

MTA Today

*A publication of the Massachusetts Teachers Association
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**STATE'S NEW EVALUATION SYSTEM
IS PROMISING AND CHALLENGING**



RED SOX STAR ADRIAN GONZALEZ JOINS MTA READING TEAM



Educators offer ideas to close achievement gap

What do teachers believe is needed to close the achievement gap in our schools, particularly those in low- and moderate-income communities?

The MTA has been working with a nonprofit group called the VIVA Project — the letters stand for Voice Ideas Vision Action — to foster an online discussion about this subject among teachers and other instructional professionals in certain urban districts, including those working in cities and towns known as Gateway Communities.

“Too often, people with little or no experience in teaching are making the major policy decisions that affect how and what we teach,” said MTA President Paul Toner. “We believe teachers should continually

be asked what they believe is needed and our voices should carry the most weight.

“Members of the VIVA staff have a track record of fostering thoughtful discussions about current education issues, which is why we invited them to come here and facilitate a discussion about the difficult issue of how to close the achievement gap, which persists despite our state’s overall high level of performance,” he added.

While the achievement gap among students of different socioeconomic backgrounds is prevalent statewide, it is most pressing in communities where the challenges related to family income are greater. In order to focus on the needs of students in those communities, the MTA conversation was opened only

to classroom teachers and instructional professionals working in schools in Barnstable, Brockton, Cambridge, Chicopee, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Haverhill, Holyoke, Leominster, Malden, Methuen, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Quincy, Revere, Somerville, Springfield, Taunton, Westfield and Worcester.

A short-term online discussion — called an Idea Exchange — was held in April. Participants identified as “thought leaders” will join a small Writing Collaborative. That group will summarize the ideas generated and turn them into actionable recommendations to deliver to MTA leaders.

More information on the project can be found by visiting <http://vivamta.socialsphere.com> or www.vivateachers.org.

MTA Today

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A special section containing information about the 2012 MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates begins on Page 19. It includes the schedule, agenda, candidates’ statements, the report of the executive director-treasurer and resolution, bylaw and standing rule proposals. This issue of MTA Today also features the spring edition of the MTA Advantage.

MTA’s Mission Statement

The Massachusetts Teachers Association is a member-driven organization, governed by democratic principles, that accepts and supports the interdependence of professionalism and unionism. The MTA promotes the use of its members’ collective power to advance their professional and economic interests. The MTA is committed to human and civil rights and advocates for quality public education in an environment in which lifelong learning and innovation flourish.

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On the cover

Teachers Chris Fontaine, left, and Lorie Banks confer about math instruction at the Morgan Elementary School in Holyoke while eighth-graders Melanie Torres, in striped shirt, and Jasmine Suarez work on solving equations. Implementing the state’s new evaluation system in Level 4 schools has been a challenge, but educators hope the result is more feedback and support for teachers and administrators. For coverage, see pages 6 and 7. Meanwhile, Adrian Gonzalez, who plays first base for the Boston Red Sox, has signed on as the spokesman for the MTA reading team, replacing catcher Jason Varitek, who has retired as a player. A story on the MTA Red Sox Reading Game’s new season appears on page 36.



Photos by Christine Peterson and Michael Ivins/Boston Red Sox

Quote-Unquote

“I don’t want to be a rich guy in a second-rate country.”

— Brookline resident Robert S. Bowditch, founder of a property management company, expressing his support for the “Buffett Rule” in a Boston Globe story published on April 16



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Locals organize to fight Stand initiative

Proposal 'a huge distraction from what teachers believe is needed to help our students succeed'

By Laura Barrett

The MTA has been fighting the extremely divisive Stand for Children ballot question on two fronts: in court and in the Legislature. Soon, the battle will be taken to the public, which will be asked to vote on the initiative petition in November if it is not stricken from the ballot or voluntarily removed by Stand.

"This ballot question will negatively affect students and teachers. It is a huge distraction from what teachers believe is needed to help our students succeed," said MTA President Paul Toner. "Stand's ballot question will effectively silence the voice of teachers in important decisions related to our schools regarding evaluation, professional status and personnel decisions."

Since July, the MTA has been informing leaders and members about the petition. MTA field staff members are beginning to meet with the executive boards of the local associations they represent to explain the initiative and the negative impact it will have on teachers, students and schools if it is passed. Many locals are now beginning to organize against the petition, and more actions will be implemented as the election season progresses.

The lengthy, complex initiative has 11 sections that make numerous changes to state law governing school district personnel practices and collective bargaining. Among other changes, the petition:

- Guts important bargaining rights, including eliminating negotiations over what should be included in performance evaluations and the criteria or processes that a district must follow in layoffs, recalls, voluntary and involuntary transfers, promotions and other personnel decisions.
- Strips teachers of the right to arbitrate or grieve over these personnel decisions.
- Denies professional teacher status to part-time teachers.

'Stand's ballot question will effectively silence the voice of teachers in important decisions related to our schools regarding evaluation, professional status and personnel decisions.'

— MTA President Paul Toner

The net effect is to give administrators the power to make more personnel decisions based on subjective criteria, potentially opening the door to favoritism and nepotism. It also makes experienced teachers at the top of the pay scale more vulnerable to being laid off by districts seeking to save money during an economic downturn. And it gives districts a perverse incentive to hire more part-time faculty, who will have no job protections and face the prospect of non-renewal at the end of every school year.

"Experience will count for very little if the Stand petition is passed," said MTA Vice President Tim Sullivan. "Your job security will depend heavily on how well you get along with your immediate supervisor, not on what you have contributed to the district over many years."

Despite giving principals more power, the initiative is opposed by the associations representing both elementary and secondary school principals.

When MTA leaders learned that Stand was planning to file the petition, they quickly sought to persuade Stand's state and national leaders to pull the question from the ballot. Instead, they urged the group to follow the legislative process and discuss its ideas collaboratively with the dozens of parent, teacher, administrator and business groups that had recently been meeting — with Stand included — to develop the new teacher evaluation system. Those discussions involved extensive research and hours

of give and take as participants worked to reach a consensus.

Stand leaders never raised the issues contained in their ballot initiative during these discussions or in their public testimony to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Now, with a huge war chest built up from donations by corporate foundations and executives, Stand has decided to go it alone in promoting its own agenda.

"It's a wolf in sheep's clothing," Sullivan said of the petition. "The initiative is so long and complicated, very few voters will ever read it. Instead, all they may know about it will be from a slick multimillion-dollar ad campaign saying it will create 'great teachers, great schools.' This is a distortion of how the initiative petition process was supposed to work."

The MTA believes that going to the ballot with this complex question is not only bad public policy, but a violation of the state Constitution. The association filed a complaint against the attorney general in January on behalf of seven plaintiffs asking that the question be barred from the ballot. In a detailed brief in support of the complaint, the MTA argues that the petition impermissibly makes changes in unrelated domains, interferes with the powers of the court and is incompletely described in the AG's summary.

MTA attorneys expect the lawsuit to be decided by mid-July.

Meanwhile, under the initiative process, the petition has gone to the Legislature, which has until May 2 to approve the question as is, reject it and approve a related question to appear alongside it on the ballot or take no action. In all scenarios except approval, the proponents will have to collect another 11,485 certified signatures by July 3 to qualify it for the ballot.

Please turn to **Stand**/Page 15

Many organizations and leaders oppose ballot petition

Numerous organizations and educational and political leaders are joining educators in opposing the Stand ballot initiative, and the list is growing.

Opponents of the petition — along with the MTA and AFT Massachusetts — include the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, Arise for Social Justice, Citizens for Public Schools, the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action, the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Administrators for Special Education, the Massachusetts Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the Massachusetts Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, the Massachusetts Building Trades Council, the

Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association, Massachusetts Jobs with Justice, the Massachusetts Parent Teacher Association, the Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives, the Massachusetts Reading Association, the Massachusetts School Library Association, the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association, the New England Jewish Labor Committee and the Union of Minority Neighborhoods.

Educational, political and labor leaders opposing the initiative, among others, include Massachusetts Secretary of Education Paul Reville; Susan Moore Johnson and Robert Schwartz, professors at the Harvard

Graduate School of Education; Sue Freedman, director of the RTTT Human Resources Pilot Project, Working Group for Educator Excellence; John Walsh, chair of the Massachusetts Democratic Party; and Lou Mandarini, secretary-treasurer of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO.

The seven plaintiffs on whose behalf MTA has filed a complaint seeking to strike the initiative from the ballot are three former Massachusetts Teachers of the Year, Michael Flynn, Jae Goodwin and Floris Wilma Ortiz-Marrero; Jon Saphier, an evaluation expert; Richard Herbert, a member of the Scituate School Committee; Mary Ann Stewart, immediate past president of the Massachusetts PTA; and Geju Brown, a Boston public school parent.

Support candidates who support public education

The Republican primary season has been a wakeup call proving that we cannot take support for public schools and public higher education for granted. We have had serious candidates who do not believe in evolution and who do believe that public employee unions — not poorly regulated investment banks and hedge funds — are responsible for our economic problems.

One candidate, Rick Santorum, called President Barack Obama a “snob” for urging high school graduates to participate in some form of higher education or training in order to survive in this economy.

Fortunately, there are good choices for educators in 2012. The MTA recommends re-electing President Obama and electing Elizabeth Warren to the U.S.



Paul Toner
MTA President

Senate. Both advocate for policies that benefit students, educators, our families and our communities.

Obama has done a remarkable job despite governing during a major recession that he didn't cause and trying to disentangle the nation from two wars that he didn't start — all while being thwarted by an obstructionist Congress.

Vice President Joseph Biden summed up why Obama deserves another four years, stating: “Osama bin Laden is dead and General Motors is alive!” These are just two of the reasons many educators support the president.

Under Obama, the **economy** is improving, thanks in large part to stimulus spending, much of which went to public education, and low interest rates.

Warren likewise supports the judicious use of stimulus funds, as well as streamlining regulations and promoting the industries of the future, including renewable energy.

Details of Warren's proposals are available at www.elizabethwarren.com.

Obama and Warren also support **equity** — increasing taxes on the wealthy to help balance the budget without having to raise taxes on middle- and lower-income families. They understand that jobs are created when workers have enough money for goods and services.

Warren is perhaps best known for helping to create the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which was set up to crack down on deceptive practices by credit card and mortgage companies.

In contrast, GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney and Scott Brown, Warren's Republican opponent, support “trickle-down economics” that favor the wealthy. Brown, who has accepted over \$1.1 million in donations from Wall Street interests, was a swing vote in watering down regulations covering the financial services industry. Forbes magazine called him one of “Wall Street's favorite congressmen.”

Meanwhile, **public education** is also “alive” in large measure thanks to Obama's decision to provide a huge share of the stimulus package to help our students. And Warren, who was a special needs teacher at a public elementary school in New Jersey before she became a lawyer, understands how important the teacher voice is in making education policy.

Brown takes an opposite path, supporting budgets that make deep cuts in education. Romney, for his part, presided over significant education spending reductions in Massachusetts when he was governor. Both take guidance on education policy from the business community instead of listening to teachers and administrators and the groups that represent them, such as the MTA and the NEA.

Obama and Warren support **unions** and strong labor laws. On her campaign website, Warren writes, “We need to make it easier for workers who want to organize together to have that chance. If people want

to organize for better wages, for better health care, and for better working conditions, they should have the right to do so.”

Romney, on the other hand, recently told Fox News, “But the role I see that ought to remain in the president's agenda with regards to education is to push back against the federal teachers' unions.”

Affordable health care is alive under Obama — unless it ends up being struck down by Republican appointees on the Supreme Court. Romney is on both sides of this issue, opposing Obamacare — which of course was based on the health care bill he championed in Massachusetts. No wonder Etch A Sketch sales have skyrocketed.

MTA delegates not only support the state and federal affordable health care acts, but also favor moving toward a single-payer system, sometimes referred to as “Medicare for all.” Although it would be difficult to pass single-payer in this climate, the sentiment is there: Affordable, quality health care is a vital benefit that all U.S. residents should receive.

The choice is clear.

In making the case for Obama, NEA President Dennis Van Roekel said last spring, “Will we allow Congress to gut Medicare, slash education and cut Social Security and continue to make it just fine for hedge fund managers and corporations to sidestep paying taxes? Or will we act and assert the real American values of hard work and responsibility, a commitment to a vibrant middle class, to college affordability, and the opportunity to reach the American dream?” The same arguments can be made in favor of Warren, an intelligent, thoughtful, articulate defender of the middle class and a staunch advocate of public education.

Whoever you support, please make sure your voices are heard in this November's election.

Members can get involved in the Obama campaign by visiting www.neafund.org. Another NEA site, www.educationvotes.org, provides state-specific information on national education issues.

Letters to the Editor

Occupy Movement highlights economic system's inequities

To the Editor:

I applaud the MTA for issuing a statement in October 2011 supporting Occupy Wall Street, including the point that “financial and political institutions must be held accountable for the excesses that led to the current economic crisis ...”

I was, therefore, dismayed to learn that MTA Benefits, in affiliation with NEA Benefits, offers credit cards and other financial services through Bank of America. This is a bank that has never been held accountable for its deceptive and unscrupulous mortgage practices, its failure to pay taxes and other costly assaults on the 99 percent.

I urge MTA and NEA to sever their connections with Bank of America and find appropriate alternatives, as other organizations have done. I encourage members to change your MTA or NEA credit cards and move your money to local banks or credit unions that put money back into our communities.

The Occupy Movement has highlighted the stark inequities of our economic system. Our union can do better than the Bank of America.

Pennie Marcus

Holyoke Community College Chapter, MCCC

Editor's Note: MTA Benefits provides value-added products and services to MTA members and acts as a strong advocate for members when issues arise.

MTAB endorses certain programs offered through NEA Member Benefits, including some Bank of America financial products. NEA has had a long-term partnership with Bank of America and a predecessor bank. These associations have yielded superior terms for members. MTAB assesses its programs annually, and member feedback is a crucial component of this assessment.

Letters policy

MTA Today welcomes letters to the editor from MTA members. Letters should be no longer than 200 words. Each letter submitted for publication must address a topic covered in MTA Today, must be signed and must include the writer's telephone number for confirmation purposes. Opinions must be clearly identified as belonging to the letter-writer. We reserve the right to edit for length, clarity and style. To submit a letter, mail it to MTA Today, 20 Ashburton Place, 8th floor, Boston, MA 02108 or e-mail it to mtatodayletters@massteacher.org. For additional information, please refer to the guidelines posted on www.massteacher.org.

A call for more higher ed funding

Faculty, staff, students and administrators converge on Beacon Hill to lobby legislators

By Sarah Nathan

For the first time in at least recent memory, students, faculty, staff and administrators convened collectively at the State House to ask the Legislature for increased funding for the Commonwealth's public colleges and universities.

The joint lobbying effort took place on March 8.

State funding for public higher education has declined by approximately \$700 million — or 42 percent — since 2001, while enrollment figures continue to rise.

Participants in the Beacon Hill event urged legislators to support a 5 percent increase in the operating budgets for all 29 public higher education campuses and to include the collective bargaining reserves sought by the governor in House 2, his proposed state budget for the coming fiscal year. They also called on their representatives and senators to increase the scholarship account, which provides financial aid to students, by 5 percent.

"I'm here today because I work at a university and am the mother of three children and have seven grandchildren, and I am concerned about how much is being cut," said Dianne Kroll, a member of the Professional Staff Union at UMass Boston. "I'd like to support higher education for my grandchildren and for the future."

Kroll was one of an estimated 600 people who packed into Gardner Auditorium to kick off the Massachusetts Public Higher Education Advocacy Day before heading out to meet with legislators.

"We are here to welcome you to the people's house," said state Representative Tom Sannicandro (D-Ashland), earning a huge round of applause from the crowd. "This is your house. We are your state representatives, and we work for you. We want you to get out there today and tell your stories."

