

Moody: Need input from local constituents, but on the surface sounds good.

Mills: Can't commit to lengthening school year; need to consult with tourist industry and others. Support more summer education hours for students.

Hayes: What would we get for those additional days and why is that the best investment to support core mission of schools? Statewide teacher contract would support flexibility on school-year length.

Caron: In favor of moving in that direction.

Your vision for Career and Technical Education?

Moody: Need to get rid of stigma around blue collar work and the stigma around vocational education. Change the culture. Maine needs trained workers. Get people from the field back teaching CTE.

Mills: Increase apprenticeships with local employers for all students, not just CTE. Local employers and industries have larger role to play. Transportation to CTE sites is an issue.

Hayes: Private sector has role in internships. Need better messaging around value of CTE. Positive CTE message supported by LePage and needs continued support.

Caron: In favor of introducing more practical elements in education that prepare people for work. All of public education has to be integrated to build capacity needed for the next economy.

Keeping young people in Maine?

Moody: Send the message to young people there are career opportunities in Maine. Use apprenticeships to grow our own workforce with help of businesses.

Mills: Enhance public education system across the state to attract young families. Invest in research and development to support more small business and entrepreneurs. Increase broadband and improve cell service statewide. Young people are looking for connectivity and sense of community.

Hayes: Need to lead with our assets and not our liabilities. State ignored predictions of labor shortage and now thousands of private sector jobs unfilled. Negative message about lack of opportunities needs to change. 35 million people visit here. Turn that from "play here to stay here". Quality public education plays a role.

Caron: Invest in people who are actually creating jobs in Maine. Build an economy from the bottom up by investing in little guys and entrepreneurs. If you build an exciting, bottom-up economy, young people will stay and others will come.

Proficiency-based diplomas?

Moody: It should be a local decision to adopt. Systems that adopt need to be prepared and communicate better.

Mills: Original Learning Result standards are sound and state can't focus on two or four; need to teach all. As for requiring a proficiency-based diploma, some schools did well with proficiency-based systems and others might with guidance. A diploma should mean something.

Hayes: Backing off proficiency-based diploma law this legislative session was a policy mistake. Change the language and try and move forward. Perhaps using Redefining Ready model will help get proficiency back on track.

Caron: Proficiency-based learning was moving in the right direction. Need to pick a lane and stick with the lane for a while. We have to measure the results of what we're doing. If not that system, what's the system?

MSBA 2018 Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee met and interviewed prospective candidates for the MSBA Officers and Board of Directors on July 11, 20, and 23, 2018. This year at Delegate Assembly the Delegates will elect two officers, the President-Elect and the Vice President. You will note this year that there are three candidates listed for Vice President. You will be asked to vote for one. Two of the individuals are also listed as “conditional candidates” for their respective regions. The candidate not elected as Vice President, if so elected within his/her Region, will serve as a Director.

President-Elect:	Susan Hawes (II)
Vice President:	Becky Fles (VIII)
(You will vote for one)	Lawrence “Skip” Greenlaw (IV)
	Lester Harmon (IX)
Region I:	Lucy Richard
Region VIII:	Becky Fles (Conditional Candidate)
Region IX:	Lester Harmon (Conditional Candidate)
At-Large:	Danny Jackson (V) (2019)
(You will vote for four)	Peggy Lembo-Splaine (V) (2019)
	Monique Roy (VI) (2021)
	Mary-Anne LaMarre (VIII) (2021)

Please note:

1. If the Nominating Committee does not nominate a candidate, the candidate may still be nominated by two member boards prior to September 14, 2018, which will ensure that their name is printed on the ballot.
2. Candidates for director positions may still be nominated from the floor of the Delegate Assembly to be held on October 25, 2018, at the Augusta Civic Center.

Delegate Assembly

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3. It elects the Officers and Executive Board of Directors.
4. It may adopt amendments to the Constitution.

According to Article V of the Constitution, the Association is governed by the Executive Board of Directors. The Board is comprised of Regional Directors and At-Large Directors.

The Delegate Assembly consists of one voting delegate for each member district. In order to be an official delegate the member School Board must report the name of the elected delegate and alternate prior to the Assembly.

The resolutions adopted at the Delegate Assembly are an expression of the Assembly’s views regarding various issues. The body of resolutions adopted by the Assembly defines the Association’s position on various legislative proposals.

As the Officers and Board of Directors approach any legislative session, it is crucial that they represent the Association’s members. Make your local Board’s voice heard and send a delegate to the MSBA Delegate Assembly held during the MSMA Annual Fall Conference on October 25, 2018.

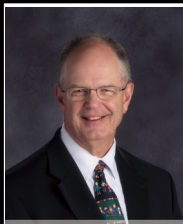
45th Annual Fall Conference

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on it at their annual meeting on Oct. 24.

A wide range of topics will be covered by people in the field, including school security; developing a public pre-K; the importance of math coaches; alternative teacher compensation models; and, a panel on surviving a social media attack.

Department of Education staff also is sharing its expertise on a strand of topics ranging from the new school report card under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act to early-college options and building budgets.



If you have questions about any articles in this newsletter or suggestions for improving this publication, let us know.

You can contact me, MSBA Executive Director, Steven Bailey. sbailey@msmaweb.com