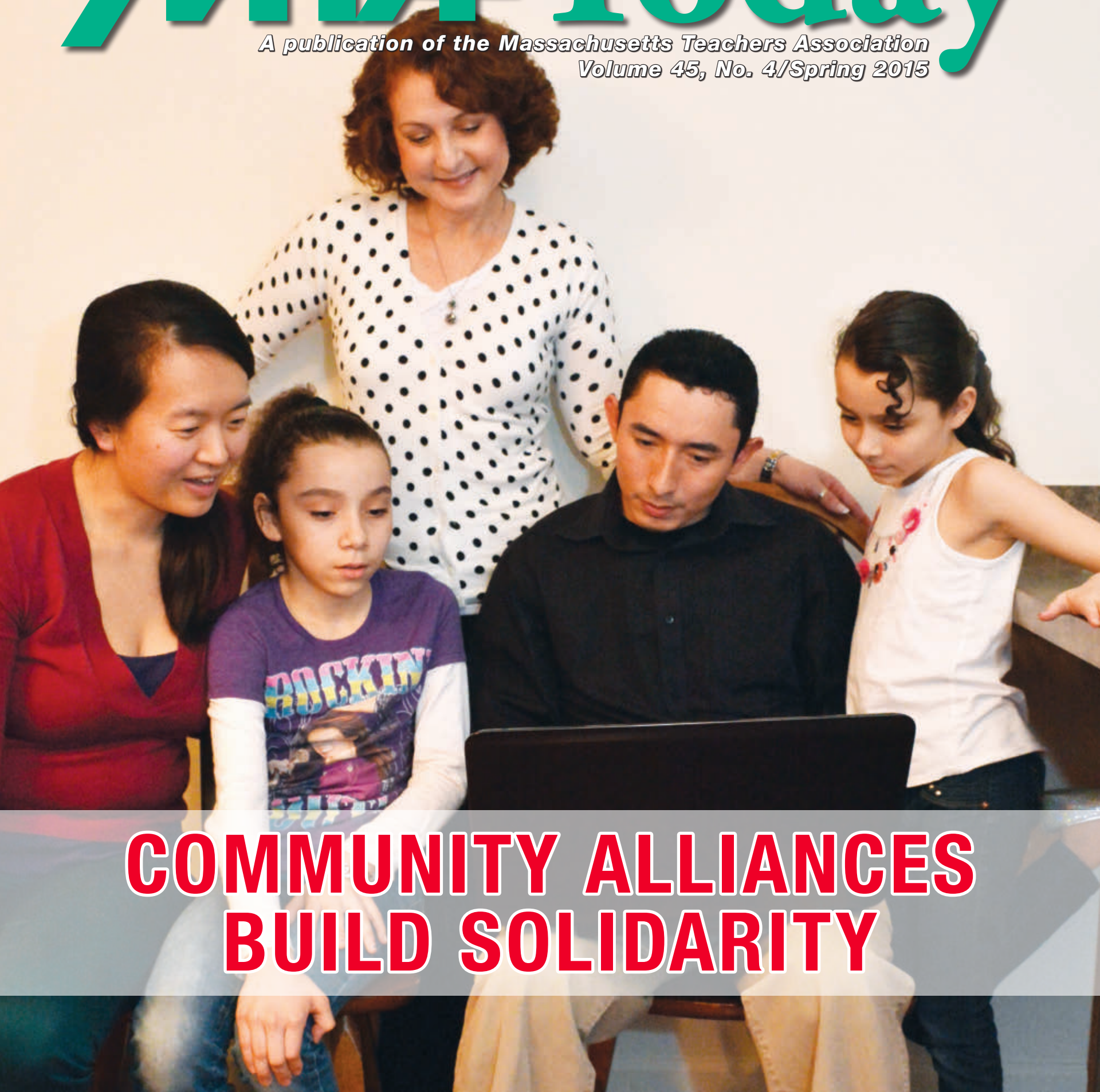


'ANOTHER GREAT SEASON' FOR READING GAME



MTA Today

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**COMMUNITY ALLIANCES
BUILD SOLIDARITY**



For the love of books

MTA President Barbara Madeloni visited the Arnone Elementary School in Brockton on Read Across America Day, which was held on March 2. Children in teacher Catherine Wedge's kindergarten class gathered around as Madeloni read two Dr. Seuss books. She then worked with the students on a reading activity. Her appearance was part of the national celebration of reading marking the birthday of the Springfield-born author, whose real name was Theodor Geisel. Thousands of students, schools and visitors take part in Read Across America events each year.

Photo by Bob Duffy

MTA Today

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A section featuring articles and other information about the 2015 MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates — including statements by candidates in contested races — runs from Page 21 to Page 33. This issue of MTA Today also includes the spring edition of the MTA Advantage.

MTA'S MISSION STATEMENT

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

MTA President
Barbara Madeloni

MTA Vice President
Janet Anderson

Executive Director-Treasurer
Ann Clarke

Communications Director/Editor
James Sacks

Staff Assistant
Janice Morrissey

Graphic Arts Assistant
Alison Donato

Publisher
Ann Clarke

ON THE COVER

Coalitions that include MTA members, parents and other community residents are of great value to students, schools and families. In communities such as Framingham, Holyoke and Everett, educators are working with organizers from Jobs With Justice on a range of crucial issues. On the cover, Framingham teacher Maria Rosaura Quirarte-Perez, standing, and JWJ's Lily Huang, left, look at photos with Nelson Hernandez and his daughters, Dariana, seated beside Huang, and Daniela Alexandra. The Hernandez family is active in Voz de la Comunidad, a local group that is involved in education issues. Coverage begins on Page 6. A story about the 2015 MTA Red Sox Reading Game getting underway for the season appears on Page 40.



Cover photos by Chris Christo and Rick Friedman
Cover design by Alison Donato



The Massachusetts Teachers Association
20 Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108
800.392.6175 or 617.878.8000
FAX: 617.742.7046
www.massteacher.org

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Quote-Unquote

"By passing this bill, we bridge the gap between helplessness and hope for more than five million educationally deprived children."

— Excerpt from President Lyndon Baines Johnson's remarks on signing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act on April 11, 1965

Holyoke resists state receivership

By Scott McLennan

In the face of Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester's recommendation to put the Holyoke Public Schools under state receivership, the Holyoke Teachers Association and the MTA have been working closely with partners throughout the city to build resistance to the plan and offer a more authentic community-based vision.

HTA President Gus Morales said that Chester's "aggressive agenda of taking control of the schools has left many people wondering, 'Why this? Why now?'"

"Even in its own review of the district, the commissioner's review team noted that gains were being made," Morales continued. "And in pushing for receivership, Commissioner Chester has not revealed any ideas that he has for improving outcomes in our schools."

At a meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on March 24, Chester told board members he would recommend that the district be placed in receivership. He urged them to vote on the issue at one of their next two monthly meetings.

The BESE vote, which Chester needs before he can appoint a receiver, could be taken as early as April 28, one day after the BESE holds a required public hearing in Holyoke.

Ever since the idea of receivership arose, the MTA has been active in the campaign to keep the city's schools in community hands. In recent months, MTA staff members in Holyoke have been assisting the HTA in an intense organizing campaign to oppose the takeover.