Sannicandro addressed the audience alongside Senator Richard Moore. Sannicandro and Moore (D-Uxbridge) are the co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Higher Education. Education Secretary Paul Reville, Higher Education Commissioner Richard Freeland, Board of Higher Education Chairman Charles Desmond, MTA

President Paul Toner and several students also spoke at the opening session.

UMass Amherst student Melanie Mulvey brought down the house when she talked about her own background and the opportunities that are ahead of her — thanks to her college education.

"I am a kid from Dorchester born to a 21-year-old single mother on welfare and I'm

Melanie Mulvey two months away from graduating," Mulvey said. "I've been able to achieve things that my mother



Hundreds of higher education supporters, above, packed into Gardner Auditorium on March 8 to call for more funding for public colleges and universities. Later, Bristol Community College staff members Kathy Burns, center, Ron Weisberger and Ellen Oliveira met with Democratic state Representative David Sullivan of Fall River, who is seated at left.

Photos by Sarah Nathan

could only dream of for herself. Now I'm poised to contribute to my community and my state in a meaningful way. Public education works."

The energy and excitement of the day were captured on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. Before the groups of students, MTA higher ed members and administrators headed out to meet with their own representatives and senators, Toner told the crowd that "it's time to start talking about revenues."

He also took the opportunity to thank the students for their efforts.

"Thank you for your support," said Toner, who earned a master's degree at UMass Boston. "We are

here for each other today. It's great to see faculty and students speaking in one voice in support of our public higher education institutions."

A video of the kickoff can be viewed on youtube.com/massteacher, and pictures are posted on flickr.com/mtacommunications. For information on higher ed funding, visit the activist toolkit at <http://massteacher.org/advocating/toolkits/highered.aspx>. If you missed the Massachusetts Public Higher Education Advocacy Day, you can still do your part by visiting <http://www.capwiz.com/nea/ma/issues/alert/?alertid=61076186> to send messages to legislators.



Melanie Mulvey

State's new evaluation system is promising and challenging

By Laura Barrett

If teachers and administrators in schools that are designated underperforming had to grade the state's new educator evaluation system, most would probably give it an "incomplete."

"The goal makes sense — to help all teachers improve and move to the proficient and exemplary categories," said Springfield Education Association President Tim Collins. "But something this massive takes time. My concern as this thing rolls out is that if we don't take the time to readjust and do it right, it could seriously hinder the new instrument's effectiveness."

Aliza Pluta, interim principal at Morgan Elementary School in Holyoke, one of the schools the state has categorized as Level 4, or underperforming, agreed.

"All in all, I think the new system is better," she said. "But it is difficult to do it all. Once I go through the whole process one time, I will be able to do it again."

"At this point," Pluta said in late March, "I don't see the endpoint. It is still not clear to me how all of this is supposed to work."

This year, the state's 34 Level 4 schools were required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to begin using most elements of the educator evaluation system required under state regulations adopted last June. They call for educator self-assessments, developing individual and team goals and collecting "artifacts" that demonstrate what the teacher has taught and the students have learned. The new rules have also meant revamping the system and rubrics for observations, with more frequent unannounced classroom visits required.

Much of the new process requires contractual changes, so new practices are being developed side-by-side with new language.

Most educators interviewed agreed that the system being rolled out is more thorough than the old one and holds out the promise of providing teachers with more feedback to help them improve their classroom strategies. Most,

'All in all, I think the new system is better. But it is difficult to do it all. Once I go through the whole process one time, I will be able to do it again.'

— Interim Principal Aliza Pluta



however, also expressed concern about the speedy implementation, which required certain changes locally before guidance was developed by the DESE.

Notably, the Level 4 schools were supposed to begin implementing major portions of the system starting in the fall, but it wasn't until halfway through the year that the DESE produced model rubrics. The MTA worked with the DESE on the revision of its initial rubrics so that the final products reflect the standards and indicators approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. In addition, the MTA worked with the department, and eventually the associations representing superintendents and school committee members, to craft model contract language for teachers. These groups are now working on model contract language for administrators.

Districts and locals are free to negotiate any changes they want, as long as they meet the regulatory requirements. But districts that do not adopt the DESE model must submit any revisions to the department to determine whether the changes comply with the regulatory requirements.

Starting next fall, all 232 Race to the Top districts will have to begin implementing the new system, and the following year all districts in the state will have to comply.

New components will also be phased in. By September 2013, all districts will have to begin to ensure that teacher and administrator evaluations incorporate the educators' impact on student learning outcomes based on multiple measures. Identifying and developing those measures will be one of the most challenging tasks of the entire new system.

The MTA, one of the DESE's approved vendors, was hired by the Holyoke Public Schools to provide extensive professional development in implementing the new evaluation

system in the district's two Level 4 schools: the Morgan, a K-8 school, and Dean Vocational Technical High School.

"As much as we're complaining about how difficult this is, I think we're in a better place than other districts that don't have the benefit of training from the MTA," said Pluta, who is in her first year as a school principal. Previously she was an ESL teacher and then an assistant principal.

All Morgan and Dean teachers and administrators completed a professional learning program at their own schools last winter. Now, the MTA is providing professional instruction to all administrators in the district, with a focus on how to conduct effective observations, provide feedback that is timely and constructive and rate performance using the Professional Practice rubrics.

Even before the training, though, Pluta was in and out of classrooms all the time, conducting as many as 48 walkthroughs a month. In addition, the Holyoke system calls for three to four unannounced observations of about 10 minutes for each teacher. Pluta has to evaluate 37 teachers, while the principal at Dean has even more.

Pluta said she thinks the frequent, brief observations are better than one long one since they show "trends over time," rather than a snapshot.

She said she loves going into the classrooms and has learned a lot about good teaching from observing others. To give her staff the benefit of that experience, she is planning to have all of its members participate in non-evaluative observations of other teachers in the school.

Morgan teachers interviewed by *MTA Today* said that the new evaluation system is just one of many changes they had to implement this year as part of their school's improvement plan.

Lorie Banks, an eighth-grade math

teacher, said that being named a Level 4 school is a mixed blessing.

"In some respects, being a Level 4 school is demoralizing," she said. "At the same time, we've come together in wonderful ways. It's a unifying thing for the school."

None of the teachers left when the school received its designation, and all are working hard to implement changes to boost their students' achievement.

For example, to help meet the goal of increasing parental involvement in their children's education, Banks invited the parents of her students to come to school for a math lesson.

"I wanted it to be a positive activity, not something they were coming in for because there was a problem with their child," she said.

Banks kept a sharp eye on her class even while being interviewed. She maintained focus with a few decisive words, sometimes peppering her comments with Spanish. A former ESL teacher, she has many strategies for making sure all of her students understand her lessons.

She experienced a very different kind of teaching after graduating from Boston University. Banks received a Fulbright Scholarship to teach in Versailles, a wealthy suburb of Paris. The challenges were different there, she said, but there were also some similarities because "kids are kids." She has been teaching in Holyoke for 19 years and has no plans to leave.

Banks and seventh-grade math teacher Chris Fontaine, a graduate of Holyoke High School and Westfield State College, agreed that one of the best aspects of the new evaluation system is the required "self-reflection." Both said they have always done a lot of self-reflection in any case, but that having to do it in a more formal way linked to team goals is helpful.

Fontaine is in a perpetual state of reflection and discussion about how to improve the school since he serves on the school's leadership, data and evaluation teams, in addition to volunteering to coach the middle school basketball team after school.

Morgan is building its program while speeding forward in other ways

Continued on next page



Student pride is evident in a mural on the wall of the Morgan Elementary School. Lorie Banks, immediate left, an eighth-grade math teacher, said that being named a Level 4 school is a mixed blessing. "In some respects, being a Level 4 school is demoralizing," she said. "At the same time, we've come together in wonderful ways. It's a unifying thing for the school."

Photos by Laura Barrett and Christine Peterson

Toner: 'Getting this right is a high priority for the MTA'

Continued from previous page
this year. It is in the process of becoming a full-service community school, which includes offering social services in the building. The school day is an hour longer, and many students participate in free after-school services, including a program called Connections that offers homework help and enrichment activities.

Jim Sullivan, acting president of the Holyoke Education Association, said that Morgan's Level 4 status is no reflection on the teachers. "They are an excellent staff," he said. "All the schools in Holyoke have trouble meeting the state's MCAS goals, like

high-poverty schools everywhere."

The Morgan is located near several abandoned warehouses in a low-slung brick building. Nearly all — 98 percent — of Morgan's 389 students are low-income, and nearly half — 43 percent — have limited English proficiency. Nine out of 10 are Hispanic. The transiency rate is high.

Sullivan said that absenteeism among students district-wide is high. He estimated that about 10 percent fail to meet the district's attendance requirement, which is not to miss more than 10 percent of the year, or 18 days. Figuring out whether or how to include achievement data for students who

miss a lot of school will be one of the thorny issues to be negotiated.

"We can't teach them if they aren't here," Sullivan said.

That concern notwithstanding, Banks and Fontaine said they have high expectations for their students.

Asked about being held accountable for her students' growth scores, Banks said, "I have no problem with that. I stand by my work." She has reason to be confident. According to DESE data, her students and Fontaine's have outstanding growth scores, meaning they performed better on their math MCAS tests than most other students with similar score histories. It is confusing to many teachers that their schools can be considered underperforming by one set of metrics even if the "student growth percentiles" — one measure by which teachers will be judged — are high.

Pluta said she is very proud of the Morgan staff and how hard everyone is working to improve student performance. "We have a very strong team," she said, adding that state officials will be disappointed if they expect that she is going to rate a lot of staff "unsatisfactory" or "needs improvement" under the new system.

Each district implementing the evaluation changes this year for Level 4 schools has had to cobble together a hybrid system, using old rubrics until new ones are developed and making certain changes provisionally while the contractual changes are being negotiated.

SEA President Collins said that in Springfield, the local and district have agreed they will sunset contractual changes implemented this year in order to reassess what is working and what isn't as the new system is implemented.

He is concerned that the DESE may be rushing the next phase.

"I expect that adding the student performance piece next year will

be a stretch," he said. "It is way too ambitious within the time frames we have been given."

According to an FAQ posted on the DESE website, the agency plans to issue guidance on the student performance measures in July.

"People are doing the best that they can at both the administrative and teacher end," said Collins. "We want to do this right. My concern is that if they try to rush this out and don't do it appropriately, confidence will be lost that the new system will be able to do the job we want it to do."

MTA President Paul Toner said that the MTA will press the DESE to make reasonable adjustments in the implementation schedule, if necessary.

"We believe the new system will help improve teaching and learning in our schools if it is done right," he said. "The point is not to create a 'gotcha' system, but a new way of looking at staff development that gives teachers and administrators feedback they need to do their jobs better. These changes have to be done thoughtfully if they are going to be effective."

Toner said the MTA professional development staff will be "training the trainers" to help members understand how the new system is supposed to work and that the field staff will help locals negotiate new contract language.

"Getting this right is a high priority for the MTA," he said.

"Massachusetts already has the highest performing students in the country, but we still have a significant achievement gap," Toner added. "Our hope is that this new system will help teachers help their students be even more successful. We are known nationwide for the quality of our schools. It makes sense for Massachusetts to be at the vanguard of building a better evaluation system. We very much want to be part of that development so that the voice of teachers is heard every step of the way."

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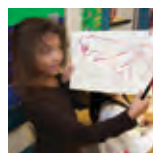
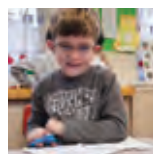
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Making a difference for students

Teamwork and helping children are key themes at MTA ESP Conference

By Meg Secatore
and Sarah Nathan

The money isn't great, and lately it seems that education support professionals must fight even harder for pay and benefits. So what attracts them to the profession?

The answer to that question — raised at the recent MTA ESP Conference by NEA Vice President Lily Eskelsen — is that it provides ESPs with the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of students.

That finding was evident in a recent NEA survey and was affirmed by the nearly 375 ESPs who were in Hyannis to hear Eskelsen's keynote speech at the conference, which was held March 30-31.

Eskelsen told the audience that she began her own professional journey at age 18 as Lily the Lunch Lady. ("The salad girl — not up to hot foods yet!") She later worked as a kindergarten aide.

"There are no insignificant positions that touch the life of a child, and there are no insignificant members of this union," Eskelsen said. "We are a team. We are a team in that school building and we have to be a team in this union."

Teamwork was also the theme of remarks by MTA President Paul Toner and Vice President Timothy Sullivan, who preceded Eskelsen at the podium.

Toner said the MTA faces many challenges in the coming months, including defeating the Stand for Children ballot question; passing bills on Beacon Hill that call for studying funding and providing adequate resources for public education, as well as allowing union representation of early childhood educators; and helping to ensure the election of Democrat Elizabeth Warren to the U.S. Senate.

Sullivan noted that none of this can be accomplished without collective effort.

"I became involved because someone asked," he told the ESPs. "Now, I ask you to ask someone to get involved in your local."

Eskelsen offered this thought on the same theme: "People with a lot more money, bigger corner offices and impressive titles will listen to us only because we have come together. They don't always agree with us, but they want to know where we stand. They will listen to us because we have the power to let our friends and neighbors in our circle of influence know what we know. We make the difference in an election. We have the power to tell our own members the truth."

Throughout the conference, numerous high-quality professional workshops were presented. Prizes provided by MTA Benefits were raffled off at key moments.

As at ESP conferences past, a highlight was the recognition of the MTA ESP of the Year. This year's honoree is Lorraine Niccoli, a paraprofessional educator and president of the



Above, ESP of the Year Lorraine Niccoli shares a happy moment with her husband, Fred, during the MTA ESP Conference. At left, participants view a display during a workshop titled "Putting Locally Grown Food within a Hand's Reach of Every Student." NEA Vice President Lily Eskelsen, below, provided a keynote address and a song during the Friday evening dinner.

Photos by Meg Secatore and Sarah Nathan



Brockton Paraprofessionals Association. The award was presented by Donna Johnson, MTA's at-large director to represent ESPs, during the closing lunch on Saturday.

"Lorraine works closely with MTA and is a leader who understands the value of engaging her membership," Johnson said. "Lorraine does not look at contract negotiations or grievance processing as her only union duties. In fact, Lorraine has built strong relationships within her local, has worked tirelessly for the rights of her members and always seeks to increase the power of her members through their engagement and involvement. She is an authentic leader and a marvelous example of how leaders can make a difference."

Niccoli recounted her first few months as a library paraprofessional at the Winthrop School in Brockton.

"The positive influence I had over these children was a power greater than anything I had ever experienced in my life," she said. "My work was truly becoming my passion, and I knew almost immediately that developing my own skills would

be essential. MTA would play a big role in my developing the skills I needed to be better in my career."

Niccoli also gave a shout-out to Toner for his support and encouragement and one to Sullivan, who previously served as president of the Brockton Education Association, which represents the city's teachers.

"Tim always kept me informed of any important issues and concerns involving the Brockton Education Association that could potentially impact the paraprofessionals as well," Niccoli said. "We worked together as a team — and that doesn't always happen in many communities."

"There isn't an ESP sitting before me today who isn't deserving of this award," she continued. "You chose to be here for a reason, and I know it wasn't to sit here and listen to me. That reason is to be better-educated ESPs so that we can be better at our careers."

For more photographs of the ESP Conference, please visit flickr.com/mtacommunications.

New requirements focus on teachers of ELL students

By Laura Barrett

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is scheduled to vote May 22 on new regulations governing requirements for teachers of English language learners.

If approved, these regulations will require tens of thousands of teachers in certain “core academic subjects” to participate in significant new professional development over the next few years that is designed to improve how they teach ELL students.

