

MTA Today

*A publication of the Massachusetts Teachers Association
Volume 44, No. 1 / Summer 2013*



**Using new technology
to help students learn**



SAVE the DATE!

MTA ETHNIC MINORITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE CONFERENCE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6 – SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7
SHERATON FRAMINGHAM HOTEL

The **MTA Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee** is hosting its annual conference for MTA members on Friday, December 6, and Saturday, December 7, at the Sheraton Framingham Hotel. The conference will kick off with registration at 5 p.m. Friday and conclude by 5 p.m. Saturday. Fitchburg Mayor Lisa Wong will deliver the keynote address on Friday.

Details will be posted in coming weeks on www.massteacher.org. Have questions? Call MTA staff member Linda Ferrari at 800.479.1410 or e-mail lferrari@massteacher.org.

MTA Today

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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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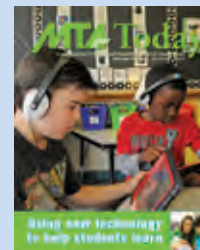
Alison Donato

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Ann Clarke

On the cover

Educators in Burlington are taking full advantage of the digital revolution, applying their knowledge and creativity to help students learn a variety of subjects in innovative ways. "We are using the resources students are going to use when they leave school," explained Assistant Superintendent Patrick Larkin. "When they go into workplaces in the future, they aren't going to be handed a three-ring binder." The large photo shows Kevin Conte, left, and Lyle Ssengonzi Ntuwa working independently on their iPads in Erin Guanci's first-grade class at the Pine Glen Elementary School. At lower right, Guanci and Amber-Nicole Winsor discuss a lesson. Coverage begins on Page 6.



Photos by Christine Peterson
Cover design by Alison Donato



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Quote-Unquote

"What you do impacts the children, their children and their children's children. You change lives."

— *Massachusetts Secretary of Education Matt Malone, addressing MTA members at the Summer Conference in Williamstown on August 5*

Caring is central to bond with students

Teacher of the Year called ‘truly remarkable’ and ‘absolutely amazing’

By Jean Conley

The day before her teaching practicum started, the fear was daunting. “Tomorrow, I will look straight into the eyes of 30 students knowing that I am responsible for each and every one of them,” she wrote. So began the career of Anne Marie Bettencourt, as described in a journal entry to her advisor at Springfield College.

How, she wondered, would she ever become any good?

Seven years later, Bettencourt would be named the 2014 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year. Surrounded by the media, her cheering colleagues and education officials in the library of Springfield Central High School, the ninth-grade English language arts teacher, clearly touched, looked out at the hundreds of students who had crowded into the room to capture the moment and sign a giant card.

After that night of panic before she faced students for the first time, Bettencourt learned to survive — and then to thrive.

The road to competence, she acknowledged, is bumpy and fraught with difficulties — with hurdles often self-imposed, having to do with self-confidence and self-questioning. But then there are the moments of true satisfaction, such as the night she received the call from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to tell her she was being named Teacher of the Year.

“I think my jaw hit the floor,” she told *MTA Today*.

Bettencourt is the 52nd recipient of the award in the Commonwealth. At 31, she is among the youngest, and she credits her youth with helping her to engage with her students on a deep level.

Bettencourt is also happy to share the credit that comes with the honor. During the ceremony, she praised everyone at Central High School. She called the award “a representation of all the people who do the work together with me in Springfield.” She referred to “the old line that says, ‘Kids don’t care what you know until they know that you care.’”

“I think that statement holds the most truth,” she said, “especially in Springfield. Our students want to know that we care about them.”

For Bettencourt, that is more than just a statement.

Bettencourt, who moved to Northampton High School at the start of the new school year and is teaching the same subject and grade level she did in Springfield, was a facilitator for Central’s Ninth Grade Academy, begun about six years ago.

The academy uses a team approach to bring a laser focus to ninth-grade students, who are considered to be at their most vulnerable moment of development, a time when many are at risk of dropping out.



Photo by Jean Conley

Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Anne Marie Bettencourt shares her own experiences and challenges as she seeks to inspire her students to succeed.

Frank Brown, one of her students last year, put it succinctly. “She doesn’t leave children behind,” he said.

There are four ninth-grade teams, with 60 to 70 students on each. Last year, more than 90 percent of Bettencourt’s team successfully completed the year and went on to 10th grade, compared to roughly 50 percent of ninth-graders across the district, according to the DESE.

Bettencourt called the Ninth Grade Academy absolutely vital to the students’ success. Of the students who are not promoted to 10th grade, Bettencourt said, about half drop out, never graduating from high school. Springfield School Superintendent Daniel J. Warwick called Bettencourt’s work “truly remarkable.”

Her principal in Springfield, Thaddeus Tokarz, wrote in his letter of recommendation for the award that “teachers tend to love their subject, but Anne Marie lives hers.”

He said Bettencourt keeps her students engaged “in inquiry, striving for mastery themselves, and by leading and modeling civic engagement by participating in school-based events, coaching, and speaking out on issues of concern.”

One reason she was attracted to urban schools, Bettencourt said, was “to fight all the negativity” about them in the media and elsewhere.

“I found that whenever you’d read any comments in the media, no one had anything good to say about urban schools,” she said. The common perception, she added, “seems to be that teachers in urban education are just warm bodies with a pulse.”

“And that’s just not true,” she continued. “And so there are a lot of truly great teachers doing phenomenal work not only in Springfield, but everywhere. And no one notices them. I never see them in the news. Or their students. Or their work.”

Her passion translates to her students, who use words like “absolutely amazing” to describe her and “lucky” to describe themselves. Frank Brown, one of her students last year, put it succinctly. “She doesn’t leave children behind,” he said.

Bettencourt grew up in New Bedford. As a writing teacher, she tells her students a lot about her life “because it gets them to share,” but for another reason as well. “We’re up here with the tie, a job ... The students don’t possibly think we’ve gone through what we’ve gone through.”

So she tells her own story, which includes growing up in difficult circumstances and the eventual divorce of her parents. Her mother, a receptionist and waitress, was “gone all the time” when Bettencourt was growing up so she could work

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Educators should take the lead on standards

As members and union leaders, we are all familiar with the stereotype that teachers' unions are only concerned with salaries, benefits and grievances. We are also aware that this stereotype is wrong.

I have always believed that the union should be leading the profession, and I have advocated for us to play that role. As a union of professional educators, we are equally concerned with improving the profession and the quality of education for our students.

That is why NEA President Dennis Van Roekel has called upon educators to work to make sure that every local association not only works on contract and grievance issues, but also has a strong group of members who are focused on the professional issues we are facing, such as new evaluations, developing



Paul Toner
MTA President

district-determined measures, implementing the Common Core State Standards and preparing for the new Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers tests.

Over the past year, our organization has spent a great deal of time on educator evaluation. As many MTA members know by now, however, the Common Core

standards and PARCC tests are at the heart of the instructional changes we are seeing in our schools. The rollout of these two initiatives provides our state and local associations with a perfect opportunity to demonstrate to our members and the public the role of the union in promoting excellent instruction and assessment.

The CCSS are voluntary national standards in English language arts and mathematics. To date, 45 states, the District of Columbia, Department of Defense schools and four territories have agreed to adopt them. In 2011, the standards were adopted as the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, with the addition of pre-kindergarten standards.

Districts should already have begun aligning their curricula with the new frameworks. If yours hasn't done so, time is of the essence. Affected educators should insist that adequate time and resources be devoted to making sure that what they are teaching matches what their students are expected to learn and be able to do.

In the spring of 2014, Massachusetts and 13 other states will be field-testing PARCC tests to measure student performance relative to the standards.

In Massachusetts, the PARCC tests may eventually replace the MCAS tests in ELA and math. If that happens, students will have to pass PARCC tests to graduate from high school, and student growth percentiles will be incorporated into educator evaluation and school accountability systems. So the

Districts should already have begun aligning their curricula with the new frameworks. If yours hasn't done so, time is of the essence.

CCSS and the PARCC tests matter. It's important to get this right.

Fortunately, the teacher voice has been prominent in the development of both the CCSS and the assessment system. The NEA and the American Federation of Teachers were partners in the creation of the standards, as were the International Reading Association, the National Council of Teachers of English and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

In Massachusetts, the CCSS have not represented a dramatic change because our state's standards were considered among the best in the country and were relied upon heavily in developing the national ones. Arguments for the CCSS include:

- State standards have been widely criticized for being "a mile wide and an inch deep." The CCSS developers looked at standards in other countries that have superior student performance and found that they generally cover fewer topics but in greater depth. The Common Core standards do the same.

- State standards vary widely. Students in some states are being held to lower standards than others. Lower expectations result in lower achievement. The hope is that establishing high standards for all students will lead to better performance by low-achieving students and help narrow achievement gaps.

- We live in a highly mobile country and a globalized economy. It makes sense for students to be learning subjects in the same sequence so they aren't repeating some topics — or missing others — if they move to another state while in school. It also makes sense to prepare them for college and careers in the 21st century, no matter where they live.

The biggest objection to adopting the CCSS in Massachusetts has come from the Pioneer Institute, which expressed concern that our state's high standards would be lowered. State education officials pledged that they would not take part if the national standards were lower than ours, and the feedback we hear from most classroom teachers is that the new frameworks do not lower standards.

After commissioning an independent comparison between the former state standards and the CCSS, the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education voted to recommend adoption of the CCSS.

The standards call on students to master both content *and* important learning processes. For example, only a limited number of specific literary

texts are listed in the standards, giving teachers and schools the latitude to incorporate their own materials. The CCSS also have literacy links to history, social studies, science and technology.

The standards emphasize reading, writing and speaking grounded in evidence from the texts, both literary and informational. Those skills cannot be "drilled" into students with test prep.

The PARCC tests are billed as "next generation" assessments. According to the PARCC consortium, "In ELA/literacy, the PARCC assessments will look much deeper at student writing abilities and critical-thinking skills. ... In math, students will have to solve complex problems, show their work, and demonstrate how they solved the problem. Unlike pencil-and-paper bubble tests, these new assessments will more closely resemble high-quality classroom work."

Understanding the new standards and developing curricula and the lesson plans to address them take time. That is why in June, the NEA and the AFT joined a dozen other national education groups in calling for a moratorium of at least one year on any high-stakes decisions being made based on new assessments pegged to the new standards.