First, HTA members held their own forums so they could identify issues of concern and come up with possible approaches to the issues facing the schools. The HTA and its partners at Western Massachusetts Jobs With Justice — working together as the Reclaim Our Schools coalition — then held another forum attended by nearly 300 elected officials, parents and other members of the community.

At that forum, held on April 2, members of the Holyoke School Committee and City Council, along with Superintendent Sergio Páez, vowed to oppose a state takeover. Parents and students expressed their faith in Holyoke's educators and voiced serious doubts about the state's ability to improve school achievement through receivership.

The Reclaim Our Schools coalition subsequently held forums so that community members could share their views on what the public schools need.

At the March BESE meeting, MTA President



Above, HTA President Gus Morales addresses a community forum. At left, Holyoke High School graduate and Springfield Education Association member Jenna Kaepfel moderates a discussion on the threatened state takeover of the Holyoke Public Schools. Panelists, from left, included Senator Don Humason, City Council President Kevin Jourdain, Mayor Alex Morse and Superintendent Sergio Páez. Not pictured are School Committee member Devin Sheehan and Representative Aaron Vega, both of whom also participated.

Photos by Scott McLennan

Holyoke Teachers Association President Gus Morales said that Chester's "aggressive agenda of taking control of the schools has left many people wondering, 'Why this? Why now?'"

Barbara Madeloni criticized Chester's report for not offering a comprehensive look at the city's schools.

"I find it astonishing that it does not include a picture of the complicated lives of the children of Holyoke, the real efforts being made every day to support children, and the wide disparities in resources between the Holyoke Public Schools and those in wealthier communities," Madeloni told BESE members during the public comment portion.

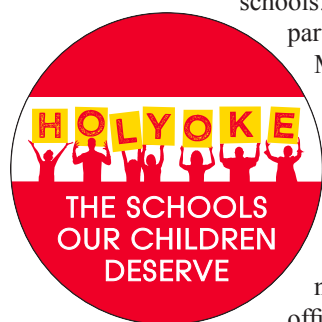
Educators and others have questioned why the DESE should be trusted to improve academic performance in the Holyoke Public Schools, given the state's long track record of failed education initiatives and private partnerships in the district.

The MTA and the HTA consider it reckless of the state to remove democratic local control of the public schools. Under receivership, the state-appointed receiver, rather than an elected school committee, has ultimate authority over the schools.

In the last several weeks, many MTA locals, joined by unions and other organizations around the state, have voiced their support for keeping Holyoke's schools in community hands.

"This has been incredibly challenging, but we have become a better union and closer community in uniting against this threat," Morales said.

For updates and further information, please visit www.massteacher.org/holyoke.



Organizing and acting together to fight back

As I write, the weather cannot seem to decide if it is winter or spring. The sun is higher in the sky and the days are longer, but a cold wind causes me to wrap myself in a coat and scarf as if it were January. So too with the stories I could tell of the current state of public education. As the saying goes, there is good news and bad news.

First, the bad news. The appointments of James Peyser as Massachusetts secretary of education and Paul Sagan as the chair of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, along with Governor Charlie Baker's opening

salvos about raising the charter school cap, tell us that the people in power have set their sights on undermining public education in Massachusetts.

The governor's proposed early retirement offer for state employees, with little or no backfill, represents an

underhanded attempt to meet his old campaign promise of laying off 5,000 state employees. And his proposed Group Insurance Commission changes put the burden of rising health care costs squarely and unfairly on the backs of working people.

Meanwhile, Commissioner of Education Mitchell Chester has his eyes on a state takeover of the Holyoke Public Schools. The commissioner's insistence on takeovers is profoundly undemocratic, as public schools get taken out of public hands, and it signals a doubling down on high-stakes testing, the erosion of union protections and the privatization of our public schools. As goes Holyoke, so goes Massachusetts.

This is not hyperbole.

From New Orleans to New York, Chicago to Los Angeles, those who wish to privatize and profit from our public schools have used high-stakes testing and charter schools to "prove" that schools are failing, close public schools and mount an assault on unions. In so doing, they are attacking the very possibility of public education and democracy.

While these efforts have been more stealthy in Massachusetts until recently (and too often experienced only by students and teachers in districts that encounter the most economic and

We are part of a growing movement of educators, students, parents and community organizers using our strength in numbers to reclaim public education.

racial injustice), we need to be ready for a full-on assault in the months ahead.

Now, some good news.

Across the Commonwealth, educators, students, parents and communities are waking up to the dangers we face and, in ways big and small, organizing and acting together to fight back.

In Framingham, teachers at the Barbieri Elementary School wrote a compelling letter to the editor about the ill effects of PARCC.

In late March, local presidents and kindergarten teachers gathered in Dedham to plan actions to educate families about Teaching Strategies GOLD, the widely used kindergarten assessment, with the goal of ending it as a requirement.

Wachusett Regional Education Association President Heidi Lahey is organizing community discussions on the schools that Wachusett students deserve.

In Concord, President Merrie Najimy and her Concord Teachers Association negotiating team are reaching out to the community and putting academic freedom and teacher autonomy on the bargaining table.

And in Holyoke, the focal point of the current assault on public education, educators, students, parents and community leaders are organizing forums, knocking on doors, holding rallies, sending letters and letting the commissioner and the state know that they fiercely object to the proposed takeover of the public schools.

Meanwhile, in public higher education, our brothers and sisters in the University of Massachusetts system continue to fight for their bargained raises.

Here in Massachusetts, our voices are beginning to blossom, like spring buds, as are the voices of educators, students and parents across the country.

Three of our NEA partner associations in the Northeast have called for opting out of state-mandated tests: New Jersey, New York and Rhode Island.

In Seattle, the opt-out movement caused Garfield High School administrators to cancel

their version of the PARCC English exam, the SBAC English language arts test.

We are part of a growing movement of educators, students, parents and community organizers using our strength in numbers to reclaim public education. We should be proud of what we have achieved in finding our voices and asserting our power.

The work of creating the schools our students deserve, getting the resources to fund those schools and building union strength and solidarity only happens with shared commitment and action.

In the weeks and months ahead, we will continue to build this movement in the following ways, as well as others:

- By working with locals' executive boards, school committee members and others to pass resolutions that support our legislation calling for a three-year moratorium on the high-stakes use of testing.

- By supporting and extending the efforts in Holyoke, the Wachusett communities and the many other towns and cities across the Commonwealth in which grassroots organizing is taking hold.

- By informing our communities about the devastating and wasteful use of testing.

- By shifting our collective bargaining emphasis to include the community and putting the big issues that matter to us as educators on the table.

- By holding the feet of UMass President Robert Caret to the fire over our contracts.

- By participating in the Fight for \$15 not only for retail workers, but as part of the struggle for economic justice for everyone.

- And by building toward a fall movement to increase resources through a two-tiered fair tax system.

It has been a long winter, but look around: Spring has sprung. And there will be much more to come.

In solidarity, and in anticipation of many great things ahead,

Barbara



Barbara Madeloni
MTA President

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.

Letters to the Editor

Modern methods and technology could make civics courses exciting

To the Editor:

Associate Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has lamented the decline of civics teaching in our public schools.

