

Changing conditions for many

Helping one child at a time

Since 1969 • Annual Report • Year ending December 31, 2014



MASSACHUSETTS
ADVOCATES
for CHILDREN

A Message from Our Executive Director & Board Chair

Dear Friends and Supporters,

In 2014, we celebrated our 45th anniversary of fighting for the rights of children who face barriers to equal educational and life opportunities. Since Hubie Jones set the organization in motion in 1969, MAC has been a voice for Massachusetts' most vulnerable children, improving educational outcomes for individual children and changing laws and policies that impact all children.

This report highlights our numerous successes of 2014 with our many partners on behalf of children and youth throughout the Commonwealth. We make a difference here in Massachusetts while inspiring national level dialogue about providing educational opportunity for all children.

None of this is possible without our circles—especially you, our supporters and funders, together with our volunteers, networks, coalitions, parent groups and legislative champions who partner with our dedicated staff. These pages provide us an opportunity to highlight our collective accomplishments while recognizing with gratitude the efforts of this powerful grassroots network of leaders who care about Massachusetts' children and families. With your support, we know we can address the many significant challenges that still remain.



Jerry Mogul



Matt Iverson

Jerry Mogul
Executive Director

Matt Iverson
Chairman, Board of Directors

Why We Do What We Do

Because Children Face Barriers to Success in School



31%

of Massachusetts children live in low-income households



76,342

Massachusetts children are English language learners.

MORE THAN 
164,000

Massachusetts children have been diagnosed with a disability and found eligible for special needs educational services.



50% of adults reported having experienced at least one form of childhood adversity according to The Adverse Childhood Experience study. This is a higher level of traumatic experience in the general population than previously imagined. Response to traumatic events can interfere with a child's ability to learn at school.



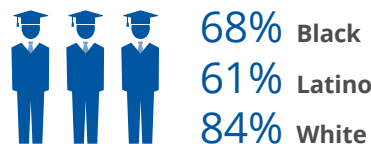
And we know their equal access to education matters

“ Studies have shown the benefits of preventive measures, such as high quality early intervention & education, in costs avoided & the return on investment...of high-quality public education & workforce development. ”

Measures of Poverty: A Boston Indicators Project Special Report

41% of inmates in state and federal prison do not have a high school diploma.

MASSACHUSETTS GRADUATION RATES (Male Students)



Massachusetts reduced by nearly half the number & rate of high school dropouts in the past 10 years. Intervention works, yet challenges remain: 5,747 students dropped out of high school in 2013-2014.



We are a voice for children who face significant barriers to equal educational & life opportunities.

* For data citations, visit: www.massadvocates.org/background

We Change Conditions for Many

MAC by the Numbers – 2014 Facts



Two major bills became law, increasing supports for children with autism & creating safe & supportive schools.
Enacting statewide law for children who need a voice.



This year, **more than 10,000 educators and others** received our books on *Helping Traumatized Children Learn*; **90,000+ have received them** since publication in 2005.
Fostering safe and supportive whole-school environments.



More than 1,000 parents attended our **60+ community-based trainings**.
Empowering parents to support children with disabilities.



Approximately 1,000 parents received advice and support through our **free Helpline**.
Giving parents a place to turn when a child is struggling.



East Boston launched **a new bilingual public school** in response to advocacy from a MAC-supported parent coalition.
Organizing parents and championing inclusion.

The Way We Work

Amplify Voices



We Listen.

Starting with a child. We serve 1,000 Helpline calls annually, providing individual case advocacy, listening for themes, & meeting with key stakeholders to understand the barriers facing vulnerable children in education.



We act.

Through advocacy. After we determine priorities for systemic advocacy, we organize our parent and professional networks. With their help, we advocate for laws & policies that improve educational opportunities for children.