The state will also change course requirements for pre-service teachers and will require teachers who don’t fall under the “core academic subjects” requirement to receive 15 professional development points in ELL instruction and another 15 in special needs instruction in order to renew their licenses after July 1, 2014.

The plan is a response to a finding by the U.S. Department of Justice that Massachusetts educators have inadequate training in how to teach ELL students under the state’s

Sheltered English Immersion law. The SEI law was passed by the voters in 2002 and was called the “Unz” petition after Ron Unz, the main proponent. This law ended most bilingual education programs in the state and requires districts to place most ELL students in regular classrooms within one year.

As a result of the Unz law and the growth in the number of ELL students, many teachers who have received little or no instruction in how to teach these children now have them in their classrooms.

The DESE has previously offered SEI teachers “category” training in how to teach ELL students. Last summer, the Department of Justice found significant shortcomings in the training and determined that the civil rights of ELL students were being violated.

In response, the DESE has created this new initiative, which is dubbed RETELL, for Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners. Under this proposed initiative, teachers of core academic

subjects will have to participate in PD that may be equivalent to a three-credit graduate course, or 67.5 PDPs, in order to receive an SEI endorsement. The training will be rolled out to different cohorts of teachers starting in September 2012 and continuing through June 2016.

After June 1, 2016, no district will be allowed to assign ELL students to a teacher who does not have an SEI endorsement.

Targeted first will be teachers in districts with a high number of ELL students and low test scores.

For purposes of the SEI endorsement, the core academic subjects are defined as Civics and Government, Early Childhood, Economics, Elementary, English, History and Geography, Language Arts, Mathematics, Reading, Science, and SPED — Moderate and Severe Disabilities.

Among the many questions raised by the MTA and its members are:

■ Will the professional development be provided free by the state?

■ Will teachers who took part in category training receive credit?

■ Will the PD be offered at times and locations that are accessible to all teachers subject to the new requirements?

■ Will the DESE change current requirements so that all of the PDPs required under these new regulations can count toward the 150 PDPs that teachers already must get every five years in order to renew their licenses?

The MTA is advocating for changes in the proposed regulations, including extending the deadline by two years, counting “category training” toward the requirement and allowing teachers to use all SEI training PDPs to meet license renewal mandates.

Further information about the requirements is available on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/>. Testimony submitted by the MTA is posted on the MTA website, www.massteacher.org.

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GLBT ISSUES COMMITTEE is recruiting marchers



The members of the MTA’s Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Issues Committee are actively recruiting fellow educators and supporters to march with them in the Boston Gay Pride Parade on Saturday, June 9.

The parade steps off at noon in the South End of Boston. MTA members will gather between 11 and 11:30 a.m. near the starting line on Tremont Street. Check the association website, www.massteacher.org, as the parade date draws near for specific information about a meeting location.

For more information, please contact MTA GLBT Issues Committee Chairwoman Bernadette Marso at 508.753.8359 or by e-mail at Bmarso@charter.net.

Education survey's participation rate tops 50 percent

Just over half of the state's 84,000 teachers and administrators — 42,331, to be precise — took a state-administered survey on teaching, learning and leading conditions in their schools.

Schools in which more than 50 percent took the survey will receive the results.

TELL Mass — the Teaching, Empowering, Learning and Leading Massachusetts survey — was commissioned by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as part of the state's federal Race to the Top grant. It was developed by the New Teacher Center, which is the same organization the MTA commissioned to create a similar survey in 2008 called MassTELLS.

The goal of TELL Mass was to provide teachers and administrators with a chance to anonymously offer their views about the conditions in their schools. Subjects included educator perceptions on curriculum alignment, class size, the availability of technology, parental involvement, the quality of professional development and whether there is an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust in the school.

Teachers and administrators who receive the results are expected to use them to reflect on what is working well and what can be improved in their schools. A number of schools and districts made changes in practices and policies as a result of the 2008 survey, and it is hoped that even more will do so after this round, now that they are familiar with the process.

Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester asked all schools to participate and informed district leaders that participation was mandatory in Race to the Top districts. When some school leaders failed to distribute the pass-codes that educators needed to take the survey, the MTA successfully lobbied the DESE to change its policy and allow teachers to directly request codes for all of the teachers in the school. In the end, the participation rate was about the same as the one in 2008.

Lawmakers grapple with budget decisions

By Sarah Nathan

Key decisions about funding for public schools and the Commonwealth's public higher education system will be made in the weeks ahead.

As *MTA Today* went to press, the House of Representatives was debating the fate of a \$32.3 million spending plan for fiscal 2012-2013 that had been prepared by the chamber's Ways and Means Committee. The committee's budget, released on April 11, included \$4.15 billion for K-12 education and \$1 billion for public higher education.

Like Governor Deval Patrick, who released his budget proposal earlier in the year, the Ways and Means Committee called for additional funding for Chapter 70 state aid for K-12 education and for public higher education.

The budget proposed by the Ways and Means Committee for the new fiscal year, which begins July 1, sought about a 4 percent increase in state aid for public schools and a 5.7 percent increase in funding for public colleges

and universities. Most of the increase for public higher education, \$49 million, was designated for collective bargaining reserves.

Reduced revenues and the fallout from the nationwide recession continue to present challenges for elected leaders making decisions about what to cut and what to fund.

In recent years, the state's public colleges and universities have faced drastic funding cuts. In concert with the MTA's Higher Education Leadership Council, MTA leaders and lobbyists were actively pursuing amendments to the Ways and Means budget to increase both state aid for public higher education and scholarships for students by 5 percent.

The MTA is also backing efforts to give faculty and staff a seat at the table and a strong voice in decisions about the mission and future of all 15 community colleges in the state.

Despite a recent setback in the Legislature, the MTA also continues to pursue alternative ways to get a full and complete adequacy study of the Chapter 70 education funding

formula. In March, the members of the Joint Committee on Education sent legislation supported by the MTA and a long list of other education organizations to a study committee for the remainder of this legislative session.

Meanwhile, the MTA is still working to further legislation that would pave the way for a non-traditional union for early education teachers and staff working at centers serving some of the neediest children in Massachusetts. Efforts are focused on advancing House Bill 1671: *An Act to Improve Quality in Early Education Care Centers*; that measure was sent to a study committee by the members of the Joint Committee on Public Service.

The House was expected to decide on its final budget plan by the end of April. Following House action, the Senate will consider its spending proposal. The governor, House and Senate have until June 30 to reach an agreement on the state budget.

For updated information on the state budget and the MTA's legislative priorities, please visit www.massteacher.org.

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'Unconference' offers unique learning experience

By Meg Secatore

There will be no keynote speaker, no plenary session. No requests for proposals and no poster presentations. Workbooks and handouts? No and no. There will *not* be a schedule of workshops.

But when educators gather for the "Unconference" at the MTA's Summer Conference in Williamstown, organizers promise a unique professional development experience. Based on the popular EdCamp model, MTA's Unconference will take place on Tuesday, Aug. 7.

Participants will gather in the morning to brainstorm over topics for the day and to build a schedule based on shared interests. (Picture a bulletin board with a timeslot grid and lots of sticky note ideas.)

If you choose a session that does not meet your needs, the EdCamp philosophy says it's OK to leave and look for another conversation. People used to "sit and git" professional development may need to make some adjustments, said Dan Callahan, an



Photo by Meg Secatore

Diana Marcus, left, Laura D'Elia and Dan Callahan of the Burlington Educators Association are coordinating MTA's first Unconference.

instructional technology specialist at Burlington's Pine Glen Elementary School and a member of a group of Philadelphia educators who came up with the EdCamp idea in 2010. From that seed, 21 EdCamps sprouted in 2011.

By May 2012, 102 will have been held, according to the newly formed EdCamp Foundation, which Callahan chairs. The movement is now

international, with EdCamps held or planned for Santiago, Dubai, Hong Kong, Stockholm and many other U.S. and global locations.

At EdCamp, you need to step up and take charge, Callahan explained. It's an empowering experience for the educators formerly known as the PD audience.

"I'm really proud that EdCamp is some people's first experience

presenting at a conference," he said.

"Even after a decade in education, I know I still have a lot of room to grow as a teacher," Callahan wrote in a recent blog post. "The unfortunate reality, though, is that most of the state- or district-provided professional development has been woefully inadequate at actually helping me to improve my practice. I know better than most what I need to work on and the things I need to learn about. I don't think it's too much to demand opportunities for the kind of professional development that will actually lead to that."

"EdCamp is organized," said Laura D'Elia, librarian at Pine Glen and a coordinator of the MTA Unconference as well as EdCamp Boston. "It's organized around your passion! Keeping that alive is important to your career. We're about what you're about."

"I think the biggest difference with an unconference is that people are there voluntarily," said Diana Marcus, a fifth-grade teacher at Pine Glen, president of the Burlington local and the third member of the MTA Unconference coordinating team.

She likens the unconference experience to those unscheduled and unscripted moments that occur whenever educators get together — the deep conversations and networking that often add up to the best takeaway from a traditional conference or professional development day.

"It's an opportunity to share ideas, trade experiences and delve into a subject that really interests you," Marcus said. "The connections you make with people who have similar interests are one of the most valuable assets of going to an unconference."

As chairman of the EdCamp Foundation Board, Callahan spends a lot of time on the road visiting new programs. New organizers will sometimes ask him if he'd like to speak and maybe officially open the event. But he stays true to the EdCamp philosophy and tells them: "This is *your* EdCamp and we're all equals here."

The Unconference will be offered as a full- or half-day option during MTA's Summer Conference and is open to any conference registrant from any level of education. Watch <http://massteacher.org/summer> beginning May 4 for further developments.

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Photos by Bob Duffy



Leaders are readers!

Millions of adults and students throughout the nation celebrated their love of books on Read Across America Day. The event, sponsored by the NEA, was held on March 2 and commemorated what would have been the 108th birthday of children's author Theodor Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss. Above, MTA President Paul Toner reads *The Lorax* to a first-grade class at the Andrew Peabody School in Cambridge that includes his son, Jack. At right, MTA Vice President Timothy Sullivan takes the "Reader's Oath" with students at the Frederick C. Murphy Primary School in Weymouth.

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NEA president calls for collaborative approach

By Sarah Nathan

Collaboration is vital to addressing the challenges facing our public schools, NEA President Dennis Van Roekel told the crowd during a recent appearance at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Silver bullets and one-size-fits-all solutions don't exist, Van Roekel said, but teachers, administrators, parents and others can all sit down together in their communities and figure out what is working and what is not as they design effective systems for the students in their schools.

Change, he told the Harvard audience on April 3, is absolutely necessary.

"We have to set aside petty differences and battles and work together to find ways to give our kids what they need," he said. "We have to decide together what we believe are the two or three most important things to change what is happening to kids. If we don't do that, we are not living up to our responsibility as a union."



Photo by Sarah Nathan

"The status quo is not acceptable," NEA President Dennis Van Roekel told a crowd at the Harvard Graduate School of Education on April 3.

He suggested that union leaders start by seeking out common ground with other education stakeholders. If administrators or school committee members are not responsive to the

union's initial ideas, he advised, don't give up.

"Work your way down the ladder" until you can find a mutual starting point, Van Roekel said.

He challenged those critical of unions to offer up substitute plans for resolving issues.

"I don't believe that those who think that collective bargaining doesn't work have a better alternative," Van Roekel said. "Collective bargaining is a way to resolve differences. It doesn't mean that it always goes well, but it is a process that allows two sides to sit down and talk.

"We have a responsibility to change the system," he added. "The status quo is not acceptable, and we cannot remain where we are as a nation. If we only play defensively and aim to stop all the bad ideas, we'll stay where we are.

"That's not a choice," he added. "We need to figure out a different way to help our kids."

Van Roekel said he encourages union leaders to reach out to different groups in a new way.

"We need to view partnerships differently than we have in the past," Van Roekel said. "If we only talk to the people we agree with ... it is a very small world."

Special election is set to fill two CRC vacancies

A special interim election is being held for two seats on the MTA Candidate Recommendation Committee.

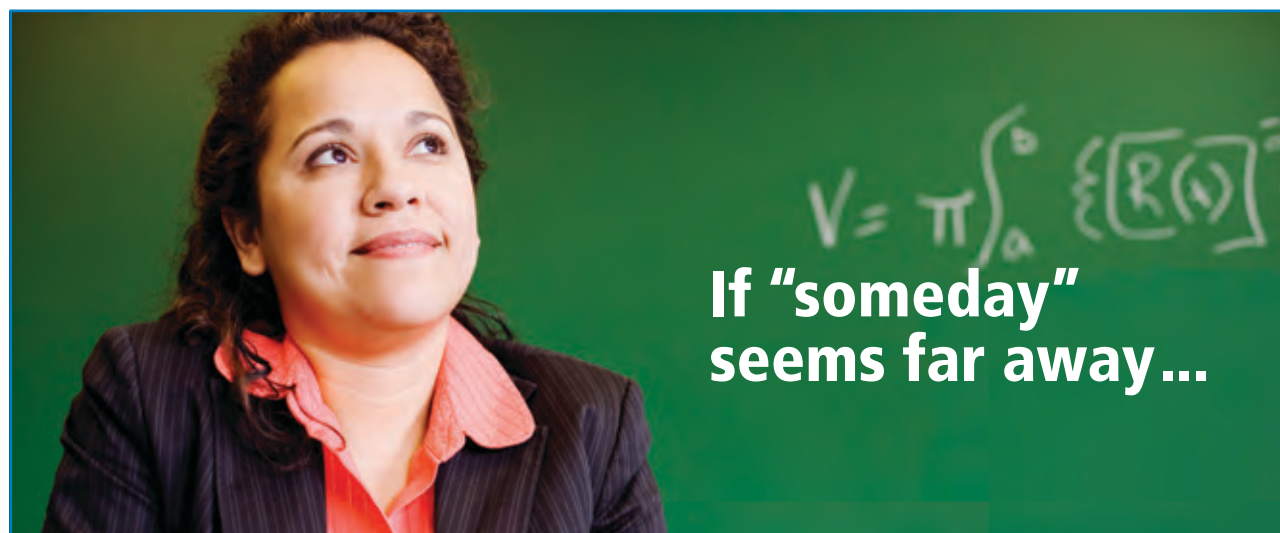
Vacancies have been declared in the new Congressional District 3 and the new Congressional District 4.

The committee is responsible for the recommendation of candidates for state and federal office.

The election procedure provides that vacancies that occur in the period between regular election cycles may be filled by votes of the current committee members.

The terms of the two interim members who are chosen will commence immediately upon election and end on March 14, 2015. Anyone seeking a seat must live in the district to be represented.

Eligible members interested in running should contact Diane Foley of the MTA Division of Governance by calling 617.878.8217 or e-mailing dfoley@massteacher.org to request a nomination form/bio-statement grid. The form and statement of not more than 100 words must be received by June 1.



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Higher ed units reach agreements

By Sarah Nathan

New two-year contract deals with periodic pay increases have been successfully negotiated for all MTA higher education members.

The majority of the agreements will go into effect on July 1.

Most of the contracts, bargained by MTA higher ed leaders and staff with employer representatives from the UMass Board of Trustees and the state Board of Higher Education, were finalized in recent weeks and have been overwhelmingly ratified by their members.

The latest round of bargaining was done on a relatively short timetable. The agreements now await funding through the legislative process.

The contracts reached by MTA unions representing faculty, librarians and professional staff include 1.75 percent increases as of July 1 and three subsequent 1.75 percent increases.

The new agreements for MTA members represented by classified

'In these difficult economic times, knowing that we will receive periodic pay increases for the next two years is a good thing. We can now turn our attention to other higher education policies.'

— HELC Chairman and MCCC President Joseph LeBlanc

units, whose members earn step increases, include 1.5 percent increases as of July 1 and three subsequent 1.5 percent increases.