Our students have almost no idea how our government works. We cannot have a democracy with an uninformed, ignorant populace.

I think one of the reasons that civics courses declined was because students hated them; they were boring and thought to be irrelevant.

Modern teaching methods and technology could make civics courses fascinating and exciting. It is time to bring them back. They are most certainly relevant.

*Bob Hall, MTA Retired
Former science teacher*

Endorsing legislation on fossil fuels would help protect our future

To the Editor:

The MTA should protect our future by endorsing “An Act relative to public investment in fossil fuels,” filed by Representative Marjorie Decker (D-Cambridge) and Senator Benjamin Downing (D-Pittsfield).

Fossil fuel holdings total \$1.3 billion, or 2.6 percent of total investment in the state’s Pension Reserves Investment Trust. That money could be invested in the thriving alternative energy market or in other areas that are not financially risky and are not gravely endangering our atmosphere and our climate.

This is the financially prudent thing to do for members’ pensions. Long-term studies show that portfolios without fossil fuel investments do as well as and sometimes outperform those with fossil fuel investments. Likewise, economists warn of a coming “carbon bubble” that will devalue fossil fuel investments.

The philanthropic Rockefeller Brothers Fund, with \$860 million invested, announced plans to

divest from fossil fuels in September, calling the decision both “moral and economic.”

Individual teachers, retirees and other state workers can go to DivestOurPensionsNow.org to lend their support.

The Massachusetts Nurses Association has supported the bill in the Legislature, as have many other organizations.

The collective voice of teachers, who care about the future of their students and who depend on secure pensions, is badly needed as an endorsement.

*Lauren Ockene
Brookline Educators Union*

New computer-based PARCC test is poorly designed and inadequate

To the Editor:

A painfully expensive, poorly designed test with inadequate technology: That sums up the new PARCC assessment from Pearson.

This first computer-based test for Massachusetts is a big selling point for Pearson. But on the ELA test, third-graders have to scroll through reading selections in a 4-inch-by-4-inch box. They are never able to see the whole text at once.

One piece of text in too small a window is bad, but this test asks students to toggle between two or more pieces of text in the same window. Meanwhile, students have to answer questions in yet another window.

Students compose essay responses in a window about 1.5 inches high. They never see the entire text they are composing, and there is no ability to cut and paste. The math test offers even worse technology.

In real life, none of us reads or writes under these conditions. Why would we ask this of children taking a high-stakes test?

The content is no better designed than the technology. Questions are framed in the same stilted language for both 8-year-olds and 15-year-olds. Many adults have been puzzled by questions on the practice tests, and well-educated adults have gotten items wrong on the fourth- and fifth-grade tests.

The students may fail, the test may fail, but Pearson will be paid generously. Our children are the guinea pigs.

I urge students, parents and educators to speak out about the appalling quality of this test.

*Kalpna Guttman
Newton Teachers Association*

Teaching for coverage is not the same as teaching for learning

To the Editor:

I just took the MTA Time-on-Testing Survey, and my responses will reflect that I don’t spend very much classroom time preparing my students for state-level standardized tests.

I think administrators would agree with me that the best way to prepare my students is to just teach the content. However, many, many of the instructional choices I make are driven by the need to “cover” all the standards that I know will appear on those standardized tests.

Teaching for coverage and teaching for learning are not the same thing. So while my students don’t spend much time taking practice tests and open-response questions, I know that my students do feel that we are flying through content, especially in March and April as the math testing window bears down on us. It’s like a forced feeding that perverts the learning process.

Regardless of how they have been marketed, the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the Common Core State Standards are not narrower and deeper — just somewhat deeper. We don’t have time to explore, create or apply. I feel compelled to cover the standards even though I know this is not the best way to teach.

This tension didn’t come through in my survey responses, but it is nevertheless a direct result of these high-stakes (for students, teachers and schools) tests.

*Lisa Soltani
Brookline Educators Union*



Future educators

Linda Perla-Mullins, right, a retired Ashburnham-Westminster middle school teacher, was among the presenters offering professional development workshops at a conference for future educators on March 28 at Westfield State University. Student Education Association of Massachusetts members Lauren Nastari, Kelly Griffin and Chelsea Orifice, from left to right, all Westfield State students, were among those attending.

Photo by Bob Duffy

Community alliances build solidarity

MTA works with coalitions to involve families and promote social justice

By Scott McLennan

Public schools, unlike many of their private and charter counterparts, do not exist apart from the communities they serve. Their doors are open to all families, and public school educators welcome all students into their classrooms.

As a result, public schools must be prepared to tackle a full range of complex issues.

Across Massachusetts, that understanding is helping MTA members develop alliances seeking to ensure that schools have the support and resources they need to serve their communities. It is also fostering the creation of partnerships that extend beyond traditional education boundaries.

Families new to this country, for example, are often effective advocates for public schools, since they know that education will be crucial to their children's success in life. That's a point that Everett High School teacher and MTA Senate District Coordinator Peter Lahey touched on when he spoke at the Massachusetts Jobs With Justice annual dinner in early April.

Lahey noted that the business-driven forces that champion charter schools and advocate for the use of standardized tests to determine the fates of students, educators and schools are often the same groups that actively campaign against workers' rights and make social mobility especially difficult for immigrants.

"This is why coalitions of another kind — of people who believe in equality, a decent wage, strong public schools and in social justice — are essential to defending democracy," Lahey said.

Over the past couple of years, MTA locals and JWWJ organizers have been uniting with parents and others to strengthen grassroots advocacy, promote social justice and strengthen communities.

In Holyoke, such a coalition is helping local residents fight a threatened state takeover of the public schools.

In Everett, community organizations have formed a web that better connects immigrant parents to the schools.

In Framingham, a parents' group nurtured by the local teachers association and Jobs With Justice is erasing boundaries between immigration issues and education issues.

Efforts are also underway in communities including Cambridge, Leominster, Fitchburg, Springfield, Taunton, Fall River and Worcester.

Members of the Framingham Teachers Association gathered one recent evening to talk about how things are going.

Not long ago, families arriving in Framingham from Central and South America were too often absent from meetings in which school policies were being made. They were missing opportunities to be heard on decisions about which schools their



Above, Nelson Hernandez looks at pictures from a Voz de la Comunidad meeting with Lily Huang of Jobs With Justice and his son, Nelson Gabriel Hernandez. Hernandez has two daughters in the Framingham Public Schools and has found that being active in Voz de la Comunidad helps him stay connected to what is going on. At left, teacher Maria Rosaura Quirarte-Perez discusses how students tend to do better academically when they know their parents are involved in the schools. "When their parents are engaged, the children know it," Quirarte-Perez told *MTA Today*. "They are motivated to do well because they know their parents and teachers do care."

Photos by Chris Christo

children would be attending and what services would be available to English language learners.

"Not everybody is on Facebook, which is where people spread the word," said FTA Co-President Sarah McKeon. "We've had some really important debates. Just recently we were talking about what to do about all of the snow days we've had. And only one group of voices was being heard. Other groups were not even aware the debate was happening."

Middle school teacher Maria Rosaura Quirarte-Perez saw how some of her students would push themselves to do better in school if they realized that their parents and teachers were talking to one another.