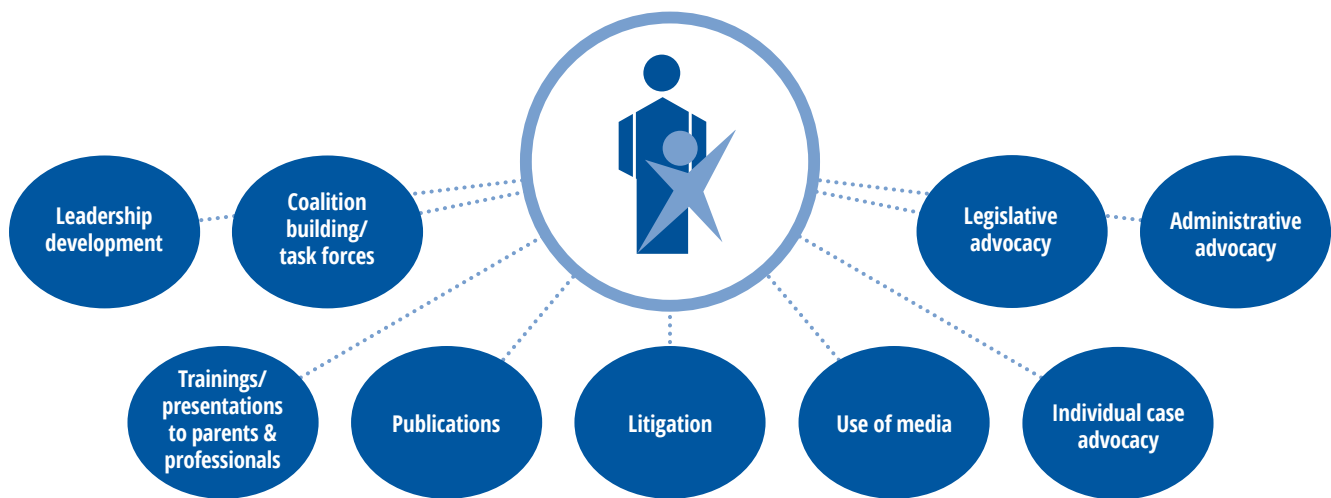
We follow through.

By seeing it through. We persist to ensure that laws have impact. We conduct workshops, create training tools & frameworks, and empower parents, students and educators, so laws are followed & children's rights are protected, enabling them to succeed in school.



Systemic Advocacy: A Holistic and Collaborative Approach

We are far more than our staff, and we don't accomplish broadscale impact alone. Our long-standing relationships with other non-profits, legal professionals, policy experts, practitioners, legislators and families help us bring the right people to the table whether we are working on behalf of a student or organizing to pass a law. Our partners and collaborators are part of our advocacy circles. Together we tackle the challenge, drawing upon multiple strategies, tailored to the unique nature of every issue:



Individual & Community Impact

2014 Statistics on Listening



It starts with the Helpline. At the core of MAC's advocacy is our free Helpline, available to any Massachusetts parent. We provide technical assistance to parents whose children are facing barriers to educational services that they require and to which they are legally entitled. We prioritize assistance to children with disabilities, homeless children, children who have been expelled or suspended from school, and children traumatized by exposure to family violence or other adverse experiences. In selected cases, for families who qualify, our staff provides free legal representation or referral to a pro-bono attorney.

Our goal is to grow our capacity to serve more families and expand our bilingual support. In 2014, we began working with Harvard Business School's Community Action Partners. Their team of alumni is providing pro-bono consulting to further improve our legal assistance and Helpline capacity.

In 2014, we received 965 calls to our Helpline from parents. Thirty six percent, or 351 calls, involved a child with autism. Of those, MAC provided extensive pro-bono advocacy services to **50 parents** needing our autism advocate specialist. Twenty percent, or nearly 200 students, had emotional disabilities. Eight percent, or 79 calls, served children who were excluded from school by its discipline rules, and another eight percent, or 82 calls, concerned children who were being bullied, most commonly because of their disability.

MAC provided pro-bono legal representation for 46 cases, either directly or by connecting the parent with our network of pro-bono attorneys or advocates. The typical pro-bono case continues for months and requires hours of legal services, and is reserved for complex or urgent needs involving low-income families.