Two MTA unions, the Association of Professional Administrators and the Massachusetts Community College Council, are on different contract cycles than the other units. APA and MCCC members will both receive the same initial 1.75 percent pay increases and three subsequent 1.75 percent raises over two years. The contract for APA members will go into effect retroactively, since the current agreement expired on Dec. 31.

The MCCC contract is scheduled to begin on July 1, 2013, when the agreement currently in place expires.

With negotiations completed, Joseph LeBlanc, chairman of the

MTA's Higher Education Leadership Council and president of the MCCC, said he welcomed the chance to work on other issues of importance to MTA faculty and staff members.

"In these difficult economic times, knowing that we will receive periodic pay increases for the next two years is a good thing," LeBlanc said. "We can now turn our attention to other higher education policies. We have a range of issues that I hope we can focus on instead of going from crisis to crisis."

When asked about the legislative process, which has been long and drawn out in past years, LeBlanc said, "We have every indication that our elected leaders will support our contracts."

"The Legislature is in a challenging position, given that some cuts are still

required to close the budget gap," LeBlanc added. "MTA lobbyists and leadership will work diligently to attempt to secure funding of these contracts before the end of the legislative session."

In addition to the APA and the MCCC, the units affected by the contracts include the Classified Staff Union at UMass Boston, the Classified and Technical Union at UMass Lowell, the Massachusetts State College Association, the Massachusetts Society of Professors and Faculty Staff Union at UMass Amherst and UMass Boston, the Massachusetts Society of Professors at UMass Lowell, the Maintenance and Trades Union at UMass Lowell, the Professional Staff Union at UMass Amherst and UMass Boston and the University Staff Association at UMass Amherst.

Another higher ed unit, the Grant and Contract Funded Employees Association at UMass Lowell, is expected to settle its contract shortly on similar terms, though without the need for state funding.

Liston named to retirement board

MTA Retired member Richard Liston has been selected to fill a vacancy on the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement Board.

Liston was chosen for a four-year term on a vote by the six other members.

He has been an MTA and NEA activist throughout his 40-year career as a special education teacher in the Everett Public Schools, where his wife, Cheryl, was also a special education teacher.

Liston worked tirelessly for 27 years as the president of the Everett Teachers Association. He currently represents MTA Retired members on the MTA Board and is the co-chair of the MTA Retired Members Committee; he has also served on the MTA Executive Committee. At the national level, he was an NEA director for six years and was on the NEA's Resolutions Committee for 12 years.

"I have always had a strong commitment to both quality public education for all students and to all educators who work in our public

schools," Liston said. "I view the opportunity to serve on the MTRB very seriously and look forward to working with all MTRB members."

Liston joins fellow MTA members Karen Mitchell and Dennis Naughton and former MTA President Anne Wass on the MTRB. The board administers the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement

System and is composed of seven members. Members vote on every disability retirement allowance, investigate all claims for accidental and ordinary disabilities, establish

rules and regulations and oversee the dissemination of services and information to more than 88,000 active educators and 55,000 retirees and survivors.



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Stand adopts bare-knuckled tactics

Continued from Page 3

Stand came to Massachusetts in 2003 as a grassroots organization mainly focused on school funding. The MTA worked with Stand in the early years and encouraged members to do the same. Since then, Stand has changed its focus and tactics.

Donations from corporate foundations and wealthy executives may be responsible for some of the shift. Major donors include executives from Bain Capital, where Mitt Romney was a partner, and the Walton Family Foundation, established by the notoriously anti-union founders of Walmart.

"It is simply wrong that corporate executives who have little or no experience working in our public schools have so much power over education policy, leaving teachers, administrators and school committee members out of the discussion," said Toner.

Stand's new bare-knuckled practices and anti-union attitude were disclosed in a frank videotaped talk

'Public education is not about bumper sticker slogans. It is about the hard work of going into classrooms every day and educating our students.'

— MTA President Paul Toner

given by national Stand Director Jonah Edelman at a conference last summer in which he claimed credit for pushing through legislation under which, among other changes, the length of the school day and year were no longer subject to collective bargaining in Chicago.

Edelman boasted in the talk, "And so essentially what we did in a very short period of time was shift the balance of power. And I can tell you there was a palpable sense of concern, if not shock, on the part of the teachers' unions in Illinois that (House) Speaker Michael Madigan had changed allegiance and that we had clear political capability to potentially jam this proposal down

their throats the same way pension reform had been jammed down their throats six months earlier." Although Edelman subsequently apologized for his comments, the organization has continued to shift its focus away from funding and toward promoting a raft of changes that affect teacher bargaining rights in the name of so-called reform.

Toner commented, "The MTA has proven again and again that teachers are not obstacles to change and genuine reform. But we are also clear that educators need to be the architects of reform, not the objects of it. Stand is trying to do its own brand of 'reform' to us, and that is deeply, deeply offensive.

"This ballot initiative is not about

'great teachers, great schools,'" Toner continued. "It's about Stand building a name for itself and raising even more money at the expense of a quality education for our students.

"The MTA stands for teachers who stand for students," Toner said. "Our members have devoted their professional lives to standing with students, parents and community groups for what is best for public education. Public education is not about bumper sticker slogans. It is about the hard work of going into classrooms every day and educating our students.

"Please join in the effort to defeat this ballot petition," he concluded, urging members and others throughout the state to understand what is at stake and act accordingly.

For materials and more information on the Stand initiative — including fact sheets, court documents and a video of Edelman's remarks concerning unions — please visit www.massteacher.org/stand.

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Topics: Altered Books: Recycle, Reuse, Recreate (ART 7112)..... M-F, 7/30-8/3

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Topics: Developing Math Materials to Differentiate Instruction (EDUC 7201)..... M-F, 7/9-19
Topics: Developing Interdisciplinary Math Learning Centers (EDUC 7202)..... M-F, 7/9-19
Building Reading/Writing in Content Areas (ENGL 8076)..... M-F, 7/9-20
Topics: Architectural Drawing for Technology Education (ITEC 8013)..... M-Th, 7/16-26
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	June 26	Jacqueline Davies Author/Illustrator <i>Lemonade Mystery Series</i> <i>The Boy Who Drew Birds</i> <i>Lost</i> Awards: Massachusetts Honor Book American Library Association Best Book List Junior Library Guild	June 28	Laura Numeroff Author <i>If You Give a Mouse a Cookie</i> <i>What Mommies Do Best</i> <i>The Jelly Beans</i> Awards: Milner Award Quill Award California Book Award California Young Reader
			June 29	TBA

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For example, you can take a train or drive to the seaside North Shore towns of Salem, Rockport, Gloucester and Newburyport, which feature compelling history, beautiful beaches, fresh seafood and seaside charm. You'll also find unexpected treasures, such as a house made out of paper in Rockport and a barn packed with antiques and kitsch located in Newburyport.

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EIA also provides no-obligation quotes to MTA members for insurance options for auto, home, boat, umbrella, identity theft coverage and more.

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MTA Retired activist now leads legislative team

By Jo Ann Fitzgerald

MTA Retired member Neil Clarke taught middle school math in Lee for 34 years before retiring. In addition to making sure his students had strong math skills, Clarke found the time to work for better working conditions and benefits for his colleagues, serving as president of his local association and in elected MTA positions.

As a retiree, Clarke continues to advocate for educators, students and others who live in the Commonwealth by serving as a district coordinator for the MTA Legislative and Political Action Team in the district represented by Senator Benjamin Downing, a Democrat.

The MTA has established LPATs in most state Senate districts and is working to create teams in the others. LPAT members are charged with educating, organizing and mobilizing MTA members and others around a pro-public-education agenda.

"LPAT members lobby legislators, map out action plans, communicate



'Taking the first step is always hard, but we will continue to reach out, one person at a time.'

— LPAT Coordinator Neil Clarke

with the MTA community about legislative issues that matter to educators and recruit other MTA members to become involved," Clarke said.

"Retired members are excellent members of LPATs because of their experience as educators and because of the flexibility in their schedules," he added.

PreK-12 and higher education members — including education support professionals, teachers, faculty and professional staff — join their retired colleagues on the teams. All work together to empower members, strengthen relationships with each other and with legislators and advocate for the MTA's legislative and political agenda.

"Elected officials and their appointees make decisions that impact teachers, faculty, staff and our communities," Clarke said. "It is important that we all make our voices heard."

Like others in his generation, Clarke is open to learning from all members, including those who have recently entered the profession.

"Every community and school district has its own culture and way of accomplishing things," he noted. "The LPATs work within those cultures to strengthen our relationships with our legislators."

As a coordinator, Clarke has had the opportunity to lobby on a variety of important issues. He has found that legislators are eager to hear from

constituents, and he has found the information provided by MTA to be invaluable in his efforts.

The teams were instrumental in the recent Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement Board Election.

"Getting the word out to our members about the importance of that election was extremely important," Clarke said. "The increase in those returning their ballots shows that if our members are contacted and know the issues, they will respond."

Clarke recently joined 73 other activists and Senate district coordinators at a training session where participants discussed building work-site communication structures, legislative issues and the importance of adequate state revenues. Currently there are about 700 member activists across the Commonwealth, and legislators have already met with 537 MTA members.

"There's a place for everyone in our LPAT structure," Clarke said. "Teamwork is crucial to our success. Taking the first step is always hard, but we will continue to reach out, one person at a time."

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A worldwide perspective on public education

By Kerry Costello

Building the Future through Quality Education was the theme of the sixth World Congress hosted by Education International in Cape Town, South Africa. And the 1,600 delegates all did their part to help make the goal a reality.

EI represents 30 million teachers and other education workers worldwide and holds its convention every four years. Delegates representing six continents were on hand for the congress in July.

The event was opened by South African President Jacob Zuma, who urged all present to strengthen their resolve to aggressively pursue a bright future for all children.

EI President Susan Hopgood reiterated the organization's commitment to securing resources in every country to provide a more balanced educational system worldwide. "EI will use our expertise to review recent developments in global education policy and debate best practices to recruit, prepare and support teachers and other education employees to deliver effective quality public education for all," Hopgood said.

The NEA sends the largest delegation, based on our membership. The NEA president appoints delegates and official observers who serve as alternates when needed. The MTA was represented in South Africa by me and four other members: Len Paolillo and Jim Rice of the Massachusetts State College Association, Gerry Ruane of Malden and Robert V. Travers, Jr., of Cambridge. What was most surprising to many new attendees was the structure of EI and how it conducts business, which is very different from the way things proceed at the NEA RA and the MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates.

The president of the delegation casts votes for a slate of officers, and all delegates support floor votes that are decided in advance of the business sessions.

Resolutions and bylaws are done by committee, although floor debate is allowed. New business — which is a favorite of NEA affiliates such as the MTA at our annual meetings — is not allowed to be brought forward to the floor by an individual and must be vetted for approval by a committee. Speaking for myself, I much prefer the



Standing up for public education at the EI Congress in South Africa are, from left, Len Paolillo of the Massachusetts State College Association, Gerry Ruane of Malden, Jim Rice of the MSCA, Kerry Costello of Andover and Robert V. Travers, Jr., of Cambridge.

democratic approach of our unions. The NEA played a prominent role in the congress in Cape Town. NEA Executive Director John Stocks gave a keynote address. His theme revolved around the threat to unions worldwide, and he used the attacks on collective bargaining in Wisconsin as his key example. The initial phase of that campaign "really opened my eyes

to the power of social networking," Stocks remarked. He then discussed *Education Votes*, which is NEA's multi-faceted campaign to aggressively fight such assaults. In addition, the delegates paid tribute to former NEA President Reg Weaver for his years of service to EI, and current NEA President Dennis Van Roekel was elected vice president.

Attending an international convention focused on education and union issues was an energizing experience. It also served to remind us that regardless of our battles at home, many of our colleagues across the globe experience dire conditions that we can barely imagine. The recipient of one award was forbidden to attend the congress by her government. I conversed with a delegate who had once been jailed because he was a teacher and therefore considered a subversive. Other delegates experienced denial of visas, and EI had to intervene on their behalf. The seventh EI World Congress will be held in Canada in 2015. Although an international destination even for us, it presents an affordable option to be an active participant in an international education experience. Members should not hesitate to explore this exciting opportunity. *Kerry Costello, president of the Andover Education Association, is also a member of the MTA Board. To obtain more information about EI, e-mail her at kcostello@aps1.net.*

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Senate candidate to address members

By Sarah Nathan

Senate candidate Elizabeth Warren will introduce herself to MTA members during the association's upcoming 167th Annual Meeting of Delegates.

Warren, a Democrat, has been endorsed by the NEA's Political Action Committee, The NEA Fund, based on the advice of the MTA's Candidate Recommendation Committee. She is seeking to unseat Republican Senator Scott Brown in what will be one of the most closely watched races this election season. Control of the U.S. Senate could be at stake.

"Elizabeth Warren has the right values and vision to stand up for educators and students in Congress," said MTA President Paul Toner. "She understands the issues facing teachers because she was one. Elizabeth Warren recognizes just how important good educators are to the future of our families, our communities and our country, and she will fight to create new opportunities for all of our students, from preschool to graduate school."

While most people know that Warren is a law professor at Harvard University, Toner said, few people know that before she went to law school she worked at a public elementary school in New Jersey teaching special needs students. Having a U.S. senator with a teaching background, Toner added, will be a huge benefit to teachers, education support professionals, higher education faculty and staff and others working in public education across the state.

"Education is at the core of investing in our future and building a strong middle class," Warren said on Feb. 9, the day the NEA Fund endorsed her candidacy. "For years, I have worked to level the playing field for middle-class families, and I will continue the fight to ensure both students and teachers have the tools they need to succeed here in Massachusetts."

The Annual Meeting will begin on Friday, May 11, and end on Saturday, May 12. It will be held at the Hynes Convention Center. Warren will address the delegates early on the meeting's second day.



Elizabeth Warren

'Elizabeth Warren has the right values and vision to stand up for educators and students in Congress.'

— MTA President Paul Toner

Also Saturday morning, Adam William Gray, a high school math teacher in Boston who was named the 2012 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, will receive an award.

MTA Friend of Education awards will be given to retiring U.S. Representatives John Olver and Barney Frank.

Olver, a former chemistry professor at UMass Amherst, will be recognized for his efforts on behalf of working families. During his 21-year career in Congress, Olver has fought to increase workers' rights and benefits, expand access to affordable health care and improve education and job training. Olver, who represents the First Congressional District, has fought for adequate funding for students and public schools. He also has advocated for cutting interest rates on college loans and increasing the amount of aid available through Pell Grants.

Frank, who has represented the Fourth Congressional District since 1981, has earned national attention for his work on the House Financial Services Committee and as an advocate for civil rights.

Massachusetts Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Joanne Goldstein will be presented with the MTA Friend of Labor Award. Goldstein, a former labor lawyer and chief of the attorney general's Fair Labor Division, oversees the Commonwealth's five labor and workforce



Adam William Gray



John Olver



Barney Frank

regulatory agencies, including the Department of Labor Relations.

The Annual Meeting will officially be called to order at 12:30 p.m. on May 11. The session will include new business items, a proposed resolution and a proposed bylaw change, as well as a keynote address titled "The National Political Landscape."

The speech, to be delivered by Joyce Powell, a member of the NEA Executive Committee and a special education teacher from New Jersey, is intended to give delegates a better understanding of the anti-education and anti-worker groups that currently exist in America. The request to provide MTA members with the information was outlined in a new business item passed at the 2011 Annual Meeting.

Also on Friday, leadership reports will be delivered by President Toner, Vice President Tim Sullivan and Executive Director-Treasurer Ann Clarke.

