



MACS NEWSLETTER

July 2008

1. Education Law Conference, July 30

The EdLaw conference takes place at USM in Portland. On Wednesday, July 30, there will be two discussions on public charter schools. At 10:45 am, Joshua Mayes of Georgia will give an UPDATE on charter schools nationally, and MACS will host a LUNCHEON ROUNDTABLE on public charter schools from 12:15 to 1:15 pm. To attend the luncheon, please reserve a place with MACS, macs@mainecharterschools.org. To attend the conference for one or more days, please see the details and register at www.edlaw.org. Scholarships for Maine educators and parents are available; see information at edlaw.org.

2. Traditional School Choice Programs in Maine under Threat

School district consolidation planning teams are working to reduce or eliminate Maine's traditional school choice programs in several districts. Former State Representative Steve Bowen, now education policy analyst with the Maine Heritage Policy Center, will make a presentation on these issues on Thursday, July 31st, 12 - 1:30 pm, at the Cumberland Club, 116 High St, Portland. To reserve a place, please call 321-2550 or email hnoyes@mainepolicy.org by July 28. Two new websites focus on school choice issues in Maine: <http://schoolchoice.gather.com> and <http://maineschoolchoice.ning.com>. Please see the MACS website for several articles on the importance of public school choice for improving education in Maine.

3. National Charter School Conference

A record 3,200 public charter school teachers, administrators, policymakers and other supporters of the movement gathered in New Orleans in June. The Ninth Annual National Charter Schools Conference will be held in Washington DC June 20-23, 2009. FMI, see www.publiccharters.org.

4. Expanding Public School Choice in Maine

On June 22, MACS held a workshop to consider the challenges of expanding public school choice and passing enabling legislation for public charter schools in Maine. We discussed the importance of creating bi-partisan support, and the positive aspects of public chartered schools that should appeal to a broad spectrum of parents and educators in Maine.

There are Democratic candidates willing to champion legislation for public charter schools next term, along with new Republican supporters. Presidential candidate Barack Obama has recently reiterated his support for public charter schools, and this should encourage progressive Democrats to join a movement that provides education options for families of all income levels and for children at-risk of education failure.

This year's campaign is benefitting from new and continuing supporters. We are also looking for people to help devise a public information strategy that focuses on parents and educators. If you can help, please contact Roger Brainerd, macs@mainecharterschools.org.

FMI about public school options, and to register your support for allowing public chartered schools in Maine, please call 207-763-3576, and visit www.mainecharterschools.org, and www.publiccharters.org.