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MASSACHUSETTS  
BUSINESS ALLIANCE  
FOR EDUCATION

**July 21, 2010**

## **Statement to the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in Favor of Adoption of Common Core State Standards**

The Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE) appreciates the opportunity to share with the Board our recommendation in favor of adoption of the proposed Common Core State Standards. We also urge you to review the independent analysis done for us by WestEd comparing the state's draft revised K-12 English and math standards with the Common Core in order to incorporate, where appropriate, Massachusetts standards not reflected in the Common Core. We believe this will give Massachusetts a strong set of standards that can build upon the strong education base we have established and prepare all students for success in college, career and citizenship.

For more than 20 years, MBAE has advocated for the highest possible educational standards for Massachusetts students. Along with employers across the Commonwealth, our members insist on rigorous standards in order to ensure Massachusetts remains economically competitive and a global center of innovation and productivity. We therefore commissioned a non-ideological, thorough review of the state's standards and Common Core to provide MBAE and others with factual and unbiased information about whether adoption of Common Core would build on the successes of the last 17 years of education reform and investment. This study, conducted by WestEd, an independent national education research agency, which found that:

- There is more in common than not between Massachusetts academic standards and the proposed Common Core; and both sets of standards are high;
- There is substantial alignment in math (96%) and English (74%) and the standards are comparable with regard to whether these are clear and measureable;
- In math, the two sets of standards reflect a comparable level of rigor;
- In English, the Common Core tends to have a heavier emphasis on standards that focus on strategic thinking, and those begin in earlier grades.

After reviewing the rigorous, independent comparison between the Massachusetts and Common Core educational standards, the MBAE board voted to recommend that the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) adopt Common Core

and that the Board exceed Common Core in areas where improvements can be made.

There are many areas where Common Core strengthens Massachusetts' standards and will better prepare our children to succeed in college-and the workforce – areas that are critically important to the Massachusetts business community.

In addition, the adoption of Common Core will create opportunities for Massachusetts to develop more sophisticated assessments about student and teacher performance.

There are too many children graduating from our public schools without the necessary skills to succeed in college and compete in today's economy. We believe Common Core will improve upon our successful education reforms and position Massachusetts for continued progress.

The study found that these standards not only draw heavily from Massachusetts current standards, but improve upon them by incorporating the some of the best international standards. To maintain our competitive advantage, Massachusetts must regularly update its standards to make sure that we're applying the best current thinking about educating our young people. In our view, adoption of the Common Core Standards would benefit the state's competitive economic position by challenging students and educators to develop the skills and knowledge that are essential for success in the coming decades.

I am pleased that our partners in the business community have asked me to convey their support for this position to you as well. Associated Industries of Massachusetts, Boston Leaders for Education, the Massachusetts Business Roundtable, the Massachusetts Competitive Partnership, and the Progressive Business Leaders Network all join MBAE in support of this opportunity to advance our education system of standards and assessments to continue to ensure that Massachusetts students are prepared to successfully compete both nationally and globally.

For more information, please contact Linda Noonan, executive director of MBAE, at 617-737-3122, or lnoonan@mbae.org. For copies of the WestEd report, visit: [www.mbae.org](http://www.mbae.org)

### **About MBAE**

The Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE) is committed to a high quality public education system that will prepare all students to engage successfully in a global economy and society. We bring together business and education leaders to promote education policies and practices based on measurable standards of achievement, accountability for performance, and equitable educational opportunities for all students.