



**Board of Directors**

**Mr. James Peters, President**  
Principal  
Monson High School

**Mr. Barry Haley, Vice President**  
Athletic Director  
Concord-Carlisle High School

**Ms. Donna Brickley**  
Athletic Director  
Notre Dame Academy (Hingham)

**Mr. John Brucato**  
Principal  
Milford High School

**Dr. Keith Crowley**  
Assistant Principal  
Xaverian Brothers H.S. (Westwood)

**Ms. Roberta Doering**  
School Committee  
Agawam

**Mr. Sean Gilrein**  
Superintendent  
Dudley-Charlton Reg. School District

**Mr. David King**  
Athletic Director  
Athol High School

**Mr. Karl Lord**  
School Committee  
Tri-County Reg. Voc. Tech (Franklin)

**Mrs. Ruth A. Lynch**  
Principal  
Pembroke High School

**Mr. Charles Lyons**  
Superintendent-Director  
Shawshen Valley Tech. HS (Billerica)

**Mr. Brian McCann**  
Principal  
Case High School (Swansea)

**Mr. Leslie Murray**  
Principal  
Amesbury High School

**Mr. Robert Norton**  
Principal  
Woburn High School

**Mr. Timothy Payne**  
Principal  
Mt. Greylock Reg. HS (Williamstown)

**Mr. Michael Rubin**  
Principal  
East Boston High School

**Mr. Stephen Sangster**  
Principal  
Rockland High School

**Ms. Marilyn Slattery**  
Assistant Principal  
Malden High School

**Mr. Michael Sullivan**  
Athletic Director  
Lowell Catholic High School

**Mr. Francis Whitten**  
Athletic Director  
Algonquin Reg. HS (Northborough)

# MASSACHUSETTS INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

33 FORGE PARKWAY • FRANKLIN, MASSACHUSETTS 02038 • TEL: (508) 541-7997  
FAX: (508) 541-9888 • E-MAIL: [miaa@miaa.net](mailto:miaa@miaa.net) • <http://www.miaa.net>

April 28, 2009

Governor Deval Patrick  
Massachusetts State House  
Room 280  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Patrick,

We would first like to congratulate you on the important role you played in convincing the Obama Administration to successfully pass a federal economic stimulus package beneficial to states, local jurisdictions, school districts, and families. This economic stimulus package provides needed support to local school systems and children who benefit from the important programs offered within such.

We know that as a candidate for Governor, you were one of the first statewide leaders to openly seek a pathway to eliminate user fees for "extended school day" activities. It is commonly accepted that extended school days are of real value to young people. We need to acknowledge that young people have fewer healthy options than were available to previous generations, without an extended school day. Many students are members of families where no adult is home after school.

The values and life lessons learned through participation in education-based athletics are widely known and quantified repeatedly through National, State and local studies. Research has demonstrated dramatic positive outcomes for those who participate. Data demonstrate grade point averages and graduation rates of participants are significantly higher than those not participating. In addition, there is clear evidence that dropout rates and discipline problems are significantly lower for student-athletes. Education based athletics are unique to the American Educational System. The opportunity for participation should be available to all students.

We have seen firsthand the negative effect user fees have had upon families in many school districts, and we also feel that participation of more students would result from the elimination of these fees. Moreover, we are deeply concerned that with rising unemployment and underemployment, many families will not be in a position to continue the cost of after school activities for their children.

April 28, 2009  
Governor Deval Patrick

Page 2

We write to you today seeking your support to allow local school districts the ability to use federal stimulus funds to eliminate user fees for co- curricular activities over the next two years. The elimination of users' fees would put dollars back into the pockets of parents who could use those saved funds to "stimulate" the economy. Undisputable advantages cannot be exclusive to the "haves". Users' fees are an obstacle to fair access and opportunity to students. Statewide elimination of these fees would broaden opportunities.

As documented in a letter attached from Dr. Paul E. Harrington of Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies, employment opportunities for high school youth are at the lowest levels since the Great Depression. Idle unsupervised youth leads to far greater costs and challenges than the investment needed to engage them in programs that build citizenship and character.

In a report published by the Massachusetts Department of Education in January of 2008 entitled, "Preliminary Report on the Current Fiscal Conditions in Massachusetts School Districts" the following was documented: "Spending from athletic revolving funds, which is largely supported by user fees, increased from \$12 million to \$23 million between fiscal years 2002 and 2006, suggesting that districts are relying less on general fund revenues and more on fees to support these programs....It's important to remember, however, that the dollars that districts spend from fee revenues represent a very small share of district operating expenditures, generally well under 1 percent. They are probably more valuable as a means of gaining visibility for challenging district fiscal conditions than as a means of resolving them."

The federal stimulus economic program that you played a critical role in acquiring will provide over \$1 billion in direct support to local school districts over the next two years. Clearly, there are sufficient federal stimulus funds to eliminate using children as a means of gaining visibility rather than solving a fiscal challenge. We need your leadership to eliminate user fees.

