



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

Press  
Release

## The Massachusetts Special Commission on After School and Out of School Time Announces Public Hearing

**Special Commission to Convene Seventh Public Hearing in Barnstable, September 11, 2007, 5 PM - 8 PM**

**Boston, Massachusetts - September 7, 2007**

The Massachusetts Special Commission on After School and Out of School Time announces its seventh public hearing to be held at the Barnstable Town Hall, 367 Main Street in Hyannis on **Tuesday, September 11, 2007, from 5 PM - 8 PM** in the Town Council Chambers. Prior to the public hearing from 3 PM to 4 PM members of the Special Commission will be touring the Town of Barnstable's Parks and Recreation Program at the Horace Mann Charter School located at 730 Osterville-West Barnstable Road. This municipally operated program serves up to 200 5th and 6th graders in a variety of activities that promotes their physical fitness and overall well-being. The Special Commission also plans to tour the skateboard park as well as the site for their newly planned \$24M youth center.

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 Committee on Ways and Means, 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 a 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 and site visits 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 and site visits will help us to hear from all stakeholders on this important matter."

"Our kids are everything to us," said Patti Machado, Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation in Barnstable. "We've seen that kids that stay involved in any program and stay busy do better overall. This is important to us as we focus on the whole child and their well-being. We are trying to build the best community we can, one child at a time."

### **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 that group, 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 which will 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."

### **The Massachusetts Special Commission on After School and Out of School Time**

#### **For More Information Contact:**

Debra McLaughlin, Consultant to the Commission

[dmclaughlin@kunnusta.com](mailto:dmclaughlin@kunnusta.com)

617.792.3173

#### **Visit Our Blog:**

<http://www.massafterschoolcomm.blogspot.com>

#### **Visit Our Website:**

<http://www.massafterschoolcomm.org>