"When their parents are engaged, the children know it," Quirarte-Perez said. "They are motivated to do well because they know their parents and teachers do care."

Other teachers in Framingham grappled with the struggles of their students, some of whom

would arrive in the middle of the year and might be unfamiliar with the language or school practices.

"Some of these students have gone through emotional trauma," said Ruthie M. Ortiz Collazo, a teacher at the Brophy Elementary School. "Then there is the language issue. You have to deal with the whole child before you can even start in on the curriculum. Some of the parents don't know how to handle the situation."

From these concerns grew Voz de la Comunidad. The small group of parents has blossomed into an organization of more than 20 families after just six months and a few meetings, according to Lily Huang of Jobs With Justice. Voz de la Comunidad is becoming a network of new families and a clearinghouse for information on immigration and education issues.

"They become better advocates for themselves and for their children," Huang said.

Continued on next page

Shared priorities drive partnerships with diverse groups

By Laura Barrett

Four college students speaking at a recent conference organized by the National Center for Fair & Open Testing — FairTest — described in detail the benefits of having attended public high schools that focus on projects, deep learning and authentic assessments rather than standardized tests.

“It was a discussion-based high school,” said Elliot Garcia, referring to the Urban Academy, one of 28 New York Performance Standards Consortium schools. Students in these high schools are absolved from taking all but one of the New York State Regents Exams required for graduation.

“I felt like my teachers cared about my education,” Garcia said.

Garcia is now a junior at Bard College, where he is majoring in computer science.

“When I got to college and we had to write our first five- to seven-page paper, a lot of students had a hard time,” he said. “I had no problem because in high school I wrote so many papers and I had learned to think for myself, not to get ready for a test.”

MTA members were among those attending the conference, “Beyond MCAS and PARCC: Alternative Assessments that Work,” which was held at the Mission Hill School in Boston on March 21. Gina Garro, who teaches in Revere, said she appreciated the chance to participate.

In addition to its work with FairTest, the MTA has a long-standing relationship with Citizens for Public Schools, an organization that works on testing, charter schools and other common concerns.

“I think we’ve moved too far away from caring about what kids think about what they are learning,” she said. “We ask them to find evidence in the text, but we forget to ask them what they think about what they are reading since that is not on the test.”

The event was just one example of the MTA’s collaboration with organizations and coalitions involved in a wide range of education, labor and social justice issues.

In addition to its work with FairTest, the MTA has a long-standing relationship with Citizens for Public Schools, an organization that works on testing, charter schools and other common concerns. CPS researches issues, develops fact sheets and other materials and helps parents and other community members with activities such as “take the PARCC” events for parents and teachers.

The MTA and CPS are exploring more ways to involve parents and educators in meetings with state representatives and senators in support

of bills that pause or reduce excessive testing requirements.

The MTA is also allied with several groups, including Jobs With Justice and the Raise Up Massachusetts coalition, that tackle social and economic justice issues.

Raise Up Massachusetts ran the successful “Yes on 4” ballot campaign for earned sick time in 2014. The coalition also helped win an increase in the state’s minimum wage law in the Legislature and is now working on the Fight for \$15 campaign.

The MTA is also working with Raise Up Massachusetts to explore avenues for creating a more progressive income tax.

Meanwhile, the MTA, the American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts, the Boston Teachers Union and others recently founded a new coalition of labor and community groups. The coalition intends to identify, expose and fight attacks on public education and to support a positive vision that includes teaching the whole child, adequate funding, social and economic justice and increased respect for educators.

“The MTA is powerful, but we have a big agenda and are up against powerful forces,” said MTA President Barbara Madeloni. “We increase our strength when our work with other groups helps us reach deeper into our communities to organize for change.”

‘We are building something that is sustainable and here for the long haul’

Continued from previous page

“What is happening in Framingham is special,” she added. “We are building something that is sustainable and here for the long haul.”

Nelson Hernandez has two daughters at the Brophy school, and Ortiz Collazo encouraged him to attend a meeting of Voz de la Comunidad.

“We talked about our rights. I met other parents and we talked about the schools. I learned a lot at the meetings,” Hernandez said through an interpreter. Huang noted that Hernandez has brought four new members into the group.

The team of community organizers, parents and teachers produced a long list of issues that they see as interconnected: the over-testing of students, bilingual education, immigration laws, wages and housing.

All are ripe for conversation at Voz de la Comunidad meetings.

In Everett, similar efforts are underway.

For the past two years, educators and community organizers have examined how people involved in public education, labor and immigration issues could better support each other. The work has reached into churches and community groups.

Edwin Argueta of Jobs With Justice calls the result a “curriculum.”



Photo by Chris Christo

“You have to deal with the whole child before you can even start in on the curriculum,” says Framingham teacher Ruthie M. Ortiz Collazo.

“We want a series of ‘how-to’ lessons about being an advocate — how to go before a school committee, for example, and ask for more resources for your school,” he said.

Everett Teachers Association President Kim Auger said the partnership with Jobs With Justice has made a big difference for educators working with English language learners. Everett educators, she said, are now better connected with parents in the city’s Latino and Haitian communities, thanks to informal

drop-ins and “meet-and-greets” that help parents learn about the schools and some of the issues educators deal with aside from day-to-day classwork.

“I think that because this work is not affiliated with the schools but is in the schools it has made a big difference,” Auger said. She said that parents who are new to the city — and perhaps the country — are cautious about questioning elected officials or administrators at first.

But the impact has been significant. More parents are visible in the schools, and more educators are better known in the broader community. The ripples have brought better understanding all around.

“Through our work with JWJ, I personally have had my consciousness raised about the issues facing my students outside the classroom that make the importance of education doubly important to them,” Lahey remarked in his address at the Jobs With Justice dinner.

He noted the challenges his students have brought to his attention: transience; limited access to food, clothing and shelter; cultural and language barriers; and parents working multiple jobs to support their households.

“In other words, in working with JWJ, I have learned what should have been evident from the start,” he said. “Your issues are our issues.”

Conference highlights work of ESPs

By Jean Conley

Hundreds of education support professionals gathered recently on Cape Cod for two days of learning, networking and celebration.

A highlight of the MTA ESP Conference, held April 10 and 11 in Falmouth, was the announcement that Michelle Elwell, a teacher assistant at Rockport Middle School, has been named MTA's Education Support Professional of the Year.

In accepting the honor on the first evening of the conference, Elwell told her fellow ESPs, "My story is your story. We show up, we work with some very difficult situations, and we do whatever we can to help the students find success each day."

Elwell is known for her boundless energy while she's in the classroom, in her work before and after school in the Homework Club, and in her dedication as the field hockey coach.

She is a former president of her local, the Rockport Educational Support Staff Association, and she has served on the association's bargaining team.



Michelle Elwell

She continues to serve as the treasurer of her local, a position she has filled for the past three years.

In introducing Elwell, Robert V. Travers, Jr., a member of the MTA Executive and ESP committees, pointed to her commitment to her students and her volunteer work in the community, which includes, among other activities, fundraising for the First Congregational Church of Rockport and the Old Sloop Community Fair. In 2013, she received a National Honor Society Community Service Award.