The Saturday business session will take up the proposed MTA budget for 2012-2013, as well as other subjects. The MTA Board of Directors, following recommendations by the Executive Committee and the Advisory Budget Committee, will propose annual dues of \$450 — a \$4 increase. Recommended dues for education support professionals are the following: For secretaries, clerks and custodians, they are \$255; and for aides, food service workers and others, they are \$128. The Board is also recommending a \$5 increase in the annual assessment for the Public Relations/Organizing Campaign budget, which would restore it from \$25 to its prior level of \$30.

This year, the MTA Human & Civil Rights Awards Dinner will not take place at the start of the Annual Meeting. Instead, it will take place on Friday, June 22, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Natick, on the eve of a meeting of the MTA Board of Directors.



Joanne Goldstein



Joyce Powell



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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

THURSDAY, MAY 10

2 – 4 p.m. Hynes Ballroom Pre-Function Area, 3rd Floor
MTAB Sponsors' Registration

2 – 4 p.m. Hynes Boylston Street Hallway, 3rd Floor
MTA Candidate Booth Registration

FRIDAY, MAY 11

8 – 9:30 a.m. Hynes Ballroom Pre-Function Area, 3rd Floor
MTAB Sponsors' Registration

8 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. Hynes Plaza Level, Main Lobby
Emergency Medical Technician

10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Hynes Rooms 304-306, 3rd Floor
Delegate and Non-Delegate Registration

10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Hynes Boylston Street Hallway, 3rd Floor
Retirement Consultations

10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Hynes Ballroom Pre-Function Area, 3rd Floor
MTAB Sponsors

10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Hynes Boylston Street Hallway, 3rd Floor
MTA Candidates' Booths

10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Hynes Boylston Street Hallway, 3rd Floor
Boston Concierge Service Desk

10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Hynes Rooms 301, 302, 303 and 305, 3rd Floor
Caucus Rooms

10 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. Hynes Boylston Street Hallway, 3rd Floor
Information Booth/Message Center

11 a.m. Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor
Business Session Doors Open

11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor (Bylaws and Rules Committee Table)
Final Deadline: Submit Proposed Amendments to the Standing Rules

Noon – 12:20 p.m. Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor
MTA Chorus

12:30 p.m. Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor
Business Session Convenes

4 p.m. on Sheraton Boston Hotel and Boston Park Plaza Hotel & Towers
Hotel Registration for Local Presidents

Prior to Recess Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor (Podium)
Friday Deadline: New Business Items without Budgetary Implications

Prior to Recess Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor (Podium)
Final Deadline: New Business Items with Budgetary Implications

Prior to Recess Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor (Resolutions Committee Table)
Final Deadline: Proposed Resolutions

6 p.m. (Approximately) Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor
Business Session Recesses

6 p.m. Sheraton Boston Hotel and Boston Park Plaza Hotel & Towers
Hotel Check-in for Delegates

6 – 7 p.m. Hynes Room 301, 3rd Floor
Resolutions Committee Meeting

6:15 – 7 p.m. Hynes Room 302, 3rd Floor
Candidate Speeches for Contested Seats: Retired Members Committee

6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Hynes Boylston Street Hallway, 3rd Floor
Dismantling of MTA Candidates' Booths

SATURDAY, MAY 12

8 a.m. Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor
Business Session Doors Open

8 – 11 a.m. Hynes Rooms 304-306, 3rd Floor
Delegate and Non-Delegate Registration

8 – 11 a.m. Hynes Room 311, 3rd Floor (Voting Area)
Election: Polls Open

8 – 11 a.m. Hynes Ballroom Pre-Function Area, 3rd Floor
MTAB Sponsors' Booths

8 a.m. – Noon Hynes Boylston Street Hallway, 3rd Floor
Information Booth/Message Center

8 a.m. – Noon Hynes Boylston Street Hallway, 3rd Floor
Boston Concierge Service Desk

8 a.m. – Adjournment Hynes Rooms 301, 302, 303 and 305, 3rd Floor
Caucus Rooms

8 a.m. – Adjournment Hynes Plaza Level, Main Lobby
Emergency Medical Technician

9 a.m. Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor
Business Session Reconvenes

9 – 9:30 a.m. Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor
Presentation of Awards

10 a.m. (Approximately) Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor (Podium)
Saturday Final Deadline: New Business Items without Budgetary Implications

10:55 a.m. Hynes Room 311, 3rd Floor (Voting Area)
Admittance/Briefing of Observers

11 a.m. Hynes Room 311, 3rd Floor (Voting Area)
Election: Polls Close

11 a.m. Sheraton Boston Hotel and Boston Park Plaza Hotel & Towers
Hotel Checkout

11 a.m. – Noon Hynes Room 311, 3rd Floor (Voting Area)
Election Tabulation

11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Hynes Ballroom Pre-Function Area, 3rd Floor
Dismantling of MTAB Sponsors' Booths

11:15 a.m. – Adjournment Hynes Boylston Street Hallway, 3rd Floor
Non-Delegate Registration

11:15 a.m. – Adjournment Hynes Boylston Street Hallway, 3rd Floor
Late Delegate Seating

12:15 p.m. (Approximately) Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor (Podium)
Election Results Announced

1 – 1:30 p.m. Hynes Room 311, 3rd Floor (Voting Area)
Runoff Election: Polls Reopen (if Necessary)

1:25 p.m. Hynes Room 311, 3rd Floor (Voting Area)
Admittance of Observers (if Necessary)

1:30 – 2 p.m. Hynes Room 311, 3rd Floor (Voting Area)
Runoff Election Tabulation (if Necessary)

2 p.m. Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor (Podium)
Runoff Election Results Announced (if Necessary)

3 p.m. (Approximately) Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor
Business Session Adjourns

BUSINESS SESSION AGENDA

FRIDAY, MAY 11

1. **Call to Order (12:30 p.m.)**
Paul Toner, President, Presiding
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
Tim Sullivan, Vice President
3. **"The Star-Spangled Banner"**
MTA Annual Meeting Chorus
4. **Moment of Remembrance**
5. **Announcements**
Paul Toner, President
6. **Adopt the Preliminary Credentials Report (Quorum)**
Maurice Bracken, Chair, Credentials and Ballot Committee
7. **Adopt the Order of Business**
8. **Act on Proposed Amendments to the MTA Standing Rules**
Gary Gilardi, Chair, Bylaws and Rules Committee
9. **Act on Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of May 13-14, 2011**
10. **Report on Certified Candidates**
Maurice Bracken, Chair, Credentials and Ballot Committee
11. **Act on a Proposed Amendment to the MTA Bylaws**
Gary Gilardi, Chair, Bylaws and Rules Committee
12. **Presentation of the Grant for the MTA Red Sox Reading Game**
13. **Video — "Year in Review"**
14. **MTA Leadership Reports**
 - a. *Paul Toner, President, and Tim Sullivan, Vice President*
 - b. *Ann Clarke, Executive Director-Treasurer*
15. **Greetings**
Tom Gosnell, President, AFT Massachusetts
16. **Act on Proposed Resolutions**
Diana Marcus, Chair, Resolutions Committee
17. **Keynote Address: "The National Political Landscape"**
Joyce Powell, NEA Executive Committee
18. **Act on Proposed New Business Items**
19. **Report and Video on the Public Relations/Organizing Campaign**
Tim Sullivan, Vice President and Co-Chair of the Public Relations/Organizing Campaign Committee
20. **Adopt the Supplemental Credentials Report**
Maurice Bracken, Chair, Credentials and Ballot Committee
21. **Statewide Candidate Speeches (if Necessary)**
22. **Recess**

SATURDAY, MAY 12

The Saturday Session Lasts through Adjournment with No Lunch Break

23. **Call to Order (9 a.m.)**
24. **Announcements**
Paul Toner, President
25. **Adopt the Supplemental Credentials Report**
Maurice Bracken, Chair, Credentials and Ballot Committee
26. **Presentation of the MTA Special Recognition for the Recipient of the 2012 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Award**
Adam William Gray, Boston Latin School
27. **Presentation of the 2012 MTA Friend of Education Awards**
Barney Frank, Member of Congress, Fourth District, Massachusetts, and John Olver, Member of Congress, First District, Massachusetts
28. **Presentation of the 2012 MTA Friend of Labor Award**
Joanne Goldstein, Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development
29. **Greetings**
Elizabeth Warren, MTA/NEA Recommended Candidate for the United States Senate
30. **Act on Proposed New Business Items with Budgetary Implications**
31. **Act on the Recommendations of the MTA Board of Directors on the Annual Budget in Two Parts from Which the Annual Dues Will Be Determined for FY 2012-2013**
Tim Sullivan, Vice President and Chair of the Advisory Budget Committee
 - a. Presentation and Discussion of the Recommended Operating Budget
 - b. Act on the Annual Operating Budget
 - c. Presentation and Discussion of the Public Relations/Organizing Campaign Budget
 - d. Act on the Proposed Public Relations/Organizing Campaign Budget
*Article IV, Section 1C of the MTA Bylaws:
"... The adoption of the budget will automatically determine the annual dues for active members rounded to the next higher dollar amount."*
32. **Video — "MTA/NEA Retired Membership"**
33. **Adopt the Results of the Election**
Maurice Bracken, Chair, Credentials and Ballot Committee
34. **Act on Additional Proposed Resolutions (if Necessary)**
Diana Marcus, Chair, Resolutions Committee
35. **Adopt the Results of Any Runoff Election (if Necessary)**
Maurice Bracken, Chair, Credentials and Ballot Committee
36. **Adopt the Final Credentials Report**
Maurice Bracken, Chair, Credentials and Ballot Committee
37. **Act on Proposed New Business Items without Budgetary Implications**
38. **Remarks by the President-Elect and the Vice President-Elect**
39. **Announcements and Points of Personal Privilege**
40. **VOTE Giveaway**
41. **Adjournment**

Election waiver

If the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of positions to be filled, elections may be waived and the candidates declared elected to the positions in question.

Toner runs for re-election as MTA President

My name is Paul Toner and I am a candidate for President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association. I am running for re-election as MTA President because I believe that I am the best and most prepared person to lead MTA through the highly challenging times that we continue to face as a profession, a union and a nation.

My years of experience as MTA President, MTA Vice President, an MTA Board member, local president in Cambridge, a middle school social studies teacher, a lawyer and a public school parent have prepared me to lead our state association. As MTA President, I have had the honor of working with our Vice President, Tim Sullivan. Together we have worked tirelessly with our Executive Committee, the MTA Board of Directors, local and chapter presidents, the MTA staff and other statewide unions and progressive organizations to protect well-earned rights at the local collective bargaining table, at the State House and in the media. We have fought hard to preserve what many of our veteran and retired members achieved over decades of union activism.

My vision of the MTA is as a union of professional educators serving two equally important functions.

First, as the largest labor union in the Commonwealth, we are a proud voice for workers' rights, collective bargaining, due process in the workplace, improved compensation and benefits, human rights and social justice. As a local president, I fought hard on behalf of teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, clerks and substitutes to protect their contractual rights and improve their salaries. I successfully chaired teams that negotiated 15 collective bargaining agreements and filed, presented and resolved hundreds of grievances. I truly understand the demanding nature of being a local or chapter president, and I thank those of you who hold these posts for all that you do on behalf of our members.

As MTA President, I have supported our members and our local leaders as you face the daily challenges of defending our members and our contracts. I have worked to maintain MTA's position as the leading labor organization in the state and to be a strong advocate for public education employees. I have stood in opposition whenever those in government have espoused policies that are detrimental to our rights. If, as some critics claim, teachers' unions and their contracts are the problem, why has Massachusetts — one of the most highly unionized states in the country — been number one in the nation on the National Assessment for Educational Progress in reading and math for four years running? Teachers' unions are not the problem; we have the solutions. And I will continue my efforts to assert our positions.



MTA President Paul Toner addresses a large crowd during a rally in support of workers' rights.

In addition to being a strong union and voice for the middle class, I believe the MTA must also be the voice of our profession and public education. Many others in the public arena claim to speak on behalf of public education and the best interests of our students and members. Those others may be self-proclaimed education experts, but we are the true experts. Our strength lies in that expertise and in our united voice.

We must all work together to make our collective voice heard over those of the think tanks, policymakers, politicians and media. Change in education is all around us, and we must position ourselves to lead the conversation for positive change in order to improve our schools and support our students. Where there are issues to be addressed, such as significant achievement gaps between our student populations, we must not shy away from these challenges. We must be the agent of positive changes to improve public education, and we must present our models of teacher-led change. Teachers' unions are not the problem; we have the solutions.

MTA and your locals have had some very tough battles over the past few years. In these challenging economic times, we have many more battles before us. More than ever, we must be vocal and proactive in promoting our agenda for advancing the interests of our students and our members. We must be the leading advocates for increasing revenues and resources for our schools, campuses and communities.

As President, my main priority will be to continue to work with each and every one of you to move our members to greater mobilization and collective action. I want to organize and mobilize members across the state around the issues they face daily in their classrooms and on their campuses. Those issues I've heard in discussions with leaders

and members from around the Commonwealth include:

- Promoting a positive public image of educators, our union and the profession.
- Developing partnerships with community groups that support public education and unions.
- Giving real teachers a voice in setting education policy.
- Protecting collective bargaining rights.
- Continuing to work for higher pay for ESP members.
- Fighting to increase revenues to support public education and public services.
- Reducing the reliance on part-time faculty on our college and university campuses.
- Making Massachusetts number one in state fiscal support for public higher education as a share of personal income, instead of number 48.
- Controlling spiraling healthcare costs while maintaining access to quality care.
- Repealing the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision.
- Increasing the cost-of-living allowance on state pensions.
- Maintaining a defined-benefit pension plan for our active members.
- Reducing special education paperwork.

These battles can only be won by collective action. As your MTA President, I am proud and honored to have had the opportunity to have led you for the past two years. I will welcome the opportunity to lead you in these important battles for the next two years.

We have a lot of work ahead of us. We need to continue the fight for our members and public education. I ask that you join me in this fight and give me your vote on Saturday, May 12, at the MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates.

Sullivan seeks second term as Vice President

My name is Timothy D. Sullivan and I am running for re-election to the office of Vice President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association. I am seeking re-election because of my passion for the fundamental values of unionism and professionalism and my commitment to preserving them. I have demonstrated this commitment during my tenure as your Vice President.

I believe that my association experiences at the state, county, local (Brockton), and national levels have prepared me well for the continued challenges that await the MTA and our students. In my current capacity as MTA Vice President, I serve as chairperson of the Advisory Budget Committee and as co-chair of the Public Relations/Organizing Campaign Committee. Both of these positions have afforded me an opportunity to work on issues that affect all of our members each and every day. My focus as a leader has always been, and will continue to be, on our members, who are the core reason for our existence.

Throughout my tenure as MTA Vice President, I have focused on our mission. The MTA mission statement reads, in part: "The MTA promotes the use of its members' collective power to advance their professional and economic interests." With MTA's emerging focus on our Strategic Action Plan and



Full Capacity Locals, now is the time to use our collective power to its fullest. We must meet head-on those who seek to diminish our voices and our profession.

We must harness our common expertise by continuing to put our own imprimatur on education reform, thereby sending a message to the political establishment that we insist that our collective voice be heard. After all, it is the practitioner — whether

he or she is an ESP, a teacher, an administrator, or a higher ed member — who should be the standard bearer of public education. I believe the MTA is at a critical point where we need to remain true to our core union values while continuing to remain open to the possibilities of collaboration that have the potential to change education policy for the good of our members and the students of the Commonwealth.

When I became your Vice President two years ago, I could not have imagined the significant challenges that the organization would face. I'm not sure anyone could have predicted that in "union-friendly" Massachusetts we would be confronted with changes to pensions, health care, teacher evaluation and seniority. Now, more than ever, is the time to use our collective power to defeat those who seek to harm us and to work with those who are truly interested in partnering with us for the betterment of our profession. As a result of our recent challenges, the MTA has emerged as a strong and rational voice for unionism, education reform and the profession.