We empower parents through **free training sessions**, and in 2014 conducted more than **60 of these sessions to more than 1,000 parents**. We also provided presentations to nearly **1,000 educators on how to create trauma sensitive schools** and approximately **700 providers of mental health services** on how to help parents through the special education system.

Through our Helpline services and trainings, we gain a better understanding of the barriers children and parents face and how well laws are working to meet their needs. We combine that information with our policy analysis to identify where changes to laws and policies will measurably improve access to opportunity.

And then the collaboration begins...

2014 Advocacy in Action

Choosing Strategies So That Children Succeed

MAC uses multiple strategies tailored to the unique nature of every issue. Here are a few examples of those strategies in action:



TRAININGS: Ensuring implementation of new laws through outreach • MAC held a series of workshops with our partners, the Boys and Girls Club of Dorchester, for parents of children with disabilities. The workshops provided an overview of the intervention services and academic supports available through new Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment laws and policies which open doors to higher education. One of MAC's Young Adult Leader Fellows spoke to the group about his own experience transitioning from high school to college and to the workforce and how the new laws will address challenges that face individuals, like himself, who have autism.



PUBLICATIONS: Using information to bring about change • The Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI), a collaboration between MAC and Harvard Law School, publishes material and trains educators on creating trauma-sensitive schools. Schools in Massachusetts and across the nation have used TLPI's two-volume books *Helping Traumatized Children Learn* to help staff become aware of the needs of children impacted by traumatic events. These teachers are now better able to support students socially, emotionally, and behaviorally. In these schools, disciplinary actions are falling and academic outcomes are on the rise.



COALITIONS & TASK FORCES: Keeping a focus on key issues • MAC chairs multiple coalitions to bring about collaboration in Massachusetts. One of its coalitions, the Education Law Task Force (ELTF), composed of public interest legal organizations with expertise in education law, met regularly to be a resource to implementing Chapter 222 of the Acts of 2012 (School Discipline Law) which took effect in July of 2014. The ELTF helped Boston Public Schools align its code to the new regulations, to reduce suspensions and provide alternatives to exclusion, increasing the chances for all students to graduate and become productive members of society.

State & National Impact

2014 Legislative Advocacy Victories: Multi-year, Multi-partner Endeavors

In 2014, MAC achieved two major legislative victories with broadscale impact through policy analysis, legislative advocacy and collaboration. We could not achieve these results alone, and are grateful for the many longstanding partners who assisted in making these victories for children possible.



From left, MAC staff with Speaker Robert DeLeo, Senator Barbara L'Italien, Amy Weinstock of the Autism Insurance Resource Center and MAC board member Ann Guay.

Autism Omnibus Bill

For more than 12 years, MAC's Autism Center has been advocating along with many partners and legislators on behalf of students and individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Our focus is on meeting the needs of all students with autism, especially those from low-income families. In 2014, this collaboration led to the passage of the Autism Omnibus Bill, containing numerous provisions including MassHealth coverage of medical treatments for children with ASD from low-income families, expanding eligibility for adults services from the Department of Developmental Services, and changing state teacher licensure regulations providing specialized trainings for teachers who educate children with ASD.



TLPI Team, L to R: Joel Ristuccia, Susan Cole, Michael Gregory and Anne Eisner. Photo Credit: Jessica Stanton.

Safe & Supportive Schools Legislation

As featured in the Fall 2014 edition of the Harvard Law Bulletin, MAC's Trauma & Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI) secured passage of landmark legislation this year. These Safe and Supportive Schools provisions (Massachusetts law MGL c.69 sec.1P) create a framework for Massachusetts schools to set conditions in place to become trauma-sensitive environments where all children can learn. A culmination of 12 years of leadership through collaboration between MAC and the Harvard Law School, the legislative win was the result of advocacy by many partners joining TLPI staff and students of the Education Law Clinic. For more information, see: www.traumasensitiveschools.org.