Elwell spoke for herself and ESPs as a group. "I've always said that my job is like putting a Band-Aid on something that needs 30 stitches, so a sense of humor is key," she remarked.

At the end of some days, she said, "I think, 'How can I do this again tomorrow?'" And then she answered her own question. "The community, the service and the kids are the driving force. They are my fountain of youth and why I show up each day."

Before the presentation, MTA President Barbara Madeloni and Vice President Janet Anderson addressed the crowd.

Madeloni said she saw "a room packed with power" as she looked out at the hundreds of ESPs in the audience. She reminded them that while their workdays are spent empowering the students in their care, ESPs also hold tremendous power to shape their workplaces and communities.

Anderson, a Taunton fifth-grade teacher, said, "There isn't a school that can function without ESPs." She went on to express the profound gratitude of the entire school community for the work done by ESPs.

The conference, held at the oceanfront Sea Crest Beach Hotel, included numerous professional



The 2015 MTA ESP Conference presented numerous opportunities for learning and networking. Above, Julia Monteiro Johnson, right, assisted participants in her "Introduction to iPads" session. At left, first-time conference participants Chenell Morris, left, and Sarah Pelrin of the Watertown Educators Association enjoyed the opening reception. The event drew hundreds of ESPs to the Sea Crest Beach Hotel in Falmouth.

Photos by Jean Conley

development workshops, with sessions on Friday afternoon and Saturday morning. Workshop titles ranged from "Introduction to iPads" and "Meeting the Needs of the Whole Student" to "Beginning Organizing: Getting out of Your Comfort Zone" and "Creating and Sustaining a Democratic Classroom."

The ESP Committee held giveaways for a number of door prizes provided by MTA Benefits on both days of the conference.

After the workshops had concluded on Saturday, the crowd heard a luncheon keynote speech by Floyd Cox, a master trainer for the National Education Association's Center for Organizing.

Cox, an engaging Oklahoman who had earlier presented a workshop called "True Colors: A Personality Assessment," studded his speech with anecdotes of why ESP doesn't just stand for education support professional. It really means, in his words, "extra special people."

Cox chronicled the ESPs who have enhanced his life, including Georgia Miller, a cafeteria worker full of warmth and personality and a "wonderful

dessert chef" who later became his stepmother; Ruby Russell, a library worker who "helped me and others along the way" when he was an undergraduate at Northeastern State University; and Kevin Steidley, an "awesome" and hard-working custodian at Chelsea High School when Cox was a new teacher there and who still works at the school decades later. "These are all my extra special people," Cox said.

He continued, "Do you know an extra special person? You ought to, because you are one. You are the extra special people in the MTA."

"You live and work in communities that matter because that's where the kids are," Cox reminded his audience. "And because you are the fabric that holds the school together," he told the ESPs, "you should continue to work together with our teacher friends, our administrator friends and our university friends" to bring about the communities of caring that students deserve.

To see more photos from this year's ESP Conference, visit www.flickr.com/mtacommunications.

Lawsuit threat, new bills focus on charter issue

"[C]harter schools operate more autonomously than traditional public schools in the use of funds, adherence to state laws and school policies, selection and removal of students, and the selection and removal of staff, thus creating separate and unequal conditions for success ..."

— From 2010 NAACP Resolution on Charter Schools

By Laura Barrett

The MTA and the NAACP New England Area Conference are joining forces to fight a threatened legal challenge to the state's charter school cap. Meanwhile, a number of bills that would affect charter school funding, local approval or the cap have been filed, promising to stir debate on this contentious issue.

The *Boston Globe* reported on March 8 that Paul F. Ware Jr., Michael B. Keating and William F. Lee, partners at three top Boston law firms, say they plan to bring a constitutional challenge to the charter school cap contending that limiting the number of charter schools is a civil rights violation because it denies students a "quality" education.

"It is outrageous that these wealthy law firms are wrapping themselves in the mantle of civil rights," said MTA President Barbara Madeloni. "Their

interest, like those of other corporate reformers, is in privatizing public education and busting our unions. These are antithetical to civil rights."

Juan Cofield, president of the New England Area Conference of the NAACP, told *MTA Today*, "The NAACP is adamant that school districts should not establish two separate school systems to provide public education for students. In the landmark 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the court found that separate systems are inherently unequal and unconstitutional.

"The suggestion by the three attorneys that the cap on charter schools is a civil rights issue is ludicrous," he continued. "The establishment of charter schools has moved far from their original intent, which was to use them as an experiment to design a prototype for more effective student learning for all public schools."

As the threat of the lawsuit looms, numerous bills have been filed on charters, some to curb their growth and others to promote them.

Bills to encourage charter schools will likely receive strong support from Governor Charlie Baker, who ran on a platform of allowing 50 more Commonwealth charter schools to open.

Baker was a founder of the Pioneer Institute, a conservative think tank that actively promotes charter schools. He has appointed James Peyser as secretary of education and Paul Sagan as chairman of

the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Peyser strongly advocated for charters when he chaired the state Board of Education from 1999 to 2006. He was a leader of the Pioneer Institute and most recently was a managing partner at the NewSchools Venture Fund, which claims to have raised more than \$150 million for 300 charter schools.

Sagan, a former CEO of Akamai Technologies, is a partner in a Cambridge-based venture capital firm. He was chairman of the Massachusetts Business Leaders for Charter Public Schools, which has a record of favoring the privatization of public resources.

"We don't need venture capitalists in charge of education policy in Massachusetts — we need seasoned educators," said Madeloni. "We need education policy and decisions to be made in the context of democratic conversations with educators, students, families and the community."

There are two kinds of charter schools in Massachusetts. Commonwealth charter schools are approved by the state and are fully independent of the school district. The staff members in those schools are not parties to the local collective bargaining agreement.

Horace Mann charters are "in-district" schools whose applications must first be approved by the

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Workers call on UMass to honor contracts

By Scott McLennan

The MTA has filed labor complaints in response to University of Massachusetts President Robert Caret's plan to pay only partial raises to faculty and staff even though the Legislature and Governor Charlie Baker have acknowledged that the UMass system has the funding necessary to fully implement contracts ratified last year by several bargaining units.

Caret said after a meeting of the UMass Board of Trustees on April 8 that he will begin paying the raises effective May 3.

The raises, however, should be paid retroactively to the contracts' start date in July 2014. The MTA Legal Services Division filed the unfair labor practice complaints, which seek implementation of the full salary provisions of the contracts, with the state Department of Labor Relations.

After Baker signed a supplemental state budget on March 31 that included language validating all of the ratified



Photo by Bob Duffy

Professional Staff Union leaders Anneta Argyres and Tom Goodkind, in foreground, participated in a rally at UMass Boston on March 11. A number of actions have taken place on UMass campuses in response to the administration's refusal to implement new contracts ratified by several different units and its failure to come to a fair agreement with members of the PSU on the Boston and Amherst campuses.

UMass contracts, the MTA sent a demand letter to Caret, who had been withholding the negotiated raises based on the claim that the Legislature had not funded the university's collective bargaining agreements.

"President Caret's proposed partial implementation of the contracts is a disrespectful gesture toward the faculty and staff," said MTA President Barbara Madeloni. "Union members have long worked with UMass administrators to

secure state funding necessary to maximize student access to quality higher education. President Caret needs to honor that relationship, do the right thing and fully implement the contracts."

