



NAACP
NEW ENGLAND AREA CONFERENCE

Post Office Box 320128
(617) 323-8885

West Roxbury, MA 02132
Facsimile (617) 325-7666

**Testimony Before The Massachusetts Legislative
Joint Committee On Education**

The National Association For The Advancement Of Colored People (NAACP) is the largest, oldest and most successful civil rights advocacy organization in the country. It is now 106 years old. The New England Area Conference (NEAC) of the NAACP is the governing and coordinating entity for NAACP Branches, College Chapters, High School Chapters and Youth Councils in the states of Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont. NEAC speaks for all Branches within its jurisdiction, which in Massachusetts includes:

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|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Amherst Branch | Berkshire County Branch | Boston Branch |
| Brockton Area Branch | Cambridge Branch | Cape Cod Branch |
| Martha's Vineyard Branch | Merrimack Valley Branch | Mystic Valley Branch |
| New Bedford Branch | South Middlesex Branch | Springfield Branch |
| Worcester Branch | | |

A resolution was adopted by the NAACP in 2010 which affirmed its unequivocal stand for ***High Quality, Free, Public Education for All***. NEAC reaffirms that position today!

Charter schools were originally designed to explore new approaches to educate students with the goal to inform the education community regarding innovative instructional strategies that would accelerate academic achievement for all students. Their anticipated successes were to become a model for the benefit of all students. Education officials have not drawn from the successes of well performing

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charter schools to inform the education community regarding innovative instructional strategies that accelerate academic achievement in the general population of students. Again, implementing an instructional model has not happened and one Executive Branch after another is at fault for this failure. These administrations have failed the students. They have created a separate and unequal, dual school system. The charter schools siphon funds and other resources from most students in traditional public schools, for the benefit of a few in charter schools. Yet, many charter schools don't perform any better than traditional public schools when one compares like populations of students and a given set of circumstances.

NEAC recognizes the urgent need to provide high quality education for all students, not only those fortunate enough to win lotteries and attend strong performing charter schools. Proportionately, there are as many strong performing traditional public schools as there are charter schools. We must stop sacrificing traditional public schools students for the few in charter schools. NEAC asks the Legislature to commit itself to finding broad based, effective solutions for immediate, overarching improvements to public education for all students. Further, NEAC asks the Massachusetts Legislature to reject the emphasis on charter schools as the vanguard approach for the education of students, and instead, focus its attention, funding, and policy advocacy on improving low performing public schools and work through local authorities to ensure that all public schools are provided the necessary funding, support and autonomy necessary to educate all students to their highest potential. If we fail to do so, we will enlarge the school to prison pipeline.

Respectfully submitted,

Juan M. Cofield, President

October 13, 2015

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