They made this call after New York and Florida began using new evaluation procedures that were heavily tied to student performance based on the new standards before all districts and teachers had aligned curricula and assessments to them. Massachusetts, thanks largely to the effective advocacy of MTA members, has avoided the use of student data in a high-stakes manner.

Still, there is much to be done now and in the coming years to align instruction with the new standards and assessments. At the national and state levels, we will continue our work to make sure that timelines and expectations are reasonable and that resources are available to support your work.

Your local association should be at the forefront in advocating for the professional development, common planning time and individual preparation time you need to help your students become proficient in standards that aim to make sure all students are ready for college or a career when they graduate from high school.

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.

Conference features array of activities

By Jean Conley

The 2013 MTA Summer Conference unfolded under stunning blue skies and ideal temperatures on the campus of Williams College, featuring professional development workshops, nightly festivities and leadership and bargaining training for hundreds of public school and college educators.

U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren was a surprise guest at the MTA Board meeting on the first day of the conference, which ran from Aug. 4 to 8. Massachusetts' senior senator urged MTA members to stay active on key issues, including federal legislation affecting public schools and college affordability.

The former teacher thanked the MTA for its continued support and pointed to progress on some issues.

"We have fundamentally changed the conversation" on student loans, she said. Warren said she has found that "one side in Washington is actually trying to move bills forward. The other is drawing lines in the sand and filibustering and saying no."

But she urged teachers to press on for the good of "all of our children, not just some of our children."

"This is a fight for what kind of country we want this to be," she said.

The annual conference included a wide range of programs and events in a setting perfect for networking, socializing and sharing information.

Massachusetts Secretary of Education Matt Malone and guest speaker Beth Davies, president of Britain's National Union of Teachers, energized the Opening Session on Aug. 5. MTA President Paul Toner, Vice President Tim Sullivan and Executive Director-Treasurer Ann Clarke also offered words of welcome to the members who attended the event.

Davies captivated the audience with her depiction of state-supported education in the United Kingdom, which has seen a large percentage of schools put into the hands of private companies and the erosion of local control, trends that have continued since the era of Margaret Thatcher, who became prime minister in 1979 and whose defeat of striking coal miners defined her political legacy.

Davies said teachers "are under attack as never before" in Britain and elsewhere. The national teachers' union took its first strike action in June and plans to stage a one-day national walkout in the fall over pay, pensions and working conditions. Davies described a public school system in which teachers will be required to work until age 68 and can be fired for divulging their salaries to other teachers. She said school takeovers by private parties "can happen overnight," leaving teachers and their students alarmed and disillusioned.

Malone thanked the MTA for its leadership on issues ranging from budget priorities and equity to district-determined measures related to evaluation.



Clockwise from top left: Participants in the New Member Program listen closely to a presenter; Erika Green, a physical education teacher in Walpole, unleashes her creativity during the "Stop Whining and Draw!" workshop; Christine Boseman, chair of the Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee, and NEA Director Erik Champy enjoy "An Evening with EMAC," which featured music and dancing; and U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren waves goodbye to members of the MTA Board as President Paul Toner looks on.

Photos by Bob Duffy, Jean Conley and Jim Sacks



He said the voice of the teacher in the public debate is more important than ever.

"What you do impacts the children, their children and their children's children," he said. "You change lives."

Malone said he learned while working as the school superintendent in Brockton how important "working inclusively" with teachers is, and he praised the collaborative role played by the Brockton Education Association and its president, Kim Gibson.

The conference's 115 workshops included multi-

day and daylong tracks on organizing, bargaining and leadership, professional development tracks and diverse individual sessions.

Evenings offered the chance to view films and attend social events. On the last night of the conference, Jessica Rosenthal of Attleboro tweeted, "Can't believe it's the last night of summer conference! Having a blast! Who needs sleep?"

"Spending the week in such a beautiful, quaint, relaxing, warm and safe-feeling town is rejuvenating

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A high-tech teaching strategy

Digital revolution is in full swing in Burlington classrooms

By Laura Barrett

Pine Glen Elementary School in Burlington was built in the 1970s and looks its age. It's a low-slung glass, steel and brick building set in a wooded part of town, and it resembles many grade schools elsewhere in the country.

But inside those walls, the digital revolution is in full swing. Pine Glen students in grades four and five and those in one first-grade class are all assigned their own iPads — and that has meant a sea change in how teachers teach and how students learn and express themselves.

Students in three other first-grade classes — at Francis Wyman, Fox Hill and Memorial Elementary — are also assigned their own iPads, as are all of Burlington's middle and high school students. Eventually, the district hopes to make iPads or similar devices available to all students.

"We are using the resources students are going to use when they leave school," explained Assistant Superintendent Patrick Larkin. "When they go into workplaces in the future, they aren't going to be handed a three-ring binder."

Given that Burlington is situated along the Route 128 high-tech corridor, it comes as no surprise that the town is an early adopter of 1:1 computing devices. Larkin, who introduced iPads to Burlington High School in 2011-2012 when he was the principal there, believes other districts should consider going the same route, given the prevalence of computer technology in higher education and work.

"We're often playing catch-up in education," Larkin said. "The longer you wait to use this technology, the harder it will be to catch up. If you are focused on the needs of kids, this is a no-brainer."

Here are just a few ways that making tablets available to Burlington students has affected them and their teachers:

- Poster-board projects are often replaced by narrated slideshows or video productions.
- Worksheets are replaced by applications that use entertaining game formats and give teachers and students instant feedback on students' progress. Some apps are programmed to recommend strategies for helping students achieve skills not yet mastered.
- Instruction can be differentiated more easily because students move at their own pace on iPad applications.
- Many aging and expensive textbooks are being replaced by digital educational materials and primary sources accessed online.
- Teachers don't have to lug home as many papers and projects as they did in the past and grade them by hand; they can view them and comment online.
- More students can be actively engaged in responding to instruction. For example, in the past, one student might be called on to answer a question



Photo by Christine Peterson

Pine Glen Elementary School fifth-graders used their iPads for a project aimed at persuading audience members to move to their colony. From left to right are students Jack Perino, Alanna MacMillan and Caroline O'Callaghan. They are working with teacher Diana Marcus.

while others lost focus. With tablets, all students can be asked to tweet their answers or respond in real time to something they are hearing or watching, such as a film.

■ Student excuses about not having a homework assignment now fall flat in classes where the assignments are posted online. (An added bonus is that it's harder for a student to get away with telling mom and dad he doesn't have any homework that day.)

Students are 'engaged'

First-grade teacher Erin Guanci summed up the way that many Burlington teachers feel.

"I love it," she said when an *MTA Today* reporter visited the district in June. "The kids love it, too. They are engaged. There are so many different things they can do. It's not the end-all and be-all in education, but it's a really versatile tool."

Deidre Dowling de Salvador, a reading specialist in Guanci's classroom, agreed.

"We feel really fortunate to have these resources," she said. "It's helped the quality of what we do, and it prepares the children for the world they are living in now."

As Dowling de Salvador talked, the first-graders were engrossed in their iPads, working individually using headsets or studying together. As in many classrooms, chairs and tables were arranged in small

groups, not in forward-facing rows. Guanci was circulating through the room, quietly conferring with individual students.

"Our students need to know 100 sight words," Dowling de Salvador said. "We found sight word apps, and now just about every kid knows every word. That certainly wasn't the case in the past."

It's too early to tell whether the iPad initiative will raise MCAS scores or other test results in Burlington, and Larkin isn't concerned.

"We're not MCAS-driven," Larkin said. "We're more interested in preparing students for the workplaces of the future."

Dan Callahan, instructional technology specialist at Pine Glen, was recruited to Burlington for his creative thinking about integrating technology into instruction. He agreed with Larkin that MCAS-style tests only scratch the surface of assessing what students should know and be able to do.

Callahan said, "There's no standardized assessment for, 'Did kids work well together?' There's no standardized assessment for, 'Did they create a really nice looking design?' There's no standardized assessment for, 'Can they take what they know and present it in different ways?' But these are all things that are very important for them to be able to do."

New ways to present information

Students in Diana Marcus' fifth-grade class at Pine Glen had a big day. They were assigned to make small-group presentations about colonies they had studied. They had to use their skills to persuade a panel of adult listeners — including the school principal, who played the part of a Colonial governor — to move to their colony.

The students were free to choose how they wanted their presentations to look. They could have used poster-board (think *Mad Men*-style storyboards). Or they were free to create digital presentations the way most professionals do today. Not surprisingly, the students gravitated to the latter, though one group made a printed brochure that was designed on the iPad. Paper materials do still exist in the real world, but virtually all are designed on a computer.

One group of fifth-graders made a video for the project while another created a narrated slideshow. Clearly, the students were increasingly familiar with how to produce content on their devices and were not intimidated by the technology.

Marcus is a big fan of having iPads for all of her students, rather than devices shared with other classes via a roving technology cart.

"Before, the choices I could give my students about how they could express themselves were limited by my supplies, my time, my energy, the amount of space I had, the amount of mess it was

Continued on next page

Team training approach draws praise

By Laura Barrett

Before he retired as the Belmont Education Association president at the end of last school year, Bob Antonellis said that establishing Professional Learning Teams in his district had been a lot of work.

But it was worth it, he said, adding: "It's one of the things I did as president that I'm most proud of."

A growing number of districts in Massachusetts and across the country are joining the movement by organizing PLTs, sometimes referred to as professional learning communities, in lieu of traditional "stand-and-deliver" professional development offerings.

In Belmont, teachers join a PLT each year that is organized by grade level, subject matter or common interest. The school schedule includes dedicated time for teams to work on initiatives to improve teaching and learning in areas of their own choosing.

In May of each year, PLT members present their projects and findings to their colleagues at a conference that resembles a student science fair. The high school field house is set up with tables and poster-board displays around the perimeter of the room, allowing participants to check out each other's work. Breakout sessions are offered, during which a small number of teams present their projects in greater depth.

Teachers approached during last year's conference on May 22 were generally enthusiastic about the experience. Janice Darias, assistant superintendent in charge of Belmont's PLT program, said that in a survey she administers each year after the conference, a high percentage express support for this form of PD.



Photo by Laura Barrett

Bob Antonellis, who recently retired after serving as president of the Belmont Education Association, stands with Janice Darias, the assistant superintendent in charge of the district's PLT program.

"The research shows that bringing in somebody for a one-day PD activity is not effective," Darias said. Under the old model, the speaker "may or may not address a particular need of a particular teacher," she said.