Year in Review

Key Accomplishments



The Autism Center

Expanding Access (Autism Omnibus Law)

- Our leadership contributed to the passage of this landmark legislation, providing medically necessary treatment for the estimated **10,000-16,000** school-age children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Massachusetts, including Medicaid coverage of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) for children on the spectrum.
- Our advocacy helped sustain **\$4 million** in funding for **200+ low-income children** via Children's Autism Medicaid Waiver & aided families in accessing critical support.
- We published & distributed nationally *School Success for Haitian Children with Autism*, an online guide for organizations serving Haitian families.

Improving Paths to College & Work

- MAC led advocacy efforts to secure **\$1 million** in state funding for **Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment** grants for partnerships between districts and colleges, opening the doors to higher education for students with intellectual disabilities or autism.

- Our participation on a legislative Task Force on Higher Education produced recommendations for **increasing access** to higher education for students with intellectual disabilities (ID) and autism statewide.
- We led the effort to secure new state guidelines for **transition specialists** to help students age 14-22 on Individualized Education Programs (IEP) gain skills necessary to live & work in the community.

Boston Public School Reform (BSR)

Championing Equal Opportunity

- Our BSR is a **leading voice** to eliminate achievement and opportunity gaps so that all children in the Boston Public Schools (BPS) can succeed, regardless of race, income, native language, or neighborhood.
- Our advocates were appointed to serve on the **BPS Inclusion Task Force and the English language Learners (ELL) Task Force**.

Addressing Inequities

- We advocated for recruiting & hiring a more **diverse BPS teacher pool**, to better reflect the demographics of the student population; this is now an active priority of the Human Capital Office within BPS.
- We amplified student & parent voices: helping **Cape Verdean youth** preserve an ELL program at Dearborn School; promoting **restorative justice** as an alternative to exclusion in East Boston High School; preventing transportation cuts to **7th grade school buses**.
- We became a founding member of **Hubie Jones' Change Circle**, addressing inequities facing BPS black & Latino students.

Year in Review

Key Accomplishments (continued)

Empowering Parents

- MAC advocated successfully for a new dual-language school & K-1 programs in East Boston.
- We enlisted community parents to participate in the BPS Superintendent search.

School Discipline & Special Education

Keeping Kids in School (MA Chapter 222)

- We are helping to oversee state-wide implementation of the **2012 School Discipline Law and its 2014 Regulations**, leading a coalition that meets regularly to monitor that school districts are adopting new **codes of conduct** to ensure that disciplinary exclusion is the last resort. MAC championed the law to reduce exclusions and provide educational support for the **nearly 2,000 students who receive out-of-school suspensions** in Massachusetts by requiring that schools engage parents, support academic success and promote positive student behaviors.

Preparing Students for Success

- We continued to lead the **Boston Special Education Transition Project (B-SET)**, which we initiated in 2013. B-SET's goal is to improve higher education and employment opportunities for the **4,300 students with disabilities** ages 14-22 who will transition out of Boston schools into higher education or the workforce. B-SET provided community-based trainings to parents & youth, advocated for systemic change, and brought together a task force of **more than 70 organizations** to create an action plan to improve transition and inclusive workforce development opportunities for job training and employment.

Trauma & Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI)

A voice for Trauma-Sensitive Schools

- After years of laying the foundation through interdisciplinary research and coalition building, MAC's and Harvard's TLPI and our partners from across the state advocated successfully in 2014 to enact landmark **Safe and Supportive Schools** provisions into **Massachusetts law (MGL c.69 s.1P)**. The Safe and Supportive Schools law will help reduce the achievement gap by providing all students with safe and supportive whole-school learning environments. TLPI's director was appointed to the **Safe and Supportive Schools Commission**, which will assist in the statewide implementation of the new law. TLPI expanded its reach through its new website traumasensitiveschools.org and participated by invitation in major convenings across the country.