We urge you to allow these federal educational stimulus funds to be used to eliminate sport fees and other after school fees for the immediate future. Any efforts you could make to communicate this position to Education Secretary Paul Reville and Commissioner Mitchell Chester would be both timely and deeply appreciated. Please let us know how we can assist you in your stated goal to reduce fees for after school athletics and other worthy extended school day programs.

Sincerely,

James C. Petrus  
Roberta C. Doering  
Dorcas P. Buckley  
James White  
Marilyn E. Slattery  
Sheela G. Ballwaat  
David P. King  
Khary

Kare D. Lord  
Scott A. Kapch  
Stephen S. Smyter  
Tim Fayant  
Charles S. Brown  
Leslie R. Brown  
Bryan J. McLean  
Bryan Kelly  
John M. Brucato



**CENTER FOR  
LABOR MARKET STUDIES**

April 7, 2008

Mr. Richard Neal  
Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association  
33 Forge Parkway  
Franklin MA 02038

Dear Mr. Neal:

Recently I spoke with Charles Lyons, Superintendent of Shawsheen Regional Vocational Technical High School and a member of the MIAA Board. We discussed at some length his concern about a reduction in the number of high school students who were engaged in school supported after school activities including athletic programs. (In my day these were known as 'extra-curricular activities'). He believes that an important reason for this reduction is a decline in funding for these programs. He indicated that a large, and growing number of school districts have begun charging user fees in order to finance the continued operation of after school programs. For some students and their families, the costs of these fees preclude their participation in after school programs. Superintendent Lyons saw this as a particularly difficult problem for special education students based on his experience at Shawsheen.

The teenage years are the times in life when individuals begin making decisions that potentially have a lifetime impact. Choices about education, work, family formation, child rearing, drug and alcohol use and many other life-impacting issues are made on a daily basis by teens. The best research indicates that the greater engagement that students have in schooling, work and church the better will be their life outcomes. Over the past few years the job market access of Massachusetts high school students has declined sharply.

At the beginning of the decade about 45 percent of all 16 to 19 year old high school students were employed. But by 2008 this share had fallen to just 30 percent. Employment access for high school students varies sharply by family income. Only about 13 percent of students from low income families in the Commonwealth were employed on average during 2007-08. Even among students with higher incomes well below half were employed. Tremendous deterioration in national, regional and state labor market conditions have had particularly adverse impacts on the employment prospects of high school students. Indeed, our analysis of the data reveal that over the course of the current national economic crisis, employment levels have fallen most rapidly among those aged 16 to 19.

As the opportunities to gain work experience diminish, the human capital building benefits of work will also decline among teens. Work is an important way for teens and young adults to develop many of the behavioral and attitudinal traits, collectively sometimes called 'work ethic' skills that are so valued by

**Andrew M. Sum**  
Director

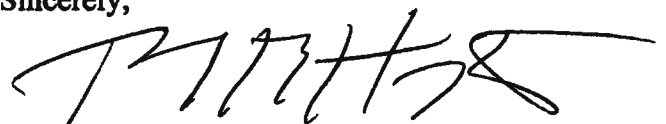
**Paul E. Harrington**  
Associate Director

employers. As work opportunities decline for teens it makes sense for high schools to attempt to reduce the adverse impacts associated with teen idleness by providing students with a variety of organized after school activities that can impart some of the behavioral traits that are valued later in life. It would seem that after school program in the athletic area would have the capability to impart values of teamwork and responsibility much like that provided through early work experience.

It seems that athletic and other extra curricular activities are too often seen as merely a sort of consumption expenditure that provides entertainment value to high school students and their families. Thus when budget reductions become necessary, they are frequently the target of reductions. However, it seems to me that from an economic point of view this is short sighted decision making. After school activities have the characteristics of an investment purchase insofar as they contribute to the long term productive capabilities of those youth who participate. Thus reducing outlays in this area has not just short run consumption impacts, but long term investment impacts associated with a reduction in the longer-term positive outcomes for students.

As employment access for students continues its rapid decline in Massachusetts, it would seem prudent to expand support for athletic and other after school programs to replace some of the behavioral gains that are lost when students can't find jobs. From the perspective of an economist concerned about the development of labor market skills among teens, the use of federal stimulus funds to support high school athletic programs and other after school programs that engage students in productive activities and form positive behavioral attributes among these students would provide not only a set of short term consumption gains associated with the enjoyment and pleasure of participation in after school athletics, drama and other activities, but also the investment gains generated with strengthening the behavioral traits of students who participate in these programs.

Sincerely,



Paul E. Harrington, Associate Director  
Center for Labor Market Studies

Cc: Charles Lyons,  
Shawsheen Valley Technical High School

**Employment to Population Ratio of High School Students in Massachusetts by Selected Family Income Level Grouping, 2007-08**