Members of MTA locals representing faculty and staff at UMass campuses in Amherst, Boston and Lowell have worked collaboratively under the banner of UMass Unions United to actively campaign for the implementation of all ratified contracts. UMass Unions United has also pushed UMass to settle a fair contract with members of the Professional Staff Union, which represents members in Amherst and Boston.

"We shouldn't be your last priority," PSU Vice President Anneta Argyres told the trustees at the April 8 meeting, which was held in Worcester.

Argyres and Randall Phillis, president of the Massachusetts Society of Professors chapter in Amherst, addressed the trustees during the public comment portion of the meeting. Both

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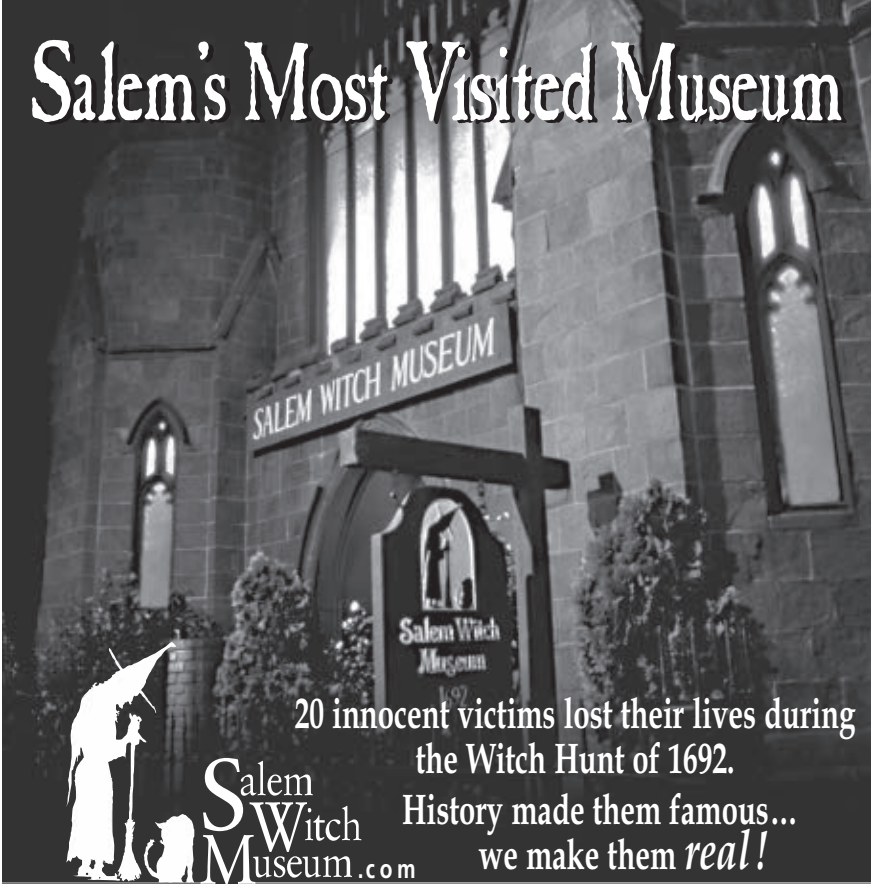
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Baker's budget shortchanges public education

By Jean Conley

Governor Charlie Baker's proposed \$38.1 billion state budget includes cuts to kindergarten expansion grants and fails to build on the reinvestment in public higher education that began to build momentum last year.

Overall, the governor's fiscal 2016 budget provides only slightly more in total funding for public education — less than 1 percent — than was allocated in fiscal 2015.

On March 4, the day that Baker unveiled his spending plan, MTA President Barbara Madeloni issued a statement calling the governor's plan "troubling for its lack of vision and absence of meaningful investment in education and other vital community services."

The Baker budget also seeks to shift health care costs to many current active state employees and all future state retirees by increasing their share of health insurance premium costs for coverage through the Group Insurance Commission from 20 percent to 25 percent. The increase would cost individuals \$300 to \$480 more per year, and family plans would go up as much as \$1,200.

In response to Baker's budget, the MTA sent direct mail to higher education members that included tear-off postcards to send to state

representatives and senators. The cards urged legislators to advocate for greater investment in public higher education in general and to retain the current premium split.

The House and Senate are now at work on their own spending plans for fiscal 2016, which begins July 1. As *MTA Today* went to press, the House Ways and Means Committee had just reported out its version of the budget, which will be debated by the full House of Representatives during the last week in April.

The Ways and Means budget does not include an increase in the employee share of GIC premiums. It also rejects the governor's plan to eliminate the Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant program.

It contains modest increases in some areas for preK-12 education, but it essentially level-funds higher education, as does Baker's plan, which provides a nominal increase of 0.1 percent overall — almost 30 percent below the amount the state invested in 2001 after accounting for inflation.

The MTA will continue to analyze budget proposals as they move through the House and Senate and will post analyses on the MTA website.

Areas of the K-12 education portion of Baker's budget that would see cuts include regional transportation, \$19 million; the special education circuit breaker, \$4 million; and charter school reimbursements to sending districts, \$3.2 million.

Many education programs aimed at helping low-income or low-performing schools would be consolidated in Baker's budget into a "Partnership Schools Network." Those programs include the English Language Learner in Gateway Cities program, Gateway Cities career academies, literacy programs, funding for innovation schools and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System Low-Scoring Student Support program.

Baker also would cut the Department of Early Education and Care by \$5.5 million, or 1 percent.

Chapter 70 state aid to municipalities and regional school districts would increase by 2.4 percent. That guarantees a \$20-per-pupil increase for each district over fiscal 2015, fully funding districts' foundation budgets, as is constitutionally required. The Ways and Means plan guarantees a per-pupil increase of \$25.

On March 24, the House and Senate Ways and Means Committees conducted a joint public hearing in Greenfield to gather input on education and local aid, and legislators heard from two MTA members who spoke about what happens when public education is not adequately funded. Northampton fourth-grade teacher Sadie Cora gave several examples.

"We used to have vice principals," she said. "No more."

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REGIONAL RETIREMENT CONSULTATIONS AVAILABLE

The MTA provides individual 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 Saturday (by appointment only) and second Saturday 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 (by appointment only), 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 Saturday of each month (by appointment only), 9 a.m. to 1 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 — Edward Nelson: third Saturday of each month (walk in), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Southeast Office, 756 Orchard Street, third floor, Raynham; 508.822.5371, or at home, 774.239.7823.

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Note: If your association would like to schedule 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 consultants do not have records of your service, so members are advised to bring that information along to meetings.

Collective bargaining summit helps ignite activism

By Scott McLennan

The Concord Teachers Association recently began negotiations for a new contract not with a customary list of proposals, but with a platform of ideals developed through member-to-member outreach.

“My bargaining committee is on fire and is excited about the possibilities,” said CTA President Merrie Najimy.

The excitement began building on Feb. 7, when Najimy and eight other CTA members on the bargaining team attended the MTA Collective Bargaining Summit in Waltham.

The summit featured activists from educators’ unions in Chicago, St. Paul, Minnesota, and Portland, Oregon, who led wide-ranging discussions on how organizing, bargaining and working to build stronger unions are the pathways to creating better public schools for students, their families and educators.

