



A Voice for All Children

Charter schools, MCAS, and the politicization of public education are but three realities that emerged from the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. Following that landmark legislation, Massachusetts' Parent Teacher Association (PTA) filed legislation that, if passed, would grant PTA a nomination for a parent representative to the Board of Education.

Championed by (then) State Senator Robert Antonioni and Representative Ruth Provost, and also including the effort and advocacy of members of Massachusetts PTA, the bill passed twelve years later and was signed into law in 2005. Massachusetts PTA quickly mobilized and the names of three nominees were forwarded to Governor Romney, who, for reasons of his own, chose not to comply with the new law and did not appoint a parent to the Board. It would take another two years, and a new governor who quickly sought to comply with the law.

Massachusetts PTA was thrilled with Attorney Ruth Kaplan's appointment to the Board in 2007: here was a strong advocate with the political acumen and will to challenge the status quo. Ms. Kaplan has proven to be a strong voice for all children, a model of critical- and creative-thinking, and a champion for the education of the whole child, an effort that encourages a broader definition of academic achievement and challenges current educational practice and policy.

It speaks volumes that Governor Patrick seeks to diversify policy perspectives on the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and Massachusetts PTA is pleased that he reappointed Ms. Kaplan to a new five-year term.

Surely Mr. Gass must recognize there is little value to a decision-making board if only rubber-stamping yes-men are appointed.

Mr. Gass would do well to double check his facts about what the PTA is all about. His careless words are an insult and do a disservice to ALL parents and families who work hard for their children and schools.

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