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## Children's advocacy group to launch Framingham chapter

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By Matt Rocheleau, Globe Correspondent

Framingham will become home to the state's 16th chapter of Massachusetts Stand for Children, a group advocating to make public schools and children's programs a top political priority.

The grassroots organization, which has grown to over 1,200 members and 20,000 advocates from more than 100 communities across the state since being founded in 2003, will hold an introductory meeting on Oct. 26 for town residents to learn how to join.

"Stand for Children's mission is to use the power of grassroots action to help all children get the excellent public education and strong support they need to thrive," said a press release announcing the Framingham chapter.

Allison Balter of Massachusetts Stand for Children said she's been working closely with members of the Framingham community to prepare for the chapter's launch.

"What I've seen in Framingham, is people care a lot about their own schools. But, there's a concern that the problems and challenges of the schools can't be changed on a local level," and the town needs statewide supports, said Balter in a phone interview.

She added that Framingham was a good fit to host its own chapter because it has a diverse community and, "in some ways Framingham is like a microcosm of the entire state.

"Massachusetts Stand for Children has successfully mobilized members and activists across the Commonwealth to lobby for: restoration of hundreds of millions of dollars of state funding for education, innovative programs to help close the achievement gap (e.g. early education and expanded learning time) and new revenue sources to provide more sustainable funding sources for our communities as well as cost savings measures to make sure we're spending our money efficiently," said the release.

The kickoff meeting will be at Fuller Middle School on 31 Flagg St. on Oct. 26 from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Free child care and free food will be available. Guests are asked to RSVP to Allison Balter at 617-803-1559.

To learn more about Stand for Children, which also has networks in Oregon, Tennessee, Colorado, Arizona and Washington, visit [www.stand.org/ma](http://www.stand.org/ma).

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