"PLTs give our professionals time and space and support to work on problems in practice that they have identified," she continued. "For example, if your students are struggling with organizing their writing, a team can come together to work on that for the year and test out new ways of instruction to make that better. It's our R&D opportunity to tap into the expertise of our professionals."

Antonellis agreed. "This is what teachers should be doing," he said. "They're the experts. They know what the problems are. They know what needs to be done."

The initiative began in the 2010-2011 school year under a former superintendent. At first, Antonellis said, teachers were required to use

some of their contractual PD time working together in teams once a month for an hour after school. That first year, the schedule didn't work well because teachers were tired after a long day in the classroom, he said.

The next year, the district and the BEA negotiated a schedule change. The school day is extended by about 15 minutes four days of the week, but students are dismissed an hour early every Wednesday. That extra hour has proven invaluable for giving teachers time during the workday for PLTs, department meetings, curriculum development and other district priorities.

Darias said that the new schedule is symbolically important.

"It says that the work we do together as colleagues is important work and should be part of the school day, not an extra," she said.

The teachers presenting their projects last May were eager to share their findings with others.

"After all three PLTs I've been a part of, I've come away with

something useful," said Beth Manca, a middle school Latin teacher. "I've added something to my teaching every year."

Members of a team of second-grade teachers at the Burbank Elementary School were also positive about their project. Their team was one of 17 in the district to focus on writing. Their display included a book written and illustrated by second-graders that was a takeoff on the classic "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie." Their theme was "If You Give a Second-Grader a Dollar."

A team of second-grade teachers at the Butler Elementary School gave a PowerPoint presentation on how they incorporated newly donated iPads into their classrooms.

"My overall impression of the use of iPads is that it's a huge success," said team member Jennifer Mathews.

That said, members of her PLT warned that their efforts required much more time than was allotted in the official PLT schedule. They often worked on their own time, learning new apps and figuring out how to incorporate the iPads into their curriculum to improve reading and math instruction. They also said teachers need ongoing IT support and PD if iPads are to be used effectively.

Marnie Wolfe, a member of the Butler team, said that while there are many benefits to the PLT model, it's a tradeoff.

"Under the old model, we used to work as a whole school more often," Wolfe said. "I think that brought us together as a school."

"Still," she continued, "everything we've done as part of the PLT has been useful. It's just that there aren't enough hours in the day to do both."

Use of iPads opens up 'so many possibilities' for students

Continued from previous page

going to make — those kinds of things," she said. "Now kids can use this new tool, and that opens up so many possibilities for them."

Freedom to choose iPads — or not — on a given assignment was central to Burlington's rollout of the 1:1 initiative. "Let's say I tell my students to show me how to reduce a fraction," Marcus posited. "Some

might put it on paper, but others will use the app Explain Everything, which is a slideshow that can be animated and narrated. It's a wonderful way for me to assess a student's understanding. When students are able to show their work as they do it, demonstrating their process, vocabulary and knowledge visually and verbally, I know the depth of their understanding and can identify where there is a problem."

Similarly, first-graders in Guanci's class can choose to read a "real" book or read one on the iPad. Sometimes, though, Guanci prefers that they use the iPad so they can track their own growing literacy skills by recording their voices on the device. "They can listen back to what they've read and hear their mistakes," she said. "That helps them improve."

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Locals urged to use grants to help students

By Sarah Nathan

Did you know that every MTA preK-12 local is eligible to receive \$750 or more each school year to help students succeed?

It's true. The Massachusetts Child provides grants to preK-12 locals to cover the costs of a wide range of items and services, including school supplies, educational field trips, medical supplies, clothing and much more. The MTA charity provides grants of up to \$750 to locals with 500 or fewer members. Locals with more than 500 members are eligible to receive \$1.50 per member.



"I'm constantly amazed by the generosity of my teaching colleagues, who give so much to their students," said Christine Mulroney, president of The Massachusetts Child, which was founded in 1996. "By taking advantage of a grant from The Mass

Child, your local association can help even more students and reimburse educators who open up their wallets for 'their kids.'"

Responding to the economic downturn, Mass Child's board opted last year to increase the amount available to MTA locals from \$500 to \$750 per school year for smaller locals and increased the sum available to large locals from \$1 to \$1.50 per member.

"Please make this the year that your local takes advantage of the funds available through The Mass Child grant program," Mulroney said. "Despite our

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Update on retiree health legislation

A hearing has been scheduled for Oct. 31 on a retiree health insurance bill filed by Governor Deval Patrick in January in response to a report filed by the Special Commission to Study Retiree Healthcare and Other Non-Pension Benefits.

The commission was created by the Legislature last year to study unfunded municipal and state retiree health care costs.

During the past decade, there have been rising concerns about the unfunded liabilities created by the current system. The governor's bill, House 59, would reduce health insurance benefits for some future public-sector retirees to reduce those liabilities. How it would affect an employee depends on a number of factors, including age and years of service.

The commission was co-chaired by former MTA President Anne Wass and included representatives of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO and the Retired State, County and Municipal Employees Association of Massachusetts. The commission's recommendations were supported by labor and retiree representatives.

The stated goal of the commission was to protect current retiree benefits, ensure that current employees close to retirement get their benefits and ensure that long-term public employees receive retiree health insurance.

On Jan. 25, the MTA Board of Directors voted to support the commission's recommendations, adopting the following motion:

That the MTA Board of Directors affirms support of the recommendations of the Special Commission to Study Retiree Healthcare and Other Non-Pension Benefits as set forth in the Special Commission's January 11, 2013, report. MTA will support legislation that mirrors or improves the recommendations contained in the report. If legislation is proposed which departs significantly from the recommendations contained in the report, and to the detriment of MTA members, the leadership will consult again with the Board of Directors.

In order to maintain sustainable health care benefits for current and future state and municipal retirees, the MTA supports making modifications to the benefit structure to reduce future costs. However, the MTA is seeking changes to the governor's bill to better protect certain groups of long-term employees who would be adversely affected by it.

"As people live longer and the cost of health insurance has skyrocketed, the unfunded liability for retiree health insurance is a serious problem that we have to deal with," said MTA President Paul Toner. "Employee retirement benefits are already putting a big strain on cities and states across the country, and Massachusetts is no exception. If the costs become too great, we may see layoffs and pay cuts for active employees in the future while risking continued health care benefits for our current retirees and active members.

"That said," Toner said, "we will continue working with the governor and the Legislature to improve House 59."

The MTA will be alerting members when the bill is under active consideration on Beacon Hill in order to advocate for changes to it.

A response to liabilities

The impetus for House 59 was data showing that the state and local governments have unfunded liabilities for "Other Post-Employment Benefits" — mainly retiree health insurance — of more than \$46 billion: \$16.7 billion for the state and \$30 billion for municipalities. That total is even greater than the state's unfunded pension liability.

Unlike in the pension system, employees do not contribute to their retiree health insurance benefits, and the state and municipalities have contributed very little, largely treating it as a pay-as-you-go system. Pay-as-you-go worked when the costs were low, but now health insurance is so expensive that accounting rules are forcing public entities to set aside more money and bring down costs.

"The goal of House 59 is to ensure the long-term sustainability of public employee retiree health insurance while maintaining a robust system that will continue to attract and retain high-quality state and municipal career employees," said Toner. "We support the bill in principle, though we have concerns about the impact on some of our membership groups."

Under current law, most state and municipal employee retirees are eligible for health insurance benefits after they retire if they have completed 10 years of creditable service. The employer pays a portion of the premium — at least 50 percent and often more — which is termed the maximum benefit.

Under House 59, future employees and many current employees would need at least 20 years of creditable service to be eligible for health insurance benefits when they retire. The employer's share of the retiree's health insurance premium would be prorated for those with more than 20 years but fewer than 30 years.

The following is a summary of key provisions of the bill. More details are available on the MTA website by searching for "OPEB." The bill itself is available on the Legislature's website.

Under House 59:

- Current retirees would retain all benefits.
- There would be no change for those eligible for accidental disability benefits.
- Some long-term employees nearing retirement would be "grandfathered in" — meaning they would continue to be eligible for the maximum benefit if they met certain criteria.
- For new employees and current employees who are not grandfathered in, health benefits would only be available to retirees who have at least 20 years of creditable service.
- Employers would pay 50 percent of the premium for retirees who have 20 years of service.

■ The employer's contribution for those who have more than 20 years of creditable service would be prorated until the maximum benefit level was reached for those with 30 years.

■ Municipalities would be forbidden from reducing benefits for retirees once they qualified for a given level of benefits.

The retiree health insurance issue was discussed at length at this year's MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates. A majority present adopted New Business Item #2, requiring the MTA to seek changes to House 59.

On May 29, the MTA sent a letter to all legislators in accordance with this NBI, notified local presidents of the directive and posted information about it on the MTA website.

The wording of the NBI is:

Be it resolved that MTA shall work to modify legislation that would adversely affect MTA members' health care coverage upon retirement, including changes to the minimum eligibility age, years of service required, and/or percentage of premiums to be paid. The MTA shall fight to improve the legislation filed by Governor Patrick entitled "An Act Providing Retiree Healthcare Benefits Reform."

The MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates hereby instructs the leadership to:

■ *Publish this resolution on the website and in MTA Today accompanied by a clear explanation of the legislation's specific provisions.*

■ *Notify every local president of this resolution and encourage them to organize their members to contact legislators to improve the current legislation.*

■ *Communicate the MTA's intent to improve the current proposed legislation via a letter to every state legislator.*

■ *Direct the MTA Government Relations Division to work to improve the current proposed legislation.*

Certain categories of members

Of particular concern to the MTA is the impact of House 59 on the following members:

■ Higher education faculty, many of whom are in graduate school for so long they are unlikely to reach the longer employment thresholds.

■ Vocational school teachers, many of whom work in their trades for decades before becoming teachers and need this experience to be able to train students in these high-skill areas.

■ Education support professionals who are only given 10 months of creditable service per year and who therefore have to work 20 percent more years to be eligible for the same level of benefits as other education employees credited with 12 months of service per year.

The hearing in October on House 59 will be before the Legislature's Joint Committee on Public Service.

Teacher of the Year says respect is important

Continued from Page 3

to pay the family's bills. As a result, Bettencourt recalled, "I had all this freedom that I didn't know what to do with."