Case Advocacy and Training

- In 2014, more than 10,000 teachers & administrators accessed TLPI's *Helping Traumatized Students Learn* training books, **95,000 since the first volume's publication in 2005**.
- Our **Harvard Education Law Clinic** provided full representation to **15 families** of students with disabilities, where traumatic experiences may play into a child's struggles.
- TPLI conducted training sessions on trauma and learning to nearly **1,000 educators and 700 mental health providers**.
- **In the last five years TLPI has partnered with Lesley University** as it develops a graduate level certificate on trauma sensitivity.

At Our Core: Helping One Child at Time

Four 2014 MAC Stories

Providing pro-bono technical assistance and legal representation to low-income families who qualify is at the core of our work, and informs our broader advocacy. Below are just a few stories from 2014 that exemplify our success.



We helped sixteen-year-old Sarah turn her life around. When we first met Sarah, she was failing out of school and on the verge of dropping out. Sarah's childhood was traumatic. Her father was abusive, and she had a learning disability. In addition, she suffered from frequent panic attacks and depression. MAC helped Sarah obtain a comprehensive evaluation and the academic and counseling support she needed. Now, Sarah achieves in school, volunteers in a homeless shelter and plans to attend college.

Luis's second chance meant he could be the first in his family to attend college. Luis was an exemplary student, who qualified to attend a prestigious Boston public exam high school. His parents were low-income immigrants who spoke no English. Luis aspired to be the first member of his family to attend college. But as a high school senior, he was caught outside of school with marijuana and expelled. Luis was assigned to Boston's alternative high school—making

it unlikely he could attend a selective four-year-college. He and his parents contacted MAC. With the help of MAC's free legal representation, Luis was able to return to his school and get back on track. He graduated on time and is now attending a competitive four-year-college.

Eleven-year-old Aram is thriving socially and academically in his hometown school. Aram has Down Syndrome. His family was pressured to send him to a specialized school out of district. But his parents knew Aram learns best alongside his non-disabled peers. MAC's advocacy allowed Aram to remain in an inclusive program and learn with his friends. Aram has progressed academically, and his school feels he has enriched their community.

Rita, a Haitian immigrant, is able to advocate for her son with autism. Thirteen-year-old Emmanuel had been placed in six schools over five years due to behavior challenges. During this time his IQ dropped twenty points due to anxiety and depression. Rita contacted MAC for help. MAC recommended Rita meet with school authorities in a mediation session. However, Rita herself had a language processing disorder in addition to her cultural barrier. She had little confidence in her ability to argue her son's case. MAC coached and prepped Rita for the mediation. As a result Rita was able to get her son placed in a school with small classes as well as staff and services that cater to the needs of students with autism, anxiety and depression. Now she can continue to advocate for Emmanuel.

2014 in Pictures

Photo Album



Capturing Advocacy in Action Above Left to Right: Susan Cole & Joel Ristuccia of TLPI lead a training on Trauma Sensitive schools, joined by Rep. Ruth Balsler; Jerry Mogul emcees the Special Education Circuit Breaker funding legislative briefing; Kim Janey of BSR testifies on school quality; Photo Left: Julia Landau and MAC Fellow Lumene Montissol testify on the Higher Education Inclusive bill.



Celebrating 45 Years of Advocacy At our October Gala, we recognized a champion for children, Dr. Katherine Butler Jones: author, educator, activist. Left to Right: Jerry Mogul, Dr. Jones, Kim Janey with the MAC Award; Matt Perrenod and Carlos Rojas present Tina Marie Johnson with the Sondra Peskoe Youth Individual Advocacy Award; John & Lucia Mudd, Matthew Iverson, and members of the Youth of Cape Verdean Community of Dorchester with the John Mudd Youth Organizational Advocacy Award.



Newly Launched in 2014 Friends of the Autism Center Left: Honoring Dr. Leonard Rappaport (2nd from left) in May 2014. Right: Featured speaker Dr. Isaac Kohane (3rd from right) in November 2014.

