

May 11, 2004

Letters to the Editor  
*Boston Globe*  
Box 55819  
Boston, MA 02205

Dear Editor:

Judge Botsford's recommendation to the Supreme Judicial Court after nine months of hearing testimony and reviewing thousands of documents is an affirmation of what those of us who advocate for the children in these districts have been saying all along—the state is not fulfilling its constitutional obligation to the children in our school districts.

Governor Romney is saying the economy has turned around so it's time to cut taxes again. Meanwhile, the Board of Education continues to unjustly label schools in our districts as failures. There are five well-respected educational organizations that agree with me that our state Board of Education's implementation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (I refuse to call it NCLB. Because of its lack of funding and unrealistic expectations, it will leave many deserving students behind.) is unreasonable and unjust. These organizations are The Massachusetts Association of School Committees, the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, The Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association, The Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association and the Massachusetts Parent Teacher Association.

Why have these organizations joined with the MFT and the MTA and published a paper around the implementation of the ESEA entitled, "A Call to Action: Don't Shortchange Children"? One of the reasons is that 100 percent of the students in every school will have to attain the level of proficiency on MCAS. When you compare MCAS scores to scores on nationally normed tests, like Iowa and the Stanford 10, in order to reach proficiency on MCAS, a student will have to out-perform 80 percent of the students in the nation. Is expecting 100 percent of Massachusetts' students to out perform 80 percent of the students in the nation a realistic goal? Springfield schools are being branded failing now, but eventually every school in Massachusetts will be branded as well if the President and the Governor continue down this road.

I urge all citizens who are concerned about our children and Massachusetts' public schools to contact Mass Partners for Public Schools ([psweitzer@mass.com](mailto:psweitzer@mass.com)) and become more informed on these important issues.

Sincerely,

Timothy T. Collins  
President