On a personal note, my wife, Joyce, and I are public school graduates (K-12 and higher ed) and the proud parents of Timmy Jr., a fifth-grader in the Weymouth Public Schools.

I ask for your consideration and your vote.
Thank you!

Alternative nomination process is available under MTA Bylaws

Article VII, Section 2B(2), of the MTA Bylaws provides for an alternative nomination process for President and Vice President at the Annual Meeting of Delegates:

- a. Nomination papers may be obtained at the Annual Meeting from the Executive Director-Treasurer.
- b. Nomination papers must be signed by 200 of the registered delegates with the same limitations as described in Section 2B(1)b of the MTA Bylaws.
- c. Nomination papers must be filed with the Credentials and Ballot

Committee prior to the close of the first business session.

- d. The committee will certify that the nomination papers comply with the requirements in Sections 2B(1)b, 2B(2)b and 2B(2)c of the MTA Bylaws. Upon certification, the candidate's name will be placed on the ballot for the office sought.

A candidate who has not previously filed papers can obtain nomination papers from the Executive Director-Treasurer or his/her designee at the podium after the opening of the first business session of the Annual Meeting

of Delegates. The candidate(s) must then file the nomination papers with the chair of the Credentials and Ballot Committee through the podium assistant at the podium prior to the close of the Annual Meeting.

The Credentials and Ballot Committee will process the nomination papers for certification in accordance with the established procedure and will certify the papers if they are in compliance with the MTA Bylaws.

As the last item of business prior

to the close of the first business session, the chair of the Credentials and Ballot Committee will present a supplementary (amended) report of the committee by reading into the record the names of those who have requested nomination papers for President and/or Vice President.

The Credentials and Ballot Committee will ensure that the names of all certified candidates for President and/or Vice President will appear on the ballots. Sufficient space will be available on the ballots to allow for the names of certified additional candidates under the supervision of the committee.

Guidelines for caucuses, admittance, new business items and reaching delegates

Caucus Rooms will be available on May 11 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in Hynes Rooms 301, 302, 303 and 305 on the third floor. On May 12, these rooms will be available from 8 a.m. to the end of the Business Session. Sign-up sheets will be available at each room. Reservations must be made in advance for peak hours, which are Friday from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and Saturday from 8 to 9 a.m. For further information, contact Jill Luci at 617.878.8320 or jluci@massteacher.org.

New Business Items submitted to the President in the MTA Boston office by 5 p.m. on Monday, May 7, will be distributed to the delegates at registration and commence to be considered at the Friday session. New Business Items *with* budgetary implications should be submitted either by the Monday prior to the Annual Meeting (May 7) or no later than *prior to the conclusion of business* on Friday (May 11) at the Annual Meeting so that they may be acted upon prior to adoption of the annual budget and the dues for FY 2012-2013, which will occur Saturday morning. A new business item *with* budgetary implications is defined as any activity or action that would result in an additional expenditure of more than \$1,000 by the MTA. New Business Items *with*

budgetary implications will be considered in the order in which they are received but before other New Business Items *without* budgetary implications.

Other New Business Items without budgetary implications may be submitted during the meeting up to the *end of the first hour* on Saturday morning (by approximately 10 a.m. on May 12). These may be considered during the meeting in the order in which they are received. The cooperation of the delegates in observing these timelines is appreciated. For information, contact Mary Ann Alfond at 617.878.8213 or malfond@massteacher.org.

Messages for delegates who are hotel guests should be left with the Sheraton Boston Hotel at 617.236.2000 or Boston Park Plaza Hotel & Towers at 617.426.2000. The special line for use by families to contact delegates during Business Session hours *for medical emergencies only* is the Hynes Medical Emergency Line: 617.954.2111. *The Business Session doors in the Hynes Ballroom, which is on the third floor, will open at 11 a.m. on Friday and at 8 a.m. on Saturday. Admittance at all times requires a proper badge.*

Election waiver applies for director seats

MTA President Paul Toner and MTA Vice President Timothy Sullivan are running unopposed for re-election at the upcoming Annual Meeting of Delegates, and all candidates for the Board of Directors have been declared elected under the association's election waiver.

Toner and Sullivan are seeking two-year terms. Their candidate statements appear on pages 22 and 23 of this issue of *MTA Today*.

The election waiver in the MTA Bylaws provides that if there is only one candidate for an open Board position, the election will be waived and the candidate is declared elected. Terms on the Board last for three years and begin July 1.

The president and vice president take office on July 15.

The candidates declared elected because of the election waiver are as follows.

District 1A: Ginger Armstrong, Lee.

District 9B: Robert P. Becker, Wachusett Regional.

District 10B: Leonard Zalauskas, Worcester.

District 35C: Beverly Saccocia, Bridgewater-Raynham.

District 42C: Joan Dillon, Harwich.

District 14D: Rosemary Jebari, Framingham.

District 28D: Maryann Ziemba, Millis.

District 32D: Lynn Howard, Weymouth.

District 30E: David Cuzzi, Walpole.

District 23F: Maria P. Gray, Pentucket.

District 25F: Brendon Sullivan, Saugus.

District 19G: Christine Colbath-Hess, Cambridge.

District 44H: Candace Shivers, MCCC.

District 46H: Dan Clawson, MSP-Amherst.

At-Large Director to Represent Ethnic-Minority

Membership: Susan Douglass Baker, Falmouth.

There are no candidates in Districts 7B and 47H.

Note: Candidates who supplied photos are pictured with this article. The biographical statements of Board candidates who supplied them appear below and on page 25.

DISTRICT 1A
Ginger Armstrong
Lee

DISTRICT 9B
Robert P. Becker
Wachusett Regional

DISTRICT 10B
Leonard Zalauskas
Worcester

DISTRICT 35C
Beverly Saccocia
Bridgewater-Raynham

DISTRICT 23F
Maria P. Gray
Pentucket

DISTRICT 19G
Christine Colbath-Hess
Cambridge

DISTRICT 46H
Dan Clawson
MSP-Amherst

AT-LARGE
Susan Douglass Baker
Falmouth

Board candidates' biographical statements

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 1A

Ginger Armstrong, Lee

Essential to education is bringing professional voices to issues. I'm excited to represent District 1A on the Board. I have worked outside education, held teaching positions around Berkshire County, and been Treasurer and President in Lee. I live in West Stockbridge with my husband and have three children in college.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 9B

Robert P. Becker, Wachusett Regional

As a classroom teacher for 25 years and as an active member in my local association for much of that time, including being President, I feel that I have both the experience and the knowledge to continue to represent 9B. I would very much appreciate your consideration. Thank you.

Board candidates' biographical statements

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 35C

Beverly Saccocia, Bridgewater-Raynham

Board of Directors, 35C, MTA; liaison paraprofessional to BREA Executive Board member; Workplace Equity Committee — MTA; member, MTA statewide ESP Committee; co-chaired NEA RA State Contact Subcommittee, 2006-2010; Emerging Leaders' Program graduate — Williamstown; NEA RA mentor, 2007-2011; BREA building representative; member, Personnel Selection Committee — MTA

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 28D

Maryann Ziemba, Millis

I'm a sixth-year H.S. social studies teacher and my local's Vice President. I've served as building representative, participated in negotiations, attended Annual Meetings, advocated for union and public education legislation as a PAL, and presented at JFNT and summer conferences as an active member of the New Member Committee.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 32D

Lynn Howard, Weymouth

I am the head teacher at the Murphy School. I have been involved with many committees in my district and in the community. I feel that my experiences will help me to make the important decisions that the MTA Board of Directors must make. I would greatly appreciate your vote.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 30E

David Cuzzi, Walpole

I have been involved in the MTA for the past 13 years. During that time I have served as a building representative, secretary and, for the past two years, as the president of my local. Most recently I have been filling a vacated Board seat in District 30E.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 23F

Maria P. Gray, Pentucket

Given the many challenges facing today's educators, membership on the MTA Board of Directors is both a humbling and important opportunity. I look forward to collaborating with colleagues concerning current educational and legislative changes and initiatives, working on behalf of our members and serving my MTA district and region.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 19G

Christine Colbath-Hess, Cambridge

I have represented the CTA since 1999 and have been president since 2009. Attended Annual Meeting since 2006 and NEA RA since 2008. Active in NEA and MTA PD committees. I want to work with you to keep MTA a strong leader in our profession. I would appreciate your vote.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 44H

Candace Shivers, MCCC

My name is Candace Shivers, and I am asking for your vote for District Director. I am currently serving on committees on the local, statewide and national levels. Now I would like to serve you as District Director. Thank you in advance for your vote.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 46H

Dan Clawson, MSP-Amherst

For too long the MTA has been playing defense. We need to be pro-active in promoting our own vision, such as quality free public higher education. Our actions should always be bottom-up, relying primarily on rank-and-file educators.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AT-LARGE / ETHNIC MINORITY

Susan Douglass Baker, Falmouth

I am Susan Douglass Baker. I have served as your At-Large Director representing ethnic minorities for the past three years. I am asking for your vote to continue my work as a member of the Board. I strive to serve you. Please re-elect me to the Board. Thank you.

One new MTA resolution is recommended

MTA Resolutions are the association's statements of principle on issues relating to members, public education, the welfare of students and human and civil rights.

Resolutions may be submitted by any member to the Resolutions Committee by the second Friday in January.

They also may be submitted by the end of business on Friday at the Annual Meeting of Delegates. In addition, the committee may propose resolutions.

All resolutions submitted are considered by the committee, and those submitted by the January deadline are also brought before the Board of

Directors. To become an official position of the MTA, a resolution must be adopted by the delegates at the Annual Meeting.

New Resolution D-17, printed below, has been approved by the Resolutions Committee and unanimously supported by the Board of Directors.

D-17 Professional Development and Access to Information for Paraprofessionals

The Massachusetts Teachers Association recognizes that paraprofessionals play a critically important role in supporting the education of students in our public schools.

The MTA strongly supports paraprofessionals being provided with high-quality professional development to ensure that they have the knowledge, skills and ability they need to assist and educate the students who are assigned to them.

Furthermore, the MTA believes that paraprofessionals should be informed about the educational goals of their students and should receive all relevant information needed to help their students meet those goals.

For a copy of all current resolutions, go to the MTA website, www.massteacher.org, and search for "Resolutions."

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE MTA BYLAWS

PRESENT TEXT

PROPOSED NEW TEXT

Bold and Italic Portions Show Revisions

1. Proposal to Amend the Quorum Count

ARTICLE IX Delegate Meetings

Section 4. Quorum

The number of members to constitute a quorum of the delegates shall be one fifth (20 percent) of the total number of delegates entitled to be present.

ARTICLE IX Delegate Meetings

Section 4. Quorum

The number of delegates to constitute a quorum of the delegates shall be **350 delegates who are registered and attending.**

(Effective immediately upon adoption)

SUBMITTED BY:

Mary J. Gilmore, MTA Retired
Millie Ficarra, Weymouth Teachers Association

MTA BYLAWS AND RULES COMMITTEE:

Recommends Adoption (6-3)

MTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Recommends Adoption: (53-1)

IMPACT STATEMENT:

This amendment would change the quorum of the delegate assembly from one-fifth (20 percent) of the total number of delegates entitled to be present to a specified number (350) of delegates who are actually registered on site and attending. For the 2011 Annual Meeting of Delegates, the quorum count was 556 (20 percent of the 2,778 delegates entitled to be present).

This amendment would reduce the number of delegates required to have a quorum.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE MTA STANDING RULES

PRESENT TEXT

PROPOSED NEW TEXT

Bold and Italic Portions Show Revisions

1. Proposal Relative to Closing Debate

RULE 6 Order of Business and Debate

Section 12.

No Present Text

RULE 6 Order of Business and Debate

New Section 12.

No delegate speaking in debate may move the previous question.

(Renumber remaining sections)

SUBMITTED BY:

Mary J. Gilmore, MTA Retired
Kim Auger, Everett Teachers Association

MTA BYLAWS AND RULES COMMITTEE:

Recommends Adoption (9-0)

MTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Recommends Adoption: (54-0)

IMPACT STATEMENT:

In keeping with past practice, this amendment would prevent a delegate from moving to close debate while speaking to the motion on the floor.

Six candidates seek seats on Retired Members Committee

Four vacancies — two-year terms commencing July 1, 2012; numbers reflect ballot lottery order

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Gerard "Gerry" Ruane | 4. Stephen E. Gorrie |
| 2. Paul V. McLaughlin | 5. Gladys W. Durant |
| 3. Nancy Mickunas | 6. Francis J. Leary, Jr. |

We must continue to make our union stronger

Great unions are built on strong foundations. They are flexible, powerful and capable of pursuing ambitious goals — but as they move forward, they adhere to the firm principles that underlie true organizational integrity.

We have kept that understanding front and center throughout the year as we have worked to help all students succeed, close the achievement gap and support our communities in every possible way.

It is a perspective that has been the guiding force of our legislative, policy, political and communications

programs. Moreover, it has been at the core of our campaign under the Strategic Action Plan to continuously reinforce the underpinnings of the MTA, our locals and our chapters as we move forcefully toward a model that relies on organizing, member empowerment and broad participation while also continuing to provide first-rate services through every division.

Indeed, we sometimes feel as though we are fixing our airplane — I dare say reconstructing it — while flying over a body of water filled with sharks.

The good news is that our work is as exciting and worthwhile as it is challenging — and it is all dedicated to ensuring that tens of thousands of students have the best possible chance to succeed not only in our schools and on our campuses, but also in life. And it never hurts to point out, as we often do, that MTA educators are having a substantial impact in keeping Massachusetts public schools number one in the nation.

We need to take great pride in that, and we should all realize the many ways that our organization — composed of members, leaders and staff working together — has not only supported the interests of students and democracy, but helped create a brighter future for our state.

■ We have led the development of initiatives that will maintain and improve the quality of our schools, colleges and universities, including an innovative new educator evaluation system and a campaign to raise state revenues for education and other vital services.

■ During a phenomenally difficult economic period, we have united to negotiate the best possible contracts and to improve policies for the students in our schools and our higher education system; in addition, we are now seeking grants for progressive

efforts to improve the way locals and chapters bargain with education employers.

■ We have put together a multi-pronged approach to battle the Stand for Children ballot petition, which threatens our public schools in numerous ways.

■ We are running community organizing programs in the state's gateway communities.

■ We have lobbied constantly to gain or hold ground for members in working conditions, salaries, benefits and other areas that are vital to recruiting and retaining first-rate educators.

■ We have continued organizing early childhood employees.

■ We have begun or continued important projects across many disciplines, developing website toolkits on critical subjects, putting together model contract language, training members of Full Capacity Locals and naming a task force to examine distance and online learning.

■ We have held a highly successful series of regional presidents' meetings and all presidents' meetings, providing opportunities for the robust exchange of opinions, information sharing and training.

■ We have grown membership in our Legislative and Political Action Teams to about 700, conducted meeting after meeting with state representatives and senators and helped elect MTA activists to the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement Board.

■ We have helped shape public opinion and highlight members' accomplishments through newspaper and broadcast interviews, *MTA Today* stories, an expanded presence on social media, legislative testimony, sponsorships, advertising, advocacy days and rallies.

■ We have provided excellent and far-reaching legal services on behalf of members; in fact, I do not hesitate to say that our Supreme Judicial Court brief seeking to have the Stand initiative removed from the ballot is one of the best such filings I have ever seen.

■ As part of our aggressive move toward digital communications, we have launched an overhaul of the MTA website, which is beginning with an attractive new homepage that includes slideshows, videos, calendars and many other features, as well as up-to-the-minute news and an array of advocacy materials.