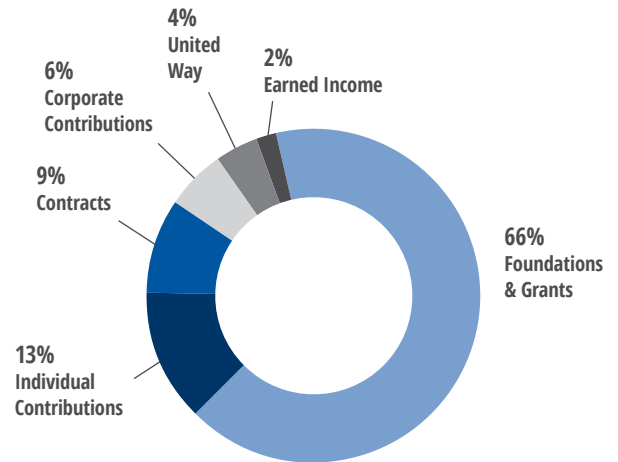
2014 Financials

Overview

Revenue and Support

Fiscal Year ending December 31, 2014

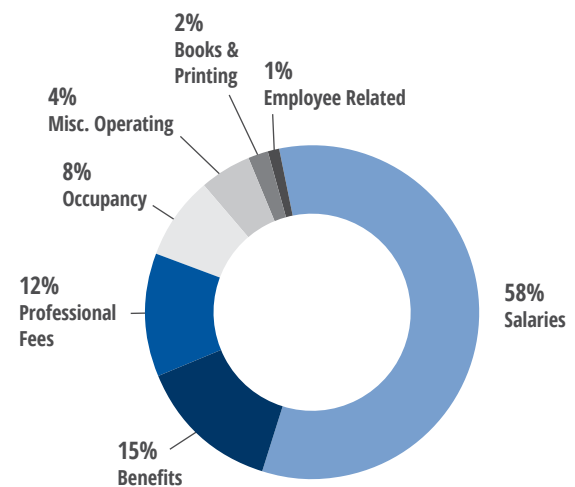
Foundations & Grants	\$ 849,058
Individual Contributions	163,137
Contracts	120,100
Corporate Contributions	79,250
United Way	48,435
Income (books, trainings, honorarium)	28,955
Miscellaneous	2,207
TOTAL	\$ 1,291,142



Expenses

Fiscal Year ending December 31, 2014

Salaries	\$ 733,829
Benefits	183,787
Professional Fees (consultants, audit, etc.)	148,766
Occupancy (rent, utilities, insurance)	100,714
Employee Related (travel, prof. devel., insurance, etc.)	16,395
Books & Printing	22,195
Misc Operating (phone, internet, supplies, equip., etc.)	52,955
TOTAL	\$ 1,258,641



Net Assets

Fiscal year ending December 31, 2014

Unrestricted	\$ 195,287
Temporarily Restricted	904,998
TOTAL	\$ 1,100,285

Our Team

Passionate Advocates



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In the Words of Parents

Helpline Thank yous

"I hope the Mass Advocates for Children continue to stay open & help children that don't have access to expensive legal advice. The ongoing situation with my twin daughters school system has been so draining & frustrating that if it weren't for these type of services, as parents we would be further behind in our advocating for our children."

"Our MAC advocate knew exactly how to express our concerns and needs to the school so we could get right to the point of what our son needed."

"She makes me feel like I have someone in my corner and I also feel much more positive after I've spoken with her."

"I was so lucky to receive the kind, validating help that I did."

"Great service. The person that I spoke to took the time to address all of my concerns."

"I would be lost without your support. We have no funds for any type of support and as it is have trouble making ends meet monthly. Bless you!!"

"Thank you very much for offering this service. It was very helpful for me in terms of understanding what the law requires of my town & school in relation to transition services."

Our Mission Since 1969

Massachusetts Advocates for Children is an independent and effective voice for children who face significant barriers to equal educational and life opportunities, particularly those who have disabilities, are low income and/or are racially, culturally, or linguistically diverse.

MAC works to overcome these barriers by changing conditions for many children, while also helping one child at a time.

Massachusetts Advocates for Children

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