"Nobody was telling me why I should be in school, that I *had* to be in school, and I took full advantage of that as a 15-year-old kid," she said. "I probably skipped about half the school year, just scraping by in ninth grade."

In 10th grade, she said, she "met this fantastic English teacher."

"He was really passionate about literature. He loved the way I wrote, and he told me so frequently on my papers. So I just loved to come to his class," Bettencourt said. All of a sudden, she said, "I had a reason to come to school."

The experience turned her around, and now she feels lucky to be able to do the same thing for her students. She went to Syracuse University with plans to become a screenwriter, but discovered that might mean "getting someone's coffee." Combining her love of literature and children, she eventually decided that education was a much better fit.

Like any busy teacher, she took on endless other duties at Central. She coached the girls' tennis team, advised the Gay Straight Alliance and worked on the Shakespeare productions that are put on by students every fall. She served as a mentor teacher at UMass Amherst and at Springfield College. Over the summer, she attended a Red Sox home game and was the featured "celebrity" during pre-game festivities to promote literacy as part of the MTA Red Sox Reading Game and Most Valuable Educator program. She even found time to get married to her sweetheart, Abe Osheyack, Smith College's sports information director, in July.

Her marriage precipitated the move to Northampton.

"I love Central and if the choice were only about me, I would teach there forever,"



Photo by Jean Conley

MTA Vice President Tim Sullivan, left, and Springfield Education Association President Tim Collins were on hand to congratulate Teacher of the Year Anne Marie Bettencourt during the ceremony at Central High School.

Bettencourt said. "However, we are starting to think about a family in the next year. We plan to buy a house in this area, so it made sense to try to find a job as close to the area as possible."

Bettencourt also said she believes "very much in being a part of the community where I teach."

"As a single person, that was very easy to do in Springfield," she said. "With kids and a 40-minute commute, it's a little harder to do."

Bettencourt's continuing enthusiasm for Shakespeare was evident late last spring as she led her ninth-grade honors English class through "Romeo and Juliet." She displayed mastery of her subject, an ability to translate the poetry of the text into language relevant to today's ninth-graders, and the gift of extraordinary peripheral vision.

As the students acted out the balcony scene, she used humor to deepen their understanding. Her ability to overhear an unrelated comment from a student at the other side of the room amazed the rest of the class. At other times, her way of explaining the text in terms appreciated by today's teenagers had the students dissolving in laughter.

By the end of the class, every single student was asking questions, yelling out answers or taking on one role or another. With energy and enthusiasm, the students became comfortable with the symbolism of the scene — the meaning of the sun, the moon, the snowy dove and the rose.

Of course, it wasn't always like this. Bettencourt said that in her first year of student teaching, "I was horrible!" On her second observation, her supervisor told her, "I wouldn't put my daughter in your class." That, she said, "crushed me."

"My management was not good. I was trying too hard to be the students' friend," she said. "I had eight weeks at that point to get better. It was eight weeks between that point and my final observation, and I said, 'I'm not going to have that be his opinion of me when I leave.'"

"I think that's what a lot of first-year teachers go through. You want the kids to like you. The kids can *love* you, but they have to respect you — and you *can* have both."

Bettencourt was so determined to become a good teacher that she poured her heart out as she wrote extensive journal e-mails to her Springfield College advisor, Daniel Zukergood, a veteran classroom teacher. The e-mails show her transformation from a struggling student teacher to an educator who found her voice and a level of confidence that allowed her to begin to change her students' lives. The e-mails eventually were published by Pearson Education in 2009 as "Teaching in the Real World: Strategies to Survive and Thrive."

As Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, Bettencourt automatically becomes the state's choice for National Teacher of the Year. This school year, her voice will be heard at the State House and around the Commonwealth as she addresses officials, parents and students on the challenges and joys of teaching.

Contact with parents seen as key to success of Ninth Grade Academy

By Jean Conley

Anne Marie Bettencourt credits much of her success at Central High School to its commitment to the Ninth Grade Academy, which began formally in 2006.

The idea for it was born about five years earlier, when Central applied for but did not receive a federal grant to establish "smaller learning communities" within the school.

Though the school was not chosen, the smaller-communities concept took hold. Then-Principal Richard Stoddard asked ninth-grade English teacher Brent Northup if he'd like to help.

Northup was well aware of extensive research showing that high retention rates in ninth grade often

lead to high dropout rates before the end of senior year. More students fail ninth grade than any other grade level, and of those students who don't pass to 10th grade on the first try, about half fail to ever finish high school.

The research also indicated that students in ninth grade didn't need an orientation day or week when they entered from middle school; they needed at least a transition year, with comprehensive long-term programs to help them over the hump.

The school initiated the academy with about 100 students. Four to six core-subject teachers met three or four times a week to discuss the students' progress.

Northup said that by the end of the year, teachers were seeing "dramatic differences" in three areas:

discipline, GPA and attendance — all key factors that affect dropout rates.

But the "cornerstone" of the effort, he said, was parent contact. Parents were asked to come in to meet with the team so they would become part of the solution when students encountered academic or social difficulties. The effort put everyone on the same page.

"Getting to know the student, getting to know the social and emotional part, is another key piece of smaller learning communities," Northup said. "If we have that understanding, then the students are more open to what we have to offer them."

By the 2011-2012 school year, 80 percent of ninth-graders were teamed. In the past two years, the teams have added ninth- and 10th-grade graduation

Please turn to **Central's**/Page 18

Making the world 'a more tolerant place'

Members gather to celebrate contributions of Human and Civil Rights honorees

By Jean Conley

In 1997, Sister Ann Fox recognized that establishing an after-school program would aid poor working families and promote educational achievement in South Boston, so she co-founded the Paraclete Foundation.

That was just the beginning. In 2000, Sister Ann, a social worker and activist, became the driving force behind the establishment of the Maranyundo School for Girls in Nyamata, Rwanda, a region that was struggling to recover from the country's 1994 genocide.

Mick Carlon, an English teacher in the Barnstable schools for 29 years and the author of two young-adult novels about Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong, has long used his passion for jazz as a vehicle for teaching students about America's cultural history.

Sister Ann and Carlon were both honored on June 14 at the MTA's 2013 Human and Civil Rights Awards Dinner, hosted by the MTA Human Relations Committee.

Sister Ann, who was in Rwanda and unable to attend the event, received the Louise Gaskins Lifetime Civil Rights Award. The award is named for a pioneer for the involvement of women and people of color in education, the MTA and the National Education Association. Carlon received the Kathleen Roberts Creative Leadership Award.

Dale Forest, chair of the Human Relations Committee, said that Sister Ann and Carlon "have chosen education as the vehicle through which they have worked to make the world a more just and tolerant place."

"In very different ways," Forest continued, "they have committed their passion and talents to educational endeavors that are unique and far-reaching."

Sister Ann's co-founding of the Paraclete Foundation would have been a substantial lifetime accomplishment for most people, Forest said. But hearing of the need for a school for girls in Rwanda, Sister Ann raised money, cultivated supporters, hired architects, obtained land and convinced local officials to make the school a reality.



Above left, award winner Mick Carlon, seated at right, poses with his wife, Lisa Milk Carlon, and former Barnstable Teachers Association president Jack McLeod. Above right, longtime MTA activist Louise Gaskins, center, chats with Eileen DeMichele, left, of the Paraclete Foundation, and Cathy O'Flaherty, a Boston teacher. At left, Susan Baker, left, a teacher at the Morse Pond School in Falmouth, enjoys a moment with Candace Shivers, an associate professor at Mount Wachusett Community College, and Ronald Colbert, who chairs the Education Department at Fitchburg State University.

Photos by Jean Conley

In 2008, the tuition-free Maranyundo School opened.

With 181 young women currently enrolled, the school prepares its students for leadership roles as Rwanda rebuilds. Most come from families that could not otherwise afford to educate their daughters.

Representing Sister Ann at the event was Eileen DeMichele, executive director of the Paraclete Foundation. DeMichele said Sister Ann would be "the first to tell you that she has no formal training as a teacher."

"But she has taught people to work together, and she has dedicated her entire life to strengthening communities through education," DeMichele said. A friend, she added, put it best, saying: "Her dedication to others has shown us the beauty in the ordinary."

Sister Ann has modeled a sense of commitment "through a lifetime of

"In very different ways, they have committed their passion and talents to educational endeavors that are unique and far-reaching," said Dale Forest, chair of the MTA's Human Relations Committee.

work dedicated to children in South Boston, Roxbury and Rwanda," said DeMichele, and she has "achieved the extraordinary and made us all the richer for it."

Carlon's novels, "Riding on Duke's Train" and "Travels with Louis," draw intimate portraits of Ellington and Armstrong while teaching students messages about human relations, diversity and the importance of role models.

In accepting his award, Carlon said he grew up listening to the jazz artists and eventually started reading more about them. He called Ellington and Armstrong "America's Beethoven, Bach and Mozart." He said he started to pay even closer attention to them as he began to realize how "dignified, brave and loving" the men were as they celebrated America — at the time a quite racist America — in their music.

Carlon recounted a story told to him by Armstrong's road manager. Armstrong, visiting Rome in 1959, was invited to the Vatican to meet Pope John. Two weeks later, back in the United States and on his way to an

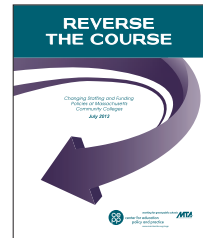
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Report stresses need for full-time faculty

By Laura Barrett

An increased reliance on part-time adjunct faculty in the state's community college system is reducing the amount of academic advising available from full-time faculty and may be contributing to poor student completion rates, according to a recent study released by MTA's Center for Education Policy and Practice.

On July 17, the day after releasing the report, the MTA testified at a legislative hearing in favor of a bill that would increase the percentage of full-time faculty and provide more benefits to part-timers.



The CEPP study, "Reverse the Course: Changing Staffing and Funding Policies at Massachusetts Community Colleges," found that less than one-third of all community college courses are taught by full-time faculty. The rate

declined from 34 percent to 28 percent between 2004-2005 and 2010-2011.

During approximately the same period, only 17 percent of first-time students enrolled full time in the state's 15 community colleges completed their college's programs. The report defines program

completion as receiving a two-year degree or certificate within three years.

"Most of the academic advising obligation falls to the ever-shrinking percentage of full-time faculty," concluded CEPP Director Kathleen Skinner.

The MTA is recommending the following:

- Community colleges should use a meaningful portion of the new funds allocated to them in the fiscal 2014 budget to hire more full-time faculty.

- The Legislature and the governor should continue to restore funds to public higher education in future years to implement changes needed to improve student outcomes, including community college graduation rates.

- Among other issues, the Special Commission on Higher Education Quality, Efficiencies and Finance created in the budget should examine what impact the loss of full-time faculty has had on students and make recommendations to ameliorate any adverse effects.

"There are many excellent adjunct faculty in the Division of Continuing Education who play an important role in our colleges and universities," said MTA President Paul Toner. "However, adjuncts are not given the time, the money, the office space or the mandate to provide students with comprehensive academic advising on how to navigate the college system through to job

placement or transfer to a four-year institution."

The fiscal 2014 budget provides increased funding for community colleges and the other public higher education institutions. But when adjusted for inflation, state funding for public higher education is still approximately one-third less than it was in fiscal 2001, the peak year. Meanwhile, enrollment in community colleges increased sharply, even as funding was being cut.

As a result, the MTA report notes, community colleges have raised fees, using some of those funds to hire adjunct faculty to keep up with demand while the number of full-time faculty members has remained flat.

"Massachusetts needs to be a national leader in public higher education, and that goal cannot be achieved without heightened levels of funding for our state's colleges and universities," said Richard Freeland, commissioner of higher education. "The overreliance of our community colleges on adjunct faculty highlighted in the MTA report is one of the most problematic consequences of the constrained budgets our institutions have received in recent years.

"Against this background," Freeland continued, "the decision of the governor and Legislature in the FY14 budget to provide significantly increased

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MTA and NAACP chart 'new territory'

Meeting focuses on how organizations can work to narrow achievement gaps

By Laura Barrett

Local leaders of the MTA and the NAACP's New England Area Conference were joined by community organizers for a first-of-its-kind meeting on June 8 to discuss how to address achievement gaps among students.

"We are charting new territory here in this relationship between the MTA and the New England Area Conference of the NAACP," said Juan Cofield, president of the conference.

MTA President Paul Toner and Cofield convened the meeting after talking to retired educator John Reed, who is active in both the MTA and NAACP and felt that more could be accomplished if the two groups worked together.

About 75 people attended the event, including several educators and activists from other New England states.



Photo by Laura Barrett

Members of the MTA and the NAACP got together in June to discuss common concerns. In the foreground, from left to right, are John Reed, a retired MTA member and NAACP activist; Karen Reed, a Dennis-Yarmouth teacher; and Sam Turner, a consultant to the Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity in Education.

The lack of ethnic minority teachers was one of the issues raised during the discussion.

"When I look out at the MTA membership, I see that 93 percent of teachers are Caucasian and 7 percent are ethnic minorities, while

the population of Massachusetts is 70 percent Caucasian and 30 percent ethnic minority," said Toner. "By having more ethnic minority role models working in our urban schools, we're going to have a more positive impact on students' lives."

Keynote speaker Dr. Ivory Toldson, an associate professor at Howard University, sought to shift the emphasis away from the term "achievement gap," because that term focuses on what students are failing to do.

He said the more relevant terms are "expectation gap," "opportunity gap" and "aspiration gap."

Toldson noted that when low-income black students do well in school despite having huge obstacles to overcome, that needs to be acknowledged. "When we don't acknowledge their strength, we do them a huge disservice," he said.

After the presentations, participants gathered in groups by region to have preliminary discussions about how they might be able to work together at the local level. Among the issues discussed were challenges that the MTA and NAACP have both identified in the past, including:

- Increasing the number of educators of color.
- Improving the quality and affordability of early childhood education.
- Encouraging and supporting more highly qualified and experienced educators to work in low-income area schools in order to improve the quality of instruction.
- Addressing racial disparities in school discipline and reducing school suspensions.

"This meeting was an important first step," Cofield said. "It's going to be up to all of us to make sure this is not an end step."

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More full-time faculty needed

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support for our campuses is a welcome and profoundly important reversal of this pattern. These dollars will support investments in academic excellence — including more full-time faculty — that the goal of national leadership implies.”

“I’m proud of the substantial increase to public higher education in this year’s budget and feel we must continue to look closely at how we can marshal our resources to best serve our students,” said Representative Tom Sannicandro, the House chairman of the Joint Committee on Higher Education.

During the budget debate, the MTA strongly supported the higher education funding increases and the creation of the special commission. The MTA will have one seat on the commission. The MTA is also pushing hard for passage of the bill that was one of the subjects of the July 17 hearing. The bill would increase the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty in public higher education and provide benefits to DCE faculty who work at least half time. Currently, even DCE faculty who teach a full course load are not eligible for state health insurance or pension benefits.

“As Senate chairman of the Higher Education Committee, I believe we must continually look at how to target scarce state dollars in order to maximize student success while, at the same time, keep down the costs of attending college and increase accessibility,” said Senator Michael Moore (D-Millbury).

Joseph LeBlanc, president of the Massachusetts Community College Council, said that while there are a number of personal and systemic reasons that not all students graduate, the MTA report rightly focuses on the loss of full-time faculty because that loss affects academic advising services that all students need, but that are particularly important for community college students. The MCCC is the MTA affiliate that represents community college faculty and professional staff.

“Community college students often have significant financial and academic needs, and many are the first in their families to go to college,” LeBlanc said. “Many of them need a lot of guidance in order to stay on track through graduation.”

“Students who enroll in our community colleges are actually

passing their courses at a good rate,” said MTA’s Elizabeth Shevlin, the lead author of the report. “During the period studied, 76 percent passed credit-bearing courses in their first year and 57 percent returned to the college for the second year. Then there is a huge drop-off, as only 17 percent actually fulfilled the requirements needed to receive a diploma or certificate within three years.

“We believe that too many students are falling through the cracks, in part because they don’t have the guidance they need,” Shevlin said. “Research shows that academic support programs, including academic advising provided by full-time faculty, lead to improved graduation rates. As recently as 2007, a state task force recommended increasing student advising services by increasing full-time faculty. Unfortunately, since then the percentage of the faculty that works full time has actually declined.”

To download a copy of the report, go to www.massteacher.org/reversethecourse.

Former ‘Road Scholar’ cites report and announces hiring plan

Shortly after the Legislature approved increased funding for community colleges and the MTA released “Reverse the Course,” the president of Northern Essex Community College told the staff at his college that he is planning to hire 12 new full-time faculty members.

Lane Glenn, president of NECC, described his own experiences as an underpaid adjunct in an e-mail sent to staff on July 25. Glenn regularly sends e-mails to college employees with updates and his own reflections on campus policies and practices.

“Without a doubt, the life of an adjunct instructor in higher

education can be challenging, frustrating and downright unfair,” he wrote. “And a new report, issued last week by the Massachusetts Teachers Association, suggests that by relying more and more on adjuncts, the state’s community colleges are not doing all they can to improve student graduation and success rates.”

Glenn went on to write, “The MTA does not suggest that adjunct instructors lack credentials or skills. Anyone who is around a community college campus long enough quickly recognizes that part-time faculty regularly come with the same credentials as full-time faculty, often have significant work experience, and can be truly talented teachers in the classroom.

“However, the report rightly notes what I experienced during my days as a ‘Road Scholar’: There is

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Lane Glenn

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Special election outcome reflects educators' activism

By Bob Duffy

MTA activists played a key role in the recent election of Edward Markey to the U.S. Senate, despite a short campaign season that coincided with the end of the school year.

"Our members worked hard, calling fellow educators and helping to get out the vote," said MTA President Paul Toner. The MTA made 180,000 phone calls and had more than 20,000 conversations with members in the weeks leading up to the June 25 special election vote.

The association also worked with other organizations, including the NEA, to fund and produce television ads supporting Markey, along with direct mail to voters.

Markey replaces longtime U.S. Senator John Kerry, who stepped down to become U.S. secretary of state earlier this year. The result of the vote was the latest in a string of Democratic victories in Massachusetts politics, which saw the re-election of President Barack Obama and the



MTA members strongly supported Edward Markey during his U.S. Senate campaign. Above left, Markey posed near an ice cream truck with Marguerite Gonsalves, president of the Malden Education Association. Both are former ice cream truck drivers. Above right, Markey received a warm welcome at the MTA Annual Meeting.

historic election of Elizabeth Warren to the U.S. Senate last November.

The Markey campaign was busiest at the end of the school year, "so it was a challenge to balance the end-of-the-year workload and still find time to phone bank and do other campaign activities," said Zachary Chase, an MTA Senate district coordinator for the Legislative and Political Action Team in the Norfolk and Suffolk District. Chase,

an education support professional in Dedham, said the group's efforts were "completely worthwhile, and we made a huge impact."

Bob Kostka, coordinator for the Plymouth and Norfolk LPAT group, agreed that while the timing wasn't optimal, the results were worth it, because the state currently has two U.S. senators who are pro-education and who witnessed the energetic

involvement of MTA members in their campaigns.

As a member of the U.S. House for 37 years, Markey established an excellent record in support of students and public education at all levels. He was a stalwart in the fight to adequately fund schools and colleges and to ensure that children across the country have equal access to learning and technology.

In May, the MTA- and NEA-recommended candidate addressed the Annual Meeting of Delegates and drew a standing ovation from the crowd of about 1,000 educators.

MTA members were among those best able to highlight Markey's strong support for public education, and they spread the message around the state, in person as well as by phone, to people who may not have been aware of his background.

Vinh Holmqvist, a retired Malden teacher, said Markey's long record in support of public education and organized labor was well known on the North Shore. Richard Liston, a retired Everett teacher and member of the MTA Board of Directors, said Markey "was always there for us and listened to our concerns."

The campaign "was hard, because people were so exhausted coming right on the heels of the Warren election," said Maryelen Calderwood, an ESP at UMass Amherst and coordinator of LPAT members in the Hampshire-Franklin-Worcester Senate District.

"But we saw how all those calls to our members led to success" and were an integral part of the campaign, she said.

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Technology brings opportunities and challenges

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Missy Skehan, an animated student with a purple bow in her hair, said there are “all kinds of really cool apps” for her iPad.

“There’s a game called Kid’s Journal,” she said. “You write on the iPad and say how you feel and where you are. You can also take a picture of what you’re writing about.”

Instant feedback

Guanci said that for certain skills, such as learning basic math facts, the iPad is much better than a worksheet because feedback is instant and students can move at their own pace. For example, students who already know how to do subtraction can move ahead to a new challenge, while those who need more practice have a variety of engaging apps to use. The students don’t have to wait for Guanci to correct their worksheets at some future time, when they’ve moved on to a different subject.