■ We have conducted top-notch conferences — drawing record crowds in some instances — to provide training for all types of members, including higher education faculty and staff, ethnic minority educators, new educators, education support professionals and retirees.

■ We have run another highly successful season of the MTA Red Sox Reading Game and continued other efforts to help students in ways large and small, including giving out funds through The Massachusetts Child charity.

It is a long list and an impressive one — and as someone who has dedicated her heart and soul to the MTA for more than three decades, I can look on it with satisfaction. Yet that feeling is mixed with impatience and the gnawing knowledge that those sharks I mentioned earlier continue to circle below us with every intent of destroying the safety net for children and families, public education at all levels, unions, decent health care for people who aren't wealthy, and many other things that have made the United States a great country. So now is a good time to turn toward what we have yet to achieve, as opposed to our many accomplishments in the months just passed.

Building, strategizing and restructuring all have a common purpose — one we must adhere to with energy, dedication and perseverance if we are to meet the towering challenge we face today as an organization and as individuals. In just the next few months, we will have to make gains as the legislative session draws to a close on Beacon Hill, fully engage in a political campaign that will in large measure determine our nation's future, fight a heightened media war, contend for adequate revenues for public education and other vital services, and deal with countless attacks and unforeseeable occurrences.

What will we do to win what we must?

■ First, I am counting on all who read this to think hard about what is at stake on Election Day. It is crucial that MTA members play a large role in re-electing President Barack Obama, supporting U.S. Senate candidate Elizabeth Warren and making sure pro-education candidates will be serving in the Massachusetts House and Senate as 2013 dawns.

■ The MTA must continue to organize, organize, organize. We recognize that our members are incredibly busy, but only through the continued strengthening of our union and our coalitions can we truly and fully represent the interests of our students — which is why we entered the education profession in the first place.

■ We need to ramp up our campaign to make our voices heard in every area. We will move forward with our Education Ambassadors project, and we expect to soon see the results of our collaboration with VIVA Teachers — the letters stand for Voice Ideas Vision Action — to improve education in urban communities.

■ We have to ensure that Massachusetts residents from Pittsfield to Provincetown understand that educators' working conditions are students' learning conditions and advocate accordingly. This calls for telling the education story, which is *our* story as it relates to the stories of the students we teach. It demands that we join our lobbyists in the State

Please turn to **We**/Page 28



Ann Clarke
Executive Director-Treasurer

We are more than equal to the challenges that face us

Continued from Page 27

House in seeking adequate resources and passing specific bills, participate in the Revenue Campaign, back up our bargaining teams, join MTA LPATs, push ahead with the Full Capacity Local program, enlighten our friends and neighbors about what is happening in public education, speak at public meetings, send e-mails and postcards and write letters and op-eds.

There is more, of course; the list could go on for pages and it still would not encompass every obstacle we face as we confront the ever-expanding array of right-wing ideologues, deceptive media mills and moneyed interests that together serve as a front for stealth attacks on families and students. But it all comes back to making sure the airplane we are building in mid-air can remain on course, fly

with intent and reach its destination with appropriate speed.

Horace Mann, the Commonwealth's first secretary of education, offered this thought way back in 1846: "Having no other mines to work, Massachusetts has mined into the human intellect; and, from its limitless resources, she has won more sustaining and enduring prosperity and happiness than if she had been founded on a stratification of silver and gold, reaching deeper down than geology has yet penetrated."

Mann's assertion holds as true now as it did then — and it remains a call to action for educators, parents, opinion leaders and everyone else in our state. It tells us as MTA members that to succeed on behalf of our students and help public education thrive, we must make sure we stand ready to address

long-term priorities even as we meet short-term goals.

That will happen if we support one another in all that we are doing and celebrate our noble purpose, which is to inspire every student at every possible turn. It will not come to pass unless we continue to build the MTA so that it speaks ever more powerfully for a great public education system that serves every child.

I, for one, believe we are more than equal to the challenge.

A longer version of the Annual Report of the Executive Director-Treasurer, including sections on the work of each MTA division and department, is included in the 2012 Delegate Handbook. The full report is also posted in the members' area of the MTA website.

MTA's Human & Civil Rights Awards Dinner

*Will Be Held on June 22
The Verve | Crowne Plaza | Natick*

Since 1983, MTA's Human Relations Committee has reviewed and selected nominees for the Annual Human & Civil Rights Awards.

The Human & Civil Rights Awards Dinner, attended by educators from across the state, honors MTA members and others who have put their lives, employment or professional careers on the line in defense of human and civil rights. Honoring those who dedicate themselves to equality for all has become a proud organizational tradition for MTA.

Online Registration:

www.massteacher.org/hcr

You can also use the form at right.

Deadline for event Registration is Friday, June 15.

Telephone reservations will NOT be accepted.

Human & Civil Rights Awards Dinner Reservation Form

Friday, June 22
The Verve | Crowne Plaza
Natick

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*John Hancock "Cost of Care Survey," conducted by CareScout 2008

Obituaries

Lillian Ahokas, 89, of Hyannis. Was an elementary teacher in Barnstable, retiring in 1984. March 4.

Claire R. Berthiaume, 86, of Shrewsbury. Taught in Northbridge and then in Framingham, where she was a department head for 20 years. Jan. 14.

Lawrence J. Boyle, 87, of Quincy. Taught in Stoughton, Hingham and at the Broadmeadows Junior High School in Quincy, retiring in 1986 after 36 years in the profession. Feb. 24.

Cynthia "Sissy" Cosmo, 71, of North Grafton. Was a kindergarten teacher in Worcester for 38 years and a curriculum specialist, spending her career at Union Hill School before retiring in 2000. Also was responsible for establishing alternative programs in Worcester. Feb. 15.

Robert F. Crowley, 74, of Groveland. Was a teacher and guidance counselor at Norwell Junior High School in Norwell. Jan. 10.

Barbara C. Cushing-Geary, 89, of Hingham. Taught in Rockland, Hingham and Braintree for many years. Feb. 12.

Harriet "Jimmie" M. Dowler, 96, of Springfield. Taught kindergarten and first grade in Westfield Public Schools and served as art director and a supervisor in the West Springfield Public Schools, retiring in 1972. March 6.

George W. Evans of Mattapoisett. Taught marketing, merchandising and salesmanship at Fairhaven High School. Feb. 29.

Claire Hatfield, 77, of Springfield. Taught Latin and English in Chicopee at both the elementary and high school levels for 30 years, retiring in 1995. Feb. 19.

Marilyn Higgins, 57, of Belchertown. Taught in the Belchertown schools for more than 25 years and coached for many seasons at Belchertown High School.

Noe O. Medeiros, 65, of New Bedford. Was a teacher at Ford Middle School in Acushnet until his retirement. Feb. 8.

Peter S. Sarno, 87, of Revere. Served as principal and football coach at the Paul Revere School and Revere High School. Jan. 8.

Dr. Charles R. "Chuck" Wilcox, 62, of Beverly. Taught at Salem State University and was employed by the Department of Mental Health. Feb. 20.

Good Reasons to Belong to MTA/NEA Retired

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The Massachusetts Teachers Association is your organization. It gets its strength from 110,000 MTA members and from its national affiliation with the National Education Association, which has more than 3 million members.

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The MTA Retired Members Committee meets throughout the year to provide a forum for retired members to address and pursue issues of concern. Eight MTA Retired members are elected to the MTA Retired Members Committee by the MTA Retired delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting.

In addition, MTA provides some financial support for MTA Retired delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting, the annual NEA Representative Assembly,

the NEA Retired Annual Meeting and the NEA Retired Regional Conference.

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COMMUNICATIONS

Receive information of special interest to retired members through *MTA Today*, *NEA Today*, the *MTA Reporter*, *This Active Life* and other publications. Receive timely updates by e-mail on matters relating to pension and retirement from both Beacon Hill and Capitol Hill as a member of the MTA Retired e-lert system. NEA and MTA maintain websites with valuable information for retired members: www.nea.org and www.massteacher.org.

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- MTA's Division of Governmental Services provides research on, and testimony for, maintaining and improving post-retirement benefits.
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The MTA conducts retirement consultations throughout the state to assist members. Proof of membership must be submitted when requesting retirement services. This schedule is in effect from September to June, except in the Boston office, which is staffed during the summer months and school vacations. In the event of inclement weather, it is advisable to call consultants in advance.

ASHBURNHAM — Robert Zbikowski: second Thursday of each month (walk in), 4 to 8 p.m., Overlook Middle School library, front entrance, 10 Oakmont Dr., Ashburnham; 978.827.1425, or at home, 978.297.0123; e-mail: zibstar702@verizon.net.

AUBURN — Louise Gaskins: first and second Saturdays of each month (walk in), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Central Office, 48 Sword St., Auburn; 508.791.2121, or at home, 978.448.5351.

BOSTON — Harold Crowley: Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (by appointment only), 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., MTA,

20 Ashburton Place, Boston; 617.878.8240 or 800.392.6175, ext. 8240.

BRAINTREE — Mary Hanna: second Saturday of each month (walk in), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Metropolitan Office, 100 Grandview Road, Braintree; 781.380.1410, or at home, 781.545.2069.

CAPE COD — Lawrence Abbruzzi: second Saturday of each month (walk in), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Barnstable Teachers Association (BTA), 100 West Main St., Suite #7, Hyannis; 508.775.8625, or at home, 508.824.9194.

HOLYOKE — Ron Lech: third Saturday of each month (walk in), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Western Office, 55 Bobala Road, Suite 3, Holyoke; 413.535.2415, or at home, 413.566.3039.

LYNNFIELD — Mary Parry: third and fourth Saturdays of each month (walk in), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Northeast Office, 50 Salem St.,

Building B, Lynnfield; 781.246.9779, or at home, 978.372.2031; fax, 978.372.2035.

PITTSFIELD — Ward F. Johnson: second Saturday of each month (walk in), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Berkshire Office, 188 East St., Pittsfield; 413.499.0257, or at home, 413.443.1722; e-mail: wardman33@aol.com.

RAYNHAM — Sandra Stephenson: third Saturday of each month (walk in), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Southeast Office, 90 New State Highway (Rte. 44), Raynham; 508.822.5371, or at home, 508.747.2234; e-mail: rockowl@aol.com. Edward Nelson: fourth Saturday of each month (walk in), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Southeast Office, 90 New State Highway (Rte. 44), Raynham; 508.822.5371, or at home, 508.853.5769.

HIGHER EDUCATION AT-LARGE — Edward McCourt, Massachusetts Bay Community College, Wellesley; 781.239.2207; e-mail: emccourt.mccc@gmail.com.

Note: If you or your association would like to have a retirement workshop at your school, your local president should call Harold Crowley at 800.392.6175, ext. 8240. Please be aware that the MTA does not have a record of your service, so members are advised to bring that information along to meetings.

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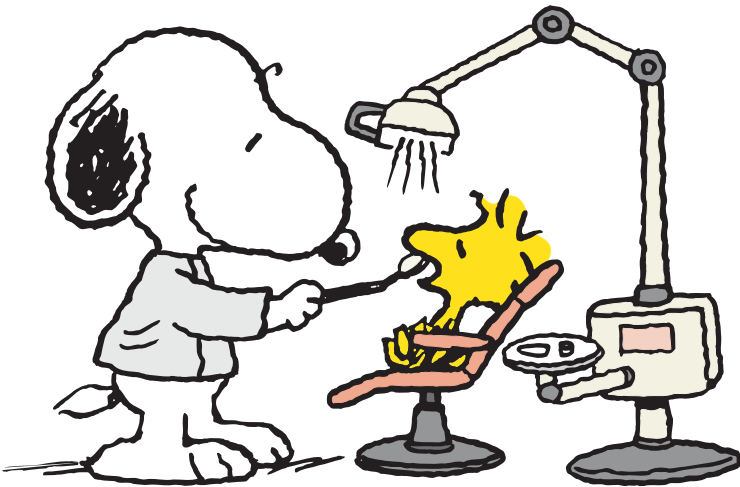
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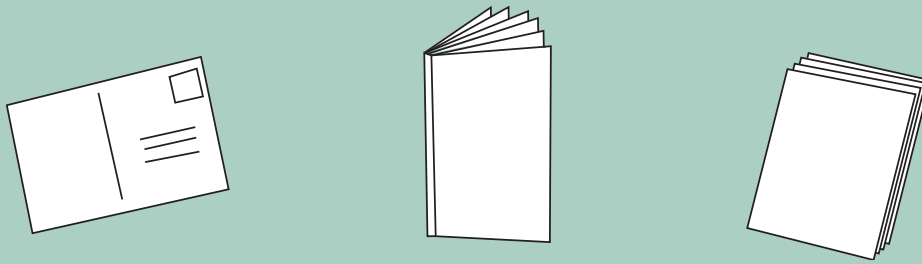
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GEORGE McCLOSKEY — July 16-20. *Executive Function Difficulties in Children: Assessment/Intervention* — www.cape.org.

EDWARD HALLOWELL — Aug. 6-10. *A Strength-Based Approach to ADHD across the Life Span* — www.cape.org.

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Massachusetts Teachers Association

MTA Today

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Gonzalez joins MTA Red Sox reading team

By Bob Duffy

Red Sox slugger Adrian Gonzalez is swinging for the fences on behalf of children and literacy as the 2012 season opens for the MTA's summer reading contest.

Gonzalez, who plays first base, is taking over as the spokesman for the MTA Red Sox Reading Game following the announcement that catcher Jason Varitek has retired from active play. Varitek, who was the team's longtime captain, has taken the lead in promoting the contest for the past several years.

"I'm thrilled to be joining the reading game team of students, teachers and parents across the state who are part of this wonderful literacy initiative," Gonzalez told *MTA Today*. "Reading opens the doors to achievement — and programs such as this one are crucial building blocks that help make the joys of books an integral part of every child's life."

Gonzalez added that it is important for students to read during the summer, when school is not in session.

The reading game — principally sponsored by The Hanover Insurance Group Foundation — is open to all kindergarten-through-eighth-grade students in Massachusetts. Each child who pledges to read nine books over the summer will be entered into a drawing for free tickets to watch the Sox play the Toronto Blue Jays at Fenway Park on Sept. 8.

The names of 100 students will be chosen at random; each will receive two tickets, as will the teacher of every child selected. Five of the students will be designated as grand prize winners and will participate in a ceremony on the baseball field before the game.

As part of the effort to highlight the literacy effort, posters featuring Gonzalez and this year's contest book — *There Goes Ted Williams*, by Matt Tavares — will be sent to MTA K-8 schools throughout the state in May. One of the author's other books, *Zachary's Ball*, was a previous reading game selection.

"I'm happy to be involved with any program that encourages reading and literacy, but I am



"Reading opens the doors to achievement," says Red Sox first baseman Adrian Gonzalez, the new spokesman for the MTA's annual summertime effort to promote the love of books among students.

Photo by Michael Ivins
Boston Red Sox

especially pleased to be involved in the MTA's summer reading program again," remarked Tavares, a lifelong Red Sox fan who grew up in Winchester and now lives in Maine.

Public service announcements are also being developed to promote the contest.

The deadline for students to make their reading pledges, get their entry forms signed by a parent or guardian and send them to the MTA is July 16.

MTA President Paul Toner noted that the game has now lasted more than a decade, inspiring tens of thousands of students to read millions of books.

"We all know that the more children read outside of school, the better they do in the classroom and in life," Toner said. "The reading game is a catalyst for helping students succeed, and MTA educators are proud to bring it back each summer."

Toner praised Gonzalez for joining the association's reading team, but also expressed his deep gratitude for the hard work done by Varitek in recent years.

