

THE MASSACHUSETTS AFTER SCHOOL AND OUT OF SCHOOL TIME COMMISSION

Senator Thomas McGee and Representative Marie St. Fleur
Co-Chairs



**The Massachusetts Special Commission on After School and Out of School Time
Announces First Public Hearing in Springfield, April 10, 5 PM—8 PM**

Boston, Massachusetts - April 6, 2007- The Massachusetts Special Commission on After School and Out of School Time announces their first public hearing to be held at Springfield Technical Community College on Tuesday, April 10 from 5 PM - 8 PM in their auditorium.

This Special Commission was created by the Massachusetts Legislature to study and recommend how to define and "better coordinate, expand, finance and improve accessible, affordable, and quality out of school time programming for school age children in all settings in Massachusetts."

Led by Senator Thomas McGee (D-Lynn), the Chair of the Senate's Labor and Workforce Development Committee and Representative Marie St. Fleur (D-Boston), the Vice-Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, the 36 member Commission has committed to holding at least nine public hearings throughout the state to gather input about the Commonwealth's afterschool system. Youth, parents, community and faith-based providers, law enforcement officials, educators, funders, business and other community leaders are expected to attend and provide testimony.

"We have an historic opportunity to gain a better understanding of the importance of afterschool programs in the lives of children, youth and families," said Senator Thomas McGee. "Since a quality workforce is a linchpin of the afterschool system, we need to identify solutions to strengthen it. We look forward to gathering information from the public hearings that will help us figure out this and other ways to better serve children and youth when they are not in school."

"Currently, Massachusetts provides afterschool programs to approximately 20% of the Commonwealth's school age population," noted Representative Marie St. Fleur. "It is well documented that the time period between 2PM and 6PM is the most hazardous, if unsupervised, for children of that age. It is clear that we need to closely examine how public/private partnerships can leverage existing resources to serve more children and youth to coordinate and strengthen a system of afterschool and expanded learning that promotes their healthy development. The public hearings will help to hear from all stakeholders on this important matter."

1.1 Million School Aged Children and Youth in Massachusetts

There are 1.1 million school aged children and youth ages 5-18 that live in Massachusetts. Of those, 720,000 are children ages 5-13 and 380,000 are youth ages 14-19. Current state funding serves 205,500 children and youth leaving nearly 80% without access to quality and enriching afterschool and summer opportunities.

The Massachusetts Special Commission on After School and Out of School Time intends to study this issue more in-depth.

In addition to holding the nine public hearings, it will also convene three working groups that will 1) analyze information and access issues; 2) identify quality, workforce and professional development concerns, and 3) determine how the afterschool system in the Commonwealth can be sustained. The Special Commission expects to issue a report in the fall of 2007 that will have recommendations in these areas to strengthen the Commonwealth's afterschool system.

About The Massachusetts Special Commission on After School and Out of School Time

The Massachusetts Special Commission on After School and Out of School Time has been created to study and recommend how to define and better coordinate, expand, finance and improve accessible, affordable, and quality out-of-school time programming for school age children in all settings in Massachusetts.

For More Information Contact:

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