Teachers in Burlington are given the choice about whether to use the iPads in their own work. They are encouraged to try to find at least one way the devices can make their lives easier.

Todd Whitten, head of the Social Studies Department at Burlington High School, said that most teachers at BHS have embraced the devices, though to varying degrees.

“There was a teacher in my department who initially viewed it as a toy and didn’t think it was worthwhile,” Whitten said. “Then one day I was talking to him about how I was using barcodes and just having kids scan their assignments and he said, ‘Wait a minute, you’re not photocopying assignments anymore?’ I told him that, yes, I save up to half an hour not fighting with the machine, clearing jams and trying to get the stapler to work. For him that was, like, ‘Oh, wow. That would be awesome.’ He started doing it and realizes how much it helps him out.”

Whitten is also enthusiastic about use of the iPads for teaching social studies.

“Last year, when the Arab Spring was happening, we were able to engage with the current events as they were unfolding,” he said. “Before, I’d have to bring everyone to the computer lab and fire up the computers. There would always be a couple that didn’t

work, so I’d spend my time running around trying to be a tech guy. Now, I can walk in the classroom and say, ‘All right, I want this half of the room to follow this person on Twitter and this half to go onto CNN, and here’s the question I want you to answer in the next 15 minutes.’ They can get online instantaneously and use the time that was saved for a great conversation about real-life events.”

Matt Bolognese, a student in a world history class, ticked off a few other benefits of having the devices.

“I find it a lot easier to take notes since I’m a faster typer than I am a writer,” he said. “It’s also a lot easier to download homework.” That day, he was working on a group PowerPoint presentation about religious intolerance. He was searching online for photographs that showed Buddhist-on-Muslim violence in Myanmar and was planning to share his research with his partners using Google Docs.

Challenges

Despite the enthusiasm many teachers share, all acknowledge that

transitioning to a 1:1 program comes with challenges.

Student Distraction. Adults and students alike connected to the Internet can be distracted by e-mail, YouTube and social networking sites. Marcus said teachers should expect a “novelty period,” when students are tempted to surf the Web.

“During our novelty period, we had kids looking up, like, 200 pictures of cute kittens,” she said. “We talk a lot about the best use of your time, and most of the time they are doing what they are supposed to be doing. It’s up to us as teachers to engage them with good pedagogy. Good pedagogy is good pedagogy with or without devices.”

Benjamin Lally, head of the BHS English Department, agreed that distraction is the biggest concern, but added, “Kids have always been distracted. They’re teenagers. When I was in high school, we passed notes. Teachers need to manage their classrooms, like they always have.”

Whitten said the iPad also changes the dynamic of having the teacher up

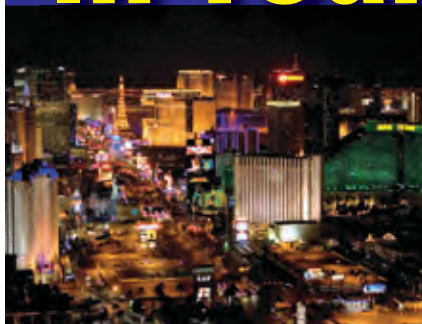
front, facing students. “You cannot teach in a classroom full of iPads from the front of the room,” he said. “I’ve always been fairly mobile. Now I’m even more mobile in my classroom than I was before.”

Inappropriate sites. Marcus said that installing filtering software is important but not foolproof. Students have to be taught what’s appropriate and what isn’t, and teachers and parents alike need to be vigilant. This issue is not unique to tablets, however, since it is relevant to any computer connected to the Internet. Few would argue that students should never have access to the Internet because of it.

Too much screen time. Some parents are concerned that the iPads will lead to their children spending too much time in front of a screen. The best counter to that is for schools to make sure students continue to participate in a variety of offline activities, including physical education, music, art and engaging in classroom-based discussions. Guanci

Continued on next page

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'Our mission is to prepare kids for the real world'

Continued from previous page

said that if parents are concerned about their children spending too much time in front of a screen on non-educational activities at home, it's up to them to set limits, as they would for television watching.

Learning curve for teachers. Learning how to use an iPad to consume content is easy; using it to produce content and learn new teaching strategies takes time and effort. Districts must figure out how to provide teachers with ongoing training and technical support.

Teachers who embrace technology in their own personal lives are more likely to enjoy spending time figuring out how to incorporate the devices into their classrooms. Those who aren't comfortable with computers are likely to use them a lot less. Eventually, Burlington teachers found that the iPads helped them save time and effort, but there is no doubt that both are required to get the program going.

Managing the devices. Students need training in how to use and protect

their iPads. Systems need to be established for making sure the devices are charged and the apps are updated.

In Burlington's elementary and middle schools, the iPads are assigned to individual students but kept in school. In high school, the students take their iPads home, and parents pay a fee of \$39 per year to insure them.

Inevitably, some students forget to charge their iPads. When that happens, finding enough outlets to charge them in an old building can be challenging.

Cost. Cost may be the single biggest barrier for districts that want to adopt a 1:1 initiative. Before Burlington invested in iPads, all of the district's schools were wired for Wi-Fi. Callahan described this as a necessary expense. "Technology is a utility," he said. "You can't say we're going to have a school with no plumbing. So why can you say we're going to have a school without Internet access?"

The iPads cost Burlington \$193,000 a year for the first three years and will cost the district \$235,000 a year when the 1:1 program is fully implemented. Larkin said that some —

but not all — of that expense is offset by reduced purchases of textbooks, paper and computers that were formerly used in computer and language labs. Some districts will find the initiative prohibitively expensive unless public or private funds are made available.

Writing on iPads. The iPad keypad is handy for taking notes and doing Internet searches, but is cumbersome for long-form writing. In Burlington, students who don't like the built-in keypad have the option of getting a case with an external keyboard. Still, many prefer to write on a computer. In low-income districts, schools will still need to make computers available to students who don't have them at home.

Penmanship. Guanci noted that two parents were concerned that their children would not be taught penmanship. "We still work on handwriting," Guanci said. She pointed to a container of pencils and then to the iPads and said they are both just "tools."

"Right now my students are writing stories by hand," she said. "Next they

will type them onto the iPad, then draw illustrations, which they upload. They will then publish their stories online with an app called Book Creator."

Written and Lally agree that tablets are useful tools, but they aren't magical.

"For each kid to have a tablet is a game changer for research capabilities," said Lally. "I'm also seeing improvement in my students' organizational skills. And they help teachers to be more efficient in our feedback and expectations. But I'm not noticing that students are writing any better. The quality of their thinking is still the quality of their thinking."

As far as Assistant Superintendent Larkin is concerned, whatever challenges exist, districts have to figure out how to overcome them if they want to make sure their students are ready for college or a career when they graduate.

"Our mission is to prepare kids for the real world," he said. "Kids will be going into jobs that don't even exist yet. It only makes sense that our jobs are changing as well."

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Carpet Cleaning	1 purchase/yr	\$20.00	1	\$20.00
Misc Shopping	8 purchases/yr	\$12.50	8	\$100.00
Flowers/Gifts	2 purchases/yr	\$6.50	2	\$13.00
Oil Changes	4 oil changes/yr	\$6.00	4	\$24.00
Cell Phone Service	12 payments/yr	\$8.25	12	\$99.00
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ENTERTAINMENT				
Bowling/Lasertag/Minigolf	4 purchases/yr	\$6.25	4	\$25.00
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Movies	6 tickets/yr	\$6.00	6	\$36.00
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TRAVEL				
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Car Rental	5 days/yr	\$16.25	5	\$81.25
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Ski Vacation	1 day pass/yr	\$15.00	1	\$15.00

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Campaign experience called 'very positive'

Continued from Page 15

Getting involved in political action is a great way to meet other MTA members and reconnect with friends and colleagues, as retired MTA member Francesca Bichisecchi of Lexington found out. As she stood waving a sign outside one of the debates between Markey and Republican opponent Gabriel Gomez, she said she had "met some of the most incredible people while working for the Warren campaign, and now Markey."

"I have had such great discussions about the needs of children and the needs of the environment," Bichisecchi said. "So the whole experience has been very positive."

She noted that educators offer the public a perspective that is too often ignored in political campaigns. "As advocates for ongoing improvement in our public schools, we must speak out on things like reasonable class size, increased salaries and things that improve the conditions for teaching and learning," she said. "There is a direct connection between activism and our quality of life."

Central's Ninth Grade Academy helps students succeed

Continued from Page 10

coaches, who act as a mix of social worker, teacher and liaison, and who take their cues from the team. The coaches work with students individually to deal with the myriad real-world challenges that conspire against success.

Northup said one coach last year literally “went and picked up a student and got him out of bed every morning until he got back on track.” Northup also credited Central High’s current principal, Thaddeus Tokarz, and the rest of the “excellent faculty and wonderful administrative team.”

Roughly 50 percent of Springfield students don’t pass to 10th grade on the first try, according to the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Last year, 94 percent of ninth-grade students at Central moved up, Northup said. “It’s a good number,” he added with satisfaction.

The teams also use online credit-recovery courses, and Northup said they are “very aggressive about

The teams also use online credit-recovery courses, and Northup said they are “very aggressive about reaching parents to get students signed in to summer school if they need it.”

reaching parents to get students signed in to summer school if they need it.”

He said Central’s high expectations for academics and conduct are long-held traditions and help to set the school apart. For example, he said, most teachers are not shy about taking a student using foul language in the hall aside to discuss “the value of professional conduct.”

The tradition of teachers “owning the halls” and enforcing quiet in hallways during class time are extensions of rules that “go way back” to Central’s time as a classical high school, he said. The school also enforces Springfield’s uniform requirement for students. “Those things make us an unusual school in many ways,” Northup said.