Nearly 200 MTA members from 44 locals, along with Legislative and Political Action Team leaders, attended workshops and discussion groups held over the course of the day.

“We are taking our first steps in reclaiming public education here in Massachusetts and nationally,” said MTA President Barbara Madeloni.

Jen Johnson of the Chicago Teachers Union discussed the renewal of her union through internal



Jen Johnson, left, of the Chicago Teachers Union, looks on as Kourtney Senquiz of the Chicopee Education Association talks during an organizing workshop about becoming an activist.

Photo by Scott McLennan

organizing and elections that brought in new leadership.

Nick Faber, vice president of the Saint Paul Federation of Teachers, detailed his union’s extensive community organizing efforts and strategies to bargain about “big issues” such as class sizes and reducing the amount of standardized testing.

Gwen Sullivan, president of the Portland Association of Teachers, discussed her union’s success in threatening to strike over workload issues. The threat garnered broad support from community members and students. “You can do anything as long as you are all together doing it,” Sullivan said.

MTA members and staff joined the activists in

workshops on strategies for bargaining and organizing as well as building community alliances.

Kourtney Senquiz of the Chicopee Education Association told others in her building site organizing workshop that when she wanted to challenge implementation of the new teacher evaluation system, she asked herself one question: “How can I be more active in my union?”

In Concord, the association circulated a poll among all members that asked three questions:

- “What brings you joy in the work you do with children?”
- “What sucks the joy and life out of the work you do with children?”

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Students become senators during visit to institute

By Jerry Spindel

School trips to Washington, D.C., are nothing new. But two groups of students and teachers from Sutton High School visited the U.S. Senate in March without ever leaving Massachusetts.

Well, not exactly.

What they visited was a full-scale replica of the Senate chamber at the new Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate on the campus of the University of Massachusetts in Boston. The institute also houses a replica of Senator Kennedy's Senate office as well as exhibits that showcase the senator's career and teach participants about the workings of the Senate.

Kennedy served as a U.S. senator from Massachusetts for nearly 47 years.

The institute was dedicated on March 30, and the event was attended by President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, both U.S. senators from Massachusetts and state officials.

The 69 Sutton High School seniors who visited on March 11 were among



Photo by Bob Duffy

Students and educators experience the Senate Immersion Module.

the first to get a look at the institute and experience the "Senate Immersion Module," or SIM. The SIM program offers the opportunity for up to 100 people, especially students and educators, to role-play the parts of U.S. senators and experience the legislative process of proposing, deliberating, debating and passing — or not passing — a bill.

The students were accompanied by teachers Michael Whittier, Gretchen Dauplaise and Ryan Wandyes; nurse Nancy Corey; and paraprofessionals Patricia Kazarian and Linda Jernberg. Superintendent of Schools Theodore F. Friend also participated.

"Students are here to learn about the legislative process and how it's supposed to work," said Whittier, who

About the Senate Immersion Module

- The SIM program is available weekdays throughout the school year and by special arrangement during the summer.
- It offers a 2½-hour hands-on learning experience.
- Reservations are required. The institute prefers four weeks' notice.
- The SIM can accommodate groups of 30 to 100.
- To set up a visit and find out how to participate, e-mail the EMK Institute at simschedule@emkinstitute.org.

teaches American government and criminal justice at the high school. "And hopefully, they'll gain a better insight into how they might be part of the democratic process."

Whittier was a member of the MTA Board in 2009 when it voted to make a substantial contribution to help fund the institute.

"I remember thinking that such a project would be great for our students," Whittier said. "At that time I couldn't imagine what is now the EMK Institute.

"It was a grand vision that we shared and they have achieved," he added. "I personally have never seen an idea become a vision and then a reality so successfully."

On their March 11 visit, Whittier said, he and his students "all sat in the Senate chamber, and each of us represented a particular senator from a particular state and party."

"We typed in our names on tablets, which gave us profiles — but not the names — of the senators we were supposed to represent. We were instructed to speak and vote not from our own conscience and convictions, but from the convictions of the senators we represented," he explained.

"The hardest part for me was being a Republican senator from the South," Whittier added with a laugh, "and one who had never voted for an education bill in his life."

At one point, a UMass student helping to facilitate the module acted as the nominee for director of the Department of Homeland Security.

The acting senators questioned him on the rule of law regarding information-gathering and other aspects of the department.

Please turn to **Visit**/Page 36

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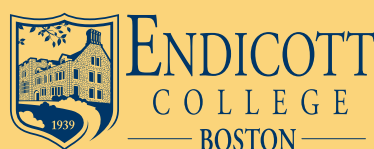
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New location chosen for Summer Conference

By Jean Conley

The MTA Summer Conference is moving from its former Berkshires location this year, but the event will continue to showcase the workshops, socials and networking opportunities that make the conference one of the MTA's most popular events.

Scheduled for Aug. 2 to 6 at UMass Amherst, the conference will also offer MTA members new opportunities for organizing and developing skills.

Under the umbrella theme of "The Schools Our Students Deserve," organizational development tracks and workshops will deepen participants' understanding of internal organizing, team and coalition building, diversity and cultural competence, and the assault on public education and public-sector unions.

Those offerings will complement the work done this year at "Reclaiming Our Schools" forums, the MTA Collective Bargaining Summit and All Presidents' Meetings.

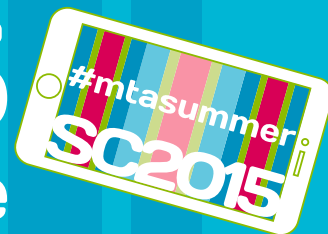
New this year will be the MTA Organizing Institute, which is designed for teams from MTA locals and committees. It will help participants consider and plan ways to shift to an organizational model using deep internal organizing to bring about increased member involvement; develop a program of student and family engagement, community organizing and coalition building; and encourage a process of developing an analysis of the political, economic and regulatory environment.

The conference will also offer a wide variety of content and skills-based professional development workshops for teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators in several areas, including iPad and Google apps, classroom management, instructional practice and differentiated instruction. Facing History and Ourselves and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts will offer workshops.

In addition, committee-sponsored wine-and-cheese receptions, dances and ice cream mixers are on the schedule, as is the popular ED Talks, a TED Talk-style event in which speakers share their "big ideas" about public education before a live audience. The MTA Movie Loft will

MTA SC2015 Summer Conference

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New this year will be the MTA Organizing Institute, which is designed for teams from MTA locals and committees.

offer blockbusters and documentaries for those looking to kick back and relax in the evenings.

The Summer Conference was held at Williams College for years, but the college notified the MTA last December that it would no longer be able to accommodate the event.

The MTA Board reviewed alternative proposals and voted unanimously to allow the Division of Training and Professional Learning to enter into an agreement with a facility best meeting the needs of the organization. The division chose UMass Amherst, the state's flagship public university campus, which offers state-of-the-art facilities and housing in air-conditioned suites in the North Apartments area of campus.

It is anticipated that a new business item will be put before delegates to the Annual Meeting on May 8 and 9 asking whether the MTA should consider opting out of the conference contract if UMass employees have not been paid their contractually agreed-upon raises by then.