As the game gets under way, the MTA Red Sox Most Valuable Educator program is also returning for another season of celebrating teachers and others who are dedicated to inspiring a love of learning. An MVE nominee can be a teacher, an education support professional, a library media specialist, a counselor, a social worker, a coach, a school nurse or anyone else who has gone above and beyond the call of duty to promote student achievement. Nominations should be submitted directly to the Red Sox. Each must

be accompanied by an essay that explains how the nominee helps establish a positive educational climate.

Those selected as MVEs will have the chance to go out onto the field at Fenway Park to be greeted by the fans, while the people who send in winning essays will receive tickets to a game.

This is a particularly important year for both the Sox and Boston, since Fenway Park is marking its centennial. Team officials are inviting groups of students and educators to visit for tours; charges apply, but special arrangements for schools are available.

"To help celebrate the 100th anniversary of Fenway Park, the team is highlighting 100 plaques and displays around the ballpark," noted the Sox' Scott Towers.

In addition, schools can book Wally the Green Monster, the team's jolly mascot, for assemblies and other events.

To learn more about the MTA Red Sox Reading Game, visit www.readingmatters.org; new materials will be posted by early May. To nominate someone to be an MTA Red Sox Most Valuable Educator, send an essay of 400 words or less to Most Valuable Educator, c/o Red Sox Community Relations, 4 Yawkey Way, Boston MA 02215. MVE nominations must be postmarked by July 31. For information about tours of Fenway Park and school visits from Wally the Green Monster, please go to <http://boston.redsox.mlb.com/> or http://redsox.mlb.com/bos/fan_forum/wally_world.jsp.

The MTA Advantage is a publication of MTA Benefits, a subsidiary of the Massachusetts Teachers Association

FAMILY MEMBER BENEFITS

You don't have to be an MTA member to save like one

You just have to be part of an MTA member's family. You can get MTA discounts and savings if you're a mother, father, sister, brother, son, daughter, spouse or domestic partner of an MTA member (active, retired or deceased). That could save you up to thousands of dollars a year on mortgages, auto insurance and travel, along with many other programs and services.

"For 43 years, we've been designing benefits for members and their families to help them achieve greater personal financial security and economic savings," said Maryann Robinson, president of MTA Benefits.

Members are encouraged to review the family member page on MTAB's website to understand the extent of the potential savings. Members themselves can easily save more than the cost of their MTA dues by participating in MTAB programs. It's exciting to know that when you include family members in the calculation, you'll find that membership can actually give you back more than you pay to belong. For a complete listing of benefits offered to family members, visit www.mtabenefits.com, and click on "Members Only" and then "Family Members."

Applying for a family membership is simple. Print the application from the link on the family member page. Ask your "sponsor" (your family member who is the MTA member) to complete the application and send it to MTA's Affiliate Services Division. Once it is approved, you can sign up for the programs for which you are eligible.

Member saves money for mother in her 90s

"We are taking advantage of MTAB's family member benefits by signing up my mother for the home heating oil discount," said MTA retired member Julia Monteiro Johnson, former president of the Dennis-Yarmouth Educators Association. "She is in her 90s, and making ends meet gets tougher every year. This will help her cut costs during the heating season."



Julia Monteiro Johnson

Johnson also gets discounts for programs she uses. "We changed to MTA car insurance because my sister, who works in insurance, said it was the best deal we could get," she commented. "That's all my husband needed to hear. It was easy to switch. My BJ's card was purchased with an MTA discount, and we received MTA discounts on our family trips to Disney World. The best savings came when I used my MTA card to buy a Bose® radio and CD player, which we plan to expand into a whole Bose entertainment system."

Johnson added that her MTA card is helpful in establishing credentials when she travels.

The happy faces of MTA

Saving money makes everyone smile. That's why MTA Benefits, more than ever, is giving members savings on things they need every day. Whether you're buying auto insurance or groceries, the savings really add up. Members should check out MTA's programs first when they are looking for ways to curb their expenses. The benefits come along with MTA membership, so why pay membership fees elsewhere to get similar discounts?



REVERSE MORTGAGES

A cash option for seniors



“**T**ough economic times, stock market losses and other financial setbacks can make it difficult – even impossible – for today’s seniors to stay in their homes,” said Paul Gershkowitz, president of Greenpark Mortgage, partner in the MTA Home Mortgage Program. “Many don’t have enough money for day-to-day living expenses or the lifestyle they expected to enjoy.”

There is a smart solution, Gershkowitz noted. A reverse mortgage – a special financial product for homeowners 62 and older – can provide a cash amount based on age, the appraised value of the home and the level of equity.

“They can use tax-free money to pay off an existing home loan, take care of medical and other expenses or even buy a vacation home – whatever they want,” said Gershkowitz. “And they don’t have to make monthly mortgage payments.”

How a reverse mortgage works

The basics of a reverse mortgage – the most common being a home equity conversion mortgage, or HECM – include:

1. A homeowner can receive a one-time total cash payment, monthly checks or credit-line withdrawals based on the amount of the mortgage.
2. No monthly payments to the bank are required during the lifetime of the borrower as long as the person remains in the house.

3. Upon the homeowner’s death or sale of the property, the total amount paid out, plus interest and fees, is due and payable to the lender.

4. The program offers borrowers two options for FHA mortgage insurance: HECM Standard and HECM Saver, both of which protect the lender and borrower. The saver plan minimizes the up-front premium, reducing the closing costs, but also reducing the money available to the borrower.

Like most financial programs, a reverse mortgage is complex. Jerry Congdon, Greenpark’s reverse mortgage specialist, spends a great deal of time with seniors and their families to make them aware of the program’s advantages and disadvantages. Applicants also talk with a HUD-approved reverse mortgage counseling agency representative who makes sure they understand the program and will benefit from it.

Praise for the program

Members who have worked with Congdon to get reverse mortgages have made these comments:

“Greenpark made the process to get my reverse mortgage so easy – and now I don’t worry about paying my bills.”

“My reverse mortgage eliminated my monthly mortgage payments and was the best thing I ever did. No more monthly stress.”

“My reverse mortgage eliminated my monthly mortgage payments and was the best thing I ever did. No more monthly stress.”

Comment from a senior who obtained a reverse mortgage through Greenpark

“My health care services are paid for by my reverse mortgage, allowing me to stay in my home. What a relief.”

In addition to “raving fan” service, Greenpark offers MTA members an average of \$850 off loan closing costs and other advantages. For information on the reverse mortgage program, contact Gershkowitz at 866.475.HOME, ext. 125, or visit www.mtabenefits.com. “We are happy to give an at-home one-on-one or group presentation to any member or local association at no charge,” said Gershkowitz.

MA Lender and Broker MC#2030, Licensed by the New Hampshire Banking Department, RI Broker #20072173LB and Lender #20072174LL, CT Mortgage Lender MCL-2030, FL Correspondent Mortgage Lender CL0700511, ME Supervised Lender SLM10152, VT Mortgage Lender #6090, Licensed by the Mississippi Department of Banking and Consumer Finance, NMLS #2030.

Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum opens a dazzling new wing



The new 70,000-square-foot wing at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, designed by prize-winning architect Renzo Piano, was opened to the public in January along with restored historic galleries at the museum.

Situated behind the original building on its site along the Fenway in Boston, the new addition provides spaces for concerts, exhibitions and classes. It complements the historic Isabella Stewart Gardner palace, with its treasured collections and beautifully landscaped courtyard.

Innovative design

The new wing incorporates glass and natural light to create an open and welcoming entrance, as well as providing uninterrupted views of the historic palace and gardens.

Visitors enter the museum through a new glass-enclosed lobby and can find information about the institution in an adjoining intimate

living room. The performance hall is the largest space in the new wing, with three balcony levels and 6,000 square feet. A gallery that will present three major exhibitions each year is a flexible area with a retractable ceiling and a full wall of windows overlooking the museum. The addition also houses working greenhouses, a landscape classroom and expanded outdoor garden spaces, two artist apartments, conservation labs and an art studio. A new restaurant, Café G, features indoor and seasonal outdoor seating.

MTA members are admitted for half price. For more information, visit www.gardnermuseum.org.



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No dues dollars are ever used to market MTA Benefits programs.

The Tip Sheet

MAKE THIS
YEAR'S VACATION
AN ADVENTURE

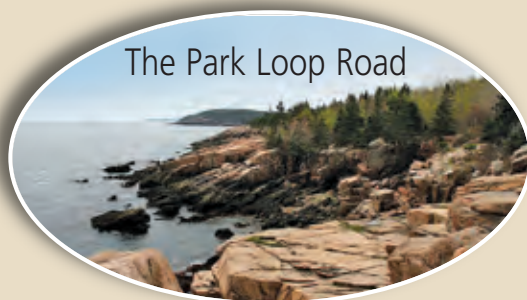


Ride through the Alaskan wilderness



This 114-mile Alaskan Railroad trip takes you from Anchorage to Seward through the Kenai Mountains and some of the world's wildest landscapes. Watch for moose, bear, Beluga whales, bald eagles and Dall sheep as you travel along the coast and then head inland, passing by blue glaciers and over a river gorge on your way to Seward on Resurrection Bay. You can return home the same day to Anchorage or stay overnight and explore historic Seward, formerly a fur-trading post. For information on the train ride, visit www.alaskarailroad.com.

Drive 27 thrilling miles



The Park Loop Road on Mt. Desert Island in Maine winds by the ocean and around mountains and forests, with every turn revealing more breathtaking natural beauty. The road, partially financed by John D. Rockefeller, is part of Maine's Acadia National Park and the national park system. Carved by glacial force, the 40,000-acre park offers unique visual thrills, such as waves pounding on rugged rock formations, views of sunsets over the ocean from the highest point on the Atlantic coast and trails that take you through pristine forests. For information on the park's attractions and lodging, visit www.nps.gov.

Explore the waterways of the czars



Moscow's Kremlin and St. Petersburg's Hermitage are among the world-famous landmarks on this Viking River Cruises tour, which takes you past Russian cities and towns on waterways once traveled by the czars. Or sail with Viking past the lavender fields of Provence and other landscapes considered to be among the most beautiful in France, then venture to charming historic towns such as Arles, painted for posterity by Vincent Van Gogh. Viking and other cruise companies take you on rivers, oceans and seas through countries and continents for adventures of a lifetime. For more information, visit www.mtabenefits.com and link to the "MTA Vacation Center," then "CruisesOnly."

Walk a legendary trail

The longest continuously marked footpath in the world, the Appalachian Trail measures more than 2,000 miles in length, starting at Mt. Katahdin in Maine and traversing through 14 states along the crests and valleys of the Appalachian mountain range to Springer Mountain in Georgia. Members of all ages and abilities can enjoy short walks, day hikes or long-distance backpacking journeys. If you join the Appalachian Mountain Club, you can get an MTA member discount on Lodge to Hut Adventures led by experienced guides, which give you a deeper understanding of the natural and historical significance of the trail. Visit www.outdoors.org for information.



Dig for Roman ruins

Join others on an Earthwatch expedition to excavate a Romano-British settlement in Devon, England. This settlement includes the largest ruins ever found in the country. Visitors can expect to see native roundhouses, enclosures,



a Roman road and other discoveries. The Celts called the area Dumnonia, and you'll help discover how the Romans interacted with the Dumnonian people and what life was like in Britain's southwest around 2,000 years ago. To learn more about this trip and other Earthwatch expeditions – plus available teacher and student fellowships and MTA discounts – visit www.earthwatch.org. No special training or experience is necessary to go on an expedition.

Don't forget to take your MTAB Discount Directory, which lists savings on attractions, lodging and other travel-related expenses. And use your MTA credit card for the easy and rewarding way to save.

SBLI offers affordable, dependable life insurance for MTA members

Experience is the best teacher, which means one should learn to expect the unexpected. Based on that principle, MTA families should look to SBLI to learn how to best protect their future security.

SBLI was founded in 1907 by Boston attorney and eventual Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis as a safe alternative within an industry plagued by corruption and scandal. Brandeis believed savings banks – highly regarded by families and communities – could also provide affordable, dependable life insurance to all families who need it. Thus began Savings Bank Life Insurance, or SBLI.

Since then, generations of families have chosen SBLI to protect their future. And today, thanks to SBLI Term Advantage, more and more MTA members are doing the same.

Term Advantage is a life insurance product created specifically with the needs of MTA members in mind. Not only does it offer some of the best rates in the country for both men and women, it also includes \$5,000



worth of free life insurance for each child of the policyholder.

No-nonsense approach

To make buying life insurance easier, SBLI embraces a no-nonsense approach, which eliminates hassles, delays and confusing jargon from the buying process.

“Although buying life insurance is one of the most important decisions a family will make, there is no reason it has to be complicated,” says Robert K. Sheridan, SBLI’s president and CEO. “We have purposely kept our entire business – from products to processes – simple and straightforward.”

Examples abound. **SBLI.com** recently was re-launched to include a more prominent “quick quote” tool as well as educational content tailored to specific life events. SBLI’s many accredited experts give empowering, common-sense answers to questions. Soon, the company’s already prompt underwriting process will be counted in days, not weeks.

Community pillars

Whether hosting local children at a free football clinic at Gillette Stadium with SBLI spokesperson and former New England Patriot Teddy Bruschi or recognizing parent volunteers in schools across the country through the SBLI Superstar Volunteer Program, SBLI is a mainstay in the community.

For more information on SBLI life insurance, call 877.272.SBLI (7254).

The SBLI advantage

- **Proud provider of life insurance for the MTA**
- **Offers some of the lowest term life rates in the country for both men and women**
- **Holds an A+ (superior) rating from A.M. Best for financial strength¹**
- **Committed to simplifying life insurance with a no-nonsense approach**



1. Visit **ambest.com** to learn more. 2. Monthly premiums are available for 20-year Guaranteed Level Premium Term Advantage Life Insurance only when using SBLI’s Automatic Payment Plan (APP). This rate is for very healthy applicants. Rates may differ based on health and underwriting. The rates are guaranteed not to increase for 20 years or during the level premium period. At the end of the level premium period, coverage may be continued to age 85 at increasing yearly term rates without insurability. 3. Age nearest birthday. The children’s rider is for children who are dependent on the insured for financial support, are at least 15 days old and have not reached age 17 on effective date. 4. SBLI Term Advantage Life Insurance is an SBLI group term product for MTA members only. PolicyForm Series G-46, GC-46, GC-30. May not be available in all states. NAIC # 70435.

Sample monthly premiums for \$300,000 20-year fully guaranteed Level Premium Term Advantage Life Insurance, Preferred Plus Non-Nicotine².

Sample Rates for Women

Sample Rates for Men

Age ³	SBLI Term Advantage	Age ³	SBLI Term Advantage
30	\$13.57	30	\$15.40
35	\$14.09	35	\$15.92
40	\$18.01	40	\$20.62
45	\$27.41	45	\$34.19
50	\$37.85	50	\$51.68

Policies also include \$5,000 in free life insurance for each of the policyholder’s children.⁴

\$100 Visa cards for three lucky members

Want to win some extra cash for your summer travels? Just enter the next MTAB online giveaway and you could walk, drive or fly away with a \$100 Visa card. Sign up between June 18 and July 2 at **www.mtabenefits.com**. To participate, click on “Members Only,” then “MTAB Giveaways” and follow the instructions. Log on to the website on July 10 to see if you’re a winner.



Also, don’t miss out on a special giveaway in recognition of **Teacher Appreciation Week**, May 6-12. How much would you appreciate winning a **\$750 American Express card**? Educators Insurance Agency (EIA) is the proud sponsor of this giveaway. EIA has been servicing the auto and home insurance needs of MTA members for more than 15 years. Mark May 6 in your calendar now so you don’t miss entering our largest giveaway this year!



All program and pricing information was current at the time of publication (April 2012) and is subject to change without notice. To find out what may have changed, please call MTA Benefits at 800.336.0990.