Despite some of the challenges — more than three-quarters of students are from low-income households, and almost a quarter

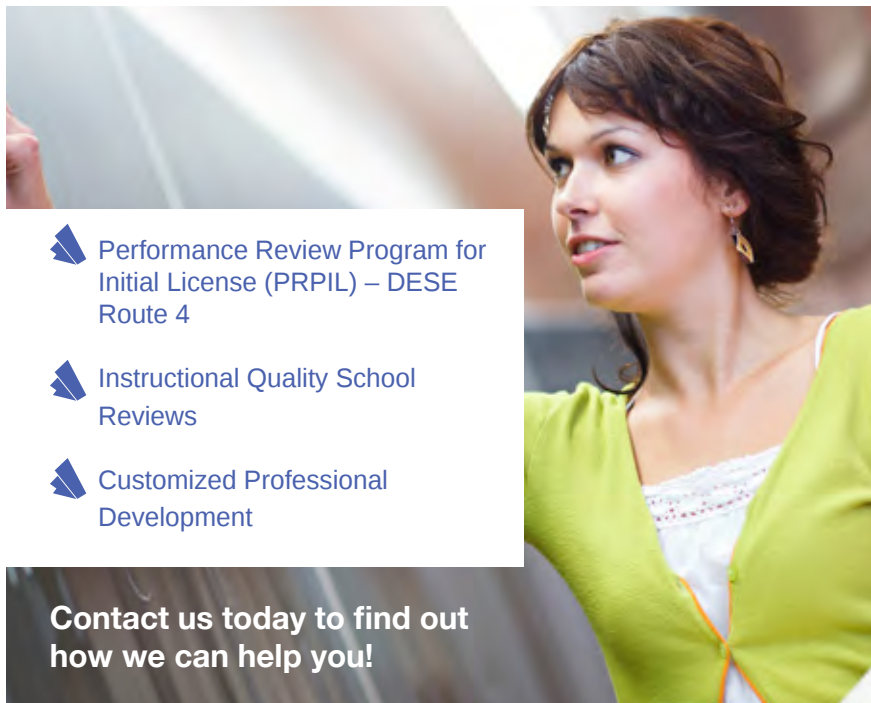
come from homes where English is not the first language — the school is winning notice far and wide, with Bettencourt’s Massachusetts Teacher of the Year award, a 2013 National Merit Magnet School Award, a *Washington Post* 2013 High School Challenge Index Award and a MassInsight Teacher in Excellence

Award this year for AP English teacher Catherine Grygorcewicz.

Northup said the best thing about the academy model is that teachers really get to know their students and build upon their strengths. The students, in turn, start to really trust their teachers’ high expectations.

Said Northup, “How powerful is it for a student to hear, ‘I’d like to see you get an A. And you can do it. And here’s how.’ For an impressionable kid, how powerful is that?”

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A social occasion



A cool time was had by all at the ice cream social held in Williamstown during the MTA Summer Conference. The event was sponsored by the MTA ESP Committee and Educators Insurance Agency, a partner of MTA Benefits. Above left, Lois Powers, a member of the Classified Staff Union at UMass Boston and the MTA Board, was hoping for a winner as she chose a rubber duck that was part of a gift card giveaway. The EIA staff handled the serving. Above right, from left to right, are Tammy Gaffney, Zachary Patten, Anna Briare, Eric Schulman and Tiffany Santilli.

Kids back at college? It's time to adjust your policy

Have you just sent your child back to college? If so, you might be breathing a sigh of relief — or just sighing at the end of a summer made more fun by having kids back in the house.

Now that your child is living away from home for a couple of months, it may be time to make changes to your insurance policies.

First, let's consider the valuables she packed. If something were to happen to her new computer, cellphone or another possession, would your homeowners' insurance policy cover the loss? Contact Educators Insurance Agency to discuss exactly how your policy works and how it needs to change, depending on whether a child lives on or off campus. (Hint: Renters insurance may be in order.)

Let's also think about how she traveled back to school. If she brought a car to campus for the first time, she's probably pretty excited, and with good reason. A car can mean better access to off-campus jobs and weekend trips. But let's look at the impact on your insurance.

If your child is listed as an additional driver on your policy, you will need to change the car's garaging location. Garaging refers



to the location in which the car will be parked and can affect insurance premiums.

It may also be time to evaluate moving your child to a separate insurance policy. Your agent can work with you and your child to see what makes the most sense for both cost and liability purposes.

Even if your child isn't bringing a car back to school, talk to your agent. If she remains on your policy to use your car over winter break or during visits home, you may be able to reduce your premiums to reflect her reduced usage.

All that adds up to savings — which makes for a richer college

It may also be time to evaluate moving your child to a separate insurance policy. Your agent can work with you and your child to see what makes the most sense for both cost and liability purposes.

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For more information, contact an advisor at Educators Insurance Agency toll-free at 877.284.7646 from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays or visit EIA's website, www.educatorsinsuranceagency.com.

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NECC to hire faculty members

Continued from Page 14

only so much time in a day, and when you are not paid for what you do outside the classroom, or given the space and tools you need to advise students, develop new curriculum or participate in professional development activities, you are far more likely to spend the time you have doing other things — like earning a living (and not getting sick while waiting for health care benefits).”

With NECC’s share of new state funds, Glenn wrote, the college will be running national searches for 12 new full-time faculty members.

Joseph LeBlanc, a member of the NECC faculty and president of the MTA’s Massachusetts Community College Council, said he welcomed Glenn’s thoughtful reflections, his kind words about the MTA report and his pledge to hire more full-time faculty members. In a letter to Glenn, however, LeBlanc did make one request.

“[W]hile the college’s search may be national in scope, I would urge you to also cast your gaze close to home,” LeBlanc wrote on July 31. “As you and your administrators are no doubt aware, world-class faculty currently work as adjuncts here at Northern Essex. Many of those individuals have already made a positive contribution to our community and would love nothing more than the opportunity to do so on a full-time basis.”

Conference a ‘win-win situation’

Continued from Page 5

in itself,” said Kathleen Meltsakos, an Andover High School paraprofessional and a member of the MTA Executive Committee. “Then when you add in reunions of friends, some of whom you only see at the Summer Conference, and the opportunity to network with colleagues and take professional development workshops, it becomes a win-win situation and a fantastic opportunity to grow as a person and increase your toolkit for the upcoming year.”

EdTalks, which showcased “ideas worth sharing” and educating the whole student, featured seven outside-the-box thinkers, including a Natick High School educator who teaches her students the value of meditation, a Burlington librarian with a passion to ignite children’s natural motivation to read and a professor who uses cityscapes as a palette for his students at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design.

The 2014 MTA Summer Conference is scheduled from Aug. 3 to 7.

To see photos of the conference, please visit flickr.com/mtacommunications. A collection of tweets, Facebook posts and photos can be found at [#mtasummer](https://www.storify.com/mtasummer) on storify.com. EdTalks presentations will be posted at www.youtube.com/massteacher.



Photo by Jair Mendes

Former MTA President Kathleen Roberts welcomed Education Secretary Matt Malone, who spoke during the Opening Session.

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Budget is a step forward for higher ed

By Jean Conley

The \$33.6 billion fiscal 2014 budget signed by Governor Deval Patrick on July 12 marks a significant advance for public higher education investment in Massachusetts.

The compromise budget, hammered out by a six-member House-Senate conference committee, increases funding for the University of Massachusetts, the nine state universities and the 15 community colleges in the Commonwealth by \$97 million.

The Legislature's move prompted UMass, the state universities and the community colleges to hold the line on tuition and fees for the first time in 12 years. The additional funding put the brakes on years of declining aid to higher education, which led to higher debt loads for students and fewer resources for the state's public campuses.

Education increases from pre-kindergarten through graduate school



had been proposed in the governor's original budget bill, known as House 1, reflecting considerable input from the MTA. Higher education spending won the commitment of Speaker Robert DeLeo in the House budget proposal, and the increases were agreed to by the Senate when the conference committee developed the final spending plan to be sent to Patrick.

The MTA strongly advocated for greater education investment throughout the process, with President Paul Toner urging members to contact

their legislators in favor of the House funding levels in the final conference committee report.

While the budget reflects gains in higher education and other areas, it does not include new revenue that would have been generated by proposals to raise the income tax while holding down increases for low- and middle-income families and seniors. Plans to generate almost \$2 billion a year were supported by both the governor and the Campaign for Our Communities, which includes the MTA and many other organizations.

The Legislature ultimately passed a bill that raises \$800 million for transportation over three years.

In another priority area, the budget establishes a Special Commission on Higher Education Quality, Efficiencies and Finance, which the MTA supported along with the efforts to provide more resources for colleges and universities.

The MTA will have one seat on the commission. The purpose of the commission is to study the funding of the higher education system, look at staffing, including the use of adjunct faculty, and make recommendations for changes. The commission is similar to one proposed in a bill filed by Senator Michael Moore (D-Millbury).

In July, MTA members testified at a hearing before the Joint Committee on Higher Education on the need for more full-time tenure-track faculty in the public higher education system in Massachusetts.

The hearing came on the heels of an MTA report, "Reverse the Course," by the association's Center for Education Policy and Practice, which found that only 28 percent of all classes at the state's community colleges were taught by full-time professors in 2010-2011. The rest were taught by adjuncts, who do not have the mandate, administrative resources or salaries to provide advising services to students.

Donnie McGee, a professor at Bristol Community College and vice president of the Massachusetts Community College Council, testified that the median salary for a community college professor is about \$61,000, but an adjunct professor teaching a full load of classes earns only about \$30,000 a year. Adjuncts also generally receive no health insurance or pension benefits.

Those testifying in favor of a bill to increase the percentage of full-time professors and offer benefits to adjuncts, "An Act to Maintain Faculty and College Excellence in the Commonwealth" (House 1086), noted that while they appreciate the Legislature's increase in this year's budget for public higher education, funding is still one-third lower than it was at its peak in fiscal 2001, when adjusted for inflation.

An effort to revive the Foundation Budget Review Commission, which had been adopted unanimously by the Senate, was not included in the FY14 budget. Passing that legislation, "An Act Reviving the Foundation Budget Review Commission" (House Bill 457/Senate Bill 207), remains a top MTA priority. A hearing is scheduled for Oct. 17.

The foundation budget has not been reviewed in depth for 20 years. The legislation is sponsored by the co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Education.

Included in the FY14 budget, however, is a new Early Education and Care Commission.

The MTA will have a seat on the commission.

Other MTA priority legislation includes:

■ **"An Act to Improve Quality in Early Education Centers" (House 477/Senate 223).** Establishes a process, through negotiation, for improving the quality of early learning and child-care services and expanding the opportunities for educational advancement for child care providers.