The long-running dispute at UMass concerns the funding of negotiated contracts on the Amherst, Boston, Dartmouth and Lowell campuses. Outgoing UMass President Robert Caret has maintained that there is not enough money in the budget to fully fund the contracts. He has agreed to pay raises starting May 3, but not retroactively.

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MTA opposes expansion of 'two-tiered' system

Continued from Page 9

local school district and, with a few exceptions, the local educators' union. Teachers in Horace Mann charter schools are represented by the local union, but the contracts they work under waive certain provisions of the collective bargaining agreement.

Both kinds of charters have boards of trustees that set the policies and sometimes hire for-profit or nonprofit education management organizations to run the schools.

Only a handful of Commonwealth charter schools have been unionized, none of them by the MTA. They are exempt from a number of state regulations. Notably, their teachers do not have to be licensed, they do not have "just cause" dismissal rights and they are not subject to the state's new educator evaluation system.

The MTA opposes the expansion of Commonwealth charter schools and has filed a bill calling for a three-year moratorium on the approval of new ones. This bill and others affecting the cap lift are likely to be debated in the current two-year legislative session.

"Commonwealth charter schools lead to a two-tiered education system that is, as the NAACP describes it, 'separate and unequal,'" said MTA President Barbara Madeloni.

"Commonwealth charter schools lead to a two-tiered education system that is, as the NAACP describes it, 'separate and unequal,'" said Madeloni.

"As a result of their enrollment practices, Commonwealth charter schools serve far fewer special needs students, English language learners and very-low-income students than their sending districts," Madeloni continued. "They also have high attrition rates, meaning that students who fail to meet their behavior or academic standards are sent back to the districts or they drop out. When that happens, charters rarely fill the vacancies created despite claiming they have very long waiting lists."

"Through these practices, charter schools end up with a small number

of the most able students by the final year of enrollment — and then make exaggerated claims about the test scores of the students who remain," Madeloni said. "They do not play on a level playing field." Madeloni also said that Commonwealth charter schools are undemocratic because the state can — and often does — approve them over the strong objections of local voters and elected officials and because "they are essentially privately controlled schools feeding on the public dollar."

"Public education as a common good for democracy requires a shared commitment to providing the best for every child and democratic oversight," she said.

Retired MTA member John Reed, who is active in the New England chapter of the NAACP, said his main concern is about funding. "I am concerned that the growing number of charter schools is displacing funding for quality public schools," he said.

Under current state law, there are several different kinds of caps that limit the expansion of Commonwealth charter schools.

■ No more than 72 Commonwealth charters are allowed, but charters in excess of that number can be opened in the lowest-performing 10 percent of districts under certain circumstances. A total of 48 Horace Mann charters may be authorized. There are currently 70 Commonwealth and 10 Horace Mann charter schools. Charter schools enroll about 3 percent of all public school students.

■ A district's total charter school tuition payments to Commonwealth charter schools cannot exceed 9 percent of that district's net school spending unless that district has performed in the lowest 10 percent statewide on the MCAS for the previous two years. In the latter case, the limit rises gradually. This year, the cap is 16 percent in those districts, and it will top out at 18 percent in 2017.

■ At least two charters approved in any year must be granted for schools located in districts where overall student performance on the MCAS is in the lowest 10 percent statewide in the two years prior to the charter application.

The DESE has informed Boston and Somerville that no new charter seats may be approved because they will reach the 18 percent spending cap when all of the seats previously approved have been filled. Holyoke

Proposals for charter schools in Brockton and Fitchburg fail to advance.

— Page 17

and Fall River are among the districts that the DESE has cautioned about the limited availability of new seats because of the spending cap.

One concern about charter schools is their impact on school district budgets — an obvious concern in places such as Boston and Somerville, where nearly one in five dollars spent on public education soon will be going to charters. Charter proponents say the impact is relatively minor since the money just "follows the student" and because districts receive partial reimbursement from the state for four years to ease the blow.

Opponents point out that the reimbursement line item has not been fully funded for years, so districts are not getting all of the funds to which they are entitled. In addition, they note that after the reimbursement runs out, the district has to pay the charter far more than the district saves because so many school district costs are fixed. Last, they point out that overall funding for the charter system is expensive, relying on state funds that otherwise could be spent on services that would benefit all students.

Opponents also express concern about the charter staffing model. Generally, charter schools hire young, inexperienced teachers who are willing and able to work exceptionally long hours for modest pay. These teachers often leave in a few years and are replaced by more young, inexperienced teachers.

"Experienced teachers bring a lot of wisdom and ability to our schools," said Madeloni. "A service as important as public education should not be based on the fast-food restaurant model of overwork and high turnover," she said. "For stability and equity, educators should have good working conditions, reasonable hours, fair pay, a high degree of autonomy and respect. Those practices are important for the long-term health of a truly public education system designed to serve all students. Unions such as ours fight for those working conditions, which secure the best learning opportunities for our students."

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'Security agreement' demand rescinded after MTA action

By Laura Barrett

Just three days before the first round of PARCC testing was to begin in March, the MTA learned that teachers were being told they had to sign an extensive "security agreement" in which they had to agree that failing to live up to the lengthy and detailed test administration protocols could lead to serious sanctions.

Teachers were insulted that, in essence, they were being told they

had to pledge in writing not to cheat or to allow students to cheat — as if they would not live up to their normal professional responsibilities unless they signed.

They were also troubled by the fact that the agreement was on PARCC letterhead, but otherwise the identity of the other party was unclear. Was it Pearson, which produces the tests? Was it the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education? Further, teachers could not understand how the

new requirement was being handed down when they had not had a chance to bargain over its impact.

The MTA responded quickly, informing members of their right to bargain over the security agreement requirement and sending a letter to Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester urging him to rescind the demand.

Chester responded to the MTA within hours, concluding that signing the agreement was optional.

"As always, test administrators and other school personnel involved in the administration of state assessments are expected to follow the policies and protocols for test security and administration," Chester wrote.

"Teachers, however, do not have to sign the PARCC Security Agreement in order to proctor the test."

MTA President Barbara Madeloni was pleased that the issue was resolved quickly, but she expressed caution and

Continued on next page

Bargaining summit offers key lessons for MTA locals

Continued from Page 12

■ "What can we propose through bargaining that would bring back some joy and reduce stress?"

"More than two-thirds of our members responded to the survey, and we had a great response from schools that had not been active in the association before," Najimy said. "An important thing we learned at the summit concerned the need to close the feedback loop. We made sure members heard the survey results and knew what we were bringing to the table."

Ideas that surfaced in the Concord negotiations included a reduction of student data collection and an increase in educator control over curriculum and instruction.

The MTA summit grew out of member-led forums in which educators have articulated their vision for what public education should look like and what obstacles block its realization.

"Our members could see that, across the country, educators are facing the same struggles and assault," Madeloni said. "To hear how other unions tackled these problems building by building, in coalition with the community and by bringing big issues to the table, was an amazing education in what is possible. I am looking forward to following up with the participants and claiming similar victories here in Massachusetts."

To see more photos from the bargaining summit, please visit [flickr.com/mtacommunications](https://www.flickr.com/photos/mtacommunications/).