■ **"An Act to Protect the Integrity of Initiative and Referendum Petitions" (House 627/Senate 332).** Regulates the initiative petition process to end shady practices and restore integrity and confidence in the ballot initiative and referendum system by establishing a process for guaranteeing a fair procedure for collecting signatures. Currently there are no regulations on overseeing individuals who are paid to gather signatures. The petition process is being threatened by groups utilizing a growing industry of paid signature gatherers. A hearing is scheduled for Sept. 18 before the Joint Committee on Election Laws.

For updates, please visit the MTA website, www.massteacher.org.



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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 and school vacations.

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.

FITCHBURG — Robert Zbikowski: second Thursday of each month (walk in), 4 to 8 p.m., Fitchburg Teachers Association office, 21 Culley St., Fitchburg; 978.790.8864, or at home, 978.297.0123; e-mail: zibstar702@verizon.net.

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, Wellesley; 781.325.2553; e-mail: emccourt.mccc@gmail.com. (Call or e-mail for assistance.)

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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EARLY EDUCATION ORGANIZING CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

The MTA, AFT Massachusetts and allied organizations continue to advocate for passage of *An Act to Improve Quality in Early Education Centers* (House Bill 477 and Senate Bill 223), which would provide a collective voice for educators serving some of the most vulnerable children in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Early Childhood Educators Union is leading the effort to get the legislation enacted. For updates and information on how to get involved, please visit www.meceu.org.



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'Great human beings' are writer's subjects

Continued from Page 11

engagement in Connecticut, Armstrong asked the road manager to stop at a service station so he could use the restroom. The station's white owner, despite knowing who his customer was and telling him he admired his work, said, "I don't allow colored people to use my restroom."

Carlson said Armstrong would become angry when he saw racism aimed at others, but when it was directed at him, he'd shake his head and become quiet and philosophical, as would Ellington.

Carlson said that when he speaks to youthful readers, he tells them to enjoy Armstrong's and Ellington's music, but "then realize that these were not only great artists, but great human beings."

Roberts and Gaskins, for whom the awards are named, attended the dinner and were recognized by MTA President Paul Toner, who announced that MTA members would be making a \$2,000 charitable contribution for each of the awards in the name of the recipient.

Forest said award winners over the years "have served immigrants, language minorities and the homeless; students with special needs; people who have been denied health care and education; and victims of discrimination based on race, class, gender, disability and sexual orientation."

"But they have all shared a passion and a commitment to enriching the lives of those they serve," Forest said.



On the reading team

Wally the Green Monster, who serves as the goodwill ambassador for the MTA Red Sox Reading Game and the MTA Red Sox Most Valuable Educator Program, signed autographs and helped hand out posters at the WGBH FunFest on July 13. The family event, which was co-sponsored by the MTA, featured ice cream, food, interactive children's games, face painting and live performances. A story on the MTA's summer reading programs and other partnerships that promote student achievement appears on Page 28.

Grants help educators meet students' needs

Continued from Page 8

best efforts, our locals don't always take advantage of the financial assistance we offer them."

Those who receive the grants find them invaluable.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you! Because of the MTA's kindness, I was able to purchase two complete toolkits and belts for students," said Sue Gieriej, a teacher at Cape Cod Regional Technical High School and longtime participant in the program.

Educators use the money in many different ways. In the 2012-13 school year, grant money was awarded to reimburse MTA local associations that purchased everything from work boots to winter coats and toiletries for students. The Mass Child does not reimburse for food or for gift cards.

To participate in the program, MTA preK-12 local association leaders must first purchase items and/or services for students, then submit the receipts to the board of The Massachusetts Child. The board meets several times during the school year to review requests so local associations are not left carrying a big bill for too long.

For more information, contact Massachusetts Child President Christine Mulroney by calling 508.846.4257 or e-mailing clmulroney@gmail.com. Fact sheets and reimbursement forms for The Massachusetts Child grant program are available on the MTA website at www.massteacher.org/masschild.

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Obituaries

Jean L. Blessington, 85, of Duxbury. Taught mathematics at Belmont High School and then became an elementary teacher in Kingston for 33 years, retiring in 1988. March 16.

Harry W. Carter, 79, of Auburn, Maine. Taught in Quincy for more than 35 years. May 11.

Joseph J. Catino, 77, of Rutland and Worcester. Was a welding instructor and head of the welding division at Worcester Vocational High

School for more than 30 years. March 20.

Raymond J. Chelte, 81, of Chicopee. Was an MTA field representative for many years, primarily working with locals in the western part of the state. Assisted in negotiating contracts, handling grievances and strengthening union relationships. July 16.

Frank P. Conte, 66, of Millis. Taught at Coolidge Junior High

School in Natick, Natick High School and Wellesley Middle School. March 20.

Joan Cormack, 82, of Ludlow, Mass., and Vero Beach, Fla. Taught in East Longmeadow, Hampden and Springfield for more than 29 years. May 15.

Louis "Skip" Eiserman, 68, of East Hampstead, N.H. Taught social studies in Andover for 30 years. March 17.

Mary J. Frati, 84, of Quincy. Was a first-grade teacher in Quincy and served as regional director of the South Shore Remedial Reading School Program. March 21.

Mary Frenning, 87, of Wellesley. Was a guidance counselor for the Weston school system for 25 years. Feb. 5.

Elizabeth A. Fyrberg, 67, of Rutland. Was a teacher and guidance counselor in the Worcester school system. April 15.

Eileen P. Kenary, 65, of Teaticket. Was an elementary teacher in the Worcester school system for 34 years, retiring in 2005. April 11.

Roberta Kreplick, 73, of Salem. Taught at Marblehead Middle School and in the Masconomet Regional School District for 30 years. May 5.

Joseph F. McHugh, Jr., 71, of Hopedale. Taught in the Medfield school system for 38 years before his retirement in 2002. April 26.

Claire Mulready, 81, of Milford. Taught in Brockton and Weymouth for 11 years and then was a bilingual teacher in Hudson and Marlborough for 20 years. June 15.

Patricia C. O'Neill, 78, of South Hadley. Taught for 39 years in the Marshfield, Springfield and Granby schools, retiring in 1995. May 19.

Patricia C. Powers, 79, of Holyoke. Taught in Chicopee for 30 years. July 24.

Albert J. Romano, Jr., 79, of Worcester and Fitchburg. Was a teacher and principal in Fitchburg for 30 years before retiring in 1989. June 3.

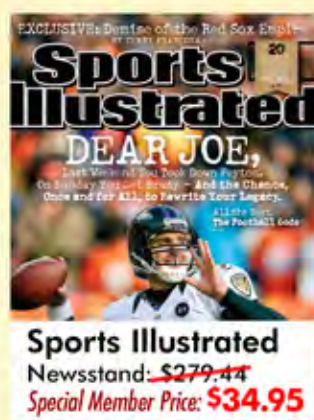
Doris Stockdale, 88, of Webster. Taught mathematics in Webster, Oxford and Lee City, Fla., before retiring in 1986. June 7.

John E. Wheeler, 69, of Worcester. Was a mathematics and computer teacher for more than 30 years in Northbridge. July 2.

George Yianakes, of North Reading, Mass., and Saco, Maine. Taught and was a basketball coach at North Reading High School before retiring. April 28.

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Massachusetts Teachers Association

MTA Today

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Partnerships promote student achievement

By Bob Duffy

As summer turns to fall, the Red Sox are in the midst of a playoff quest, the Celtics are gearing up for a new season and the Bruins are preparing for another run at the Stanley Cup.

MTA academic achievement programs that involve partnerships with all three teams allow students and educators to be part of the action.

The MTA Red Sox Reading Game, which is drawing to a close for 2013, promotes reading and literacy among Massachusetts students. The annual contest is open to all Massachusetts students in kindergarten through eighth grade who pledge to read nine books over the summer.

In July, the thousands of student entries that arrived this year were entered into a drawing for free tickets to a Red Sox home game. The 100 winners and their teachers are now preparing to attend the Sept. 21 game at Fenway Park against the Toronto Blue Jays.

A companion program to the reading game, the MTA Red Sox Most Valuable Educator Program, recognizes the hard work that educators do all year.

Anyone who works in public education or helps students — a teacher, paraprofessional, coach or librarian, for example — can be nominated. Those selected by the Sox based on essays win free tickets to a Saturday home game, take part in a ceremony on the field, hear their names announced over the loudspeaker, see their photos displayed prominently on the field's giant video screen and get prime seats behind home plate.

"It was an honor representing all Massachusetts teachers in a positive light," said MVE Meredith Moore, a math teacher at Methuen High School and a member of the Methuen Education Association.

MVE Nancy Barile, an English language arts teacher at Revere High School and a member of the Revere Education Association, said being cheered by the Fenway faithful for her work as an educator was "probably the coolest thing that's ever happened to me in my life."

"You have no idea how much it meant to my family and me," Barile said.



Michael Cummo/Boston Red Sox

Nancy Barile, an English language arts teacher at Revere High School, joined Wally the Green Monster on the field at Fenway Park. She was honored as an MTA Red Sox Most Valuable Educator.

MVE Nancy Barile, an English language arts teacher at Revere High School and a member of the Revere Education Association, said being cheered by the Fenway faithful for her work as an educator was "probably the coolest thing that's ever happened to me in my life."

Another fast-growing partnership is the MTA Boston Celtics Honor Roll program, which awards game tickets and a halftime trip to the parquet floor of the Garden to students who achieve a B average or have an exemplary attendance record.

Students who make the MTA Boston Celtics Honor Roll have the opportunity to purchase buy-one, get-one-free tickets and reserve additional seats to the same game at a discount. At each game, up to 20 participants who are on their schools' honor rolls are invited to appear on the court and high-five the players as they take the court.

Meanwhile, interest in the Bruins is expected to be high this year following their appearance in the Stanley Cup Finals in June. The team's I.C.E. School program — the letters stand for I Can Excel — provides educators with a way to tap into the excitement.

"The Boston Bruins I.C.E. School program is designed to make learning stick," said Kerry Collins, director of community relations for the team.

Lesson plans for students in kindergarten through eighth grade "incorporate hockey, Bruins players and Bruins stats" and reflect the Common Core State Standards, she said.

For information about the MTA Boston Celtics Honor Roll program, call the Celtics' Chrissy Cronin at 617.854.8034 or e-mail ccronin@celtics.com. For information about the Bruins I.C.E. School program, e-mail Community Relations Coordinator Ashley Hansen at amhansen@bostonbruins.com or call 617.624.1923. For information about the MTA Boston Red Sox Reading Game and Most Valuable Educator program, visit www.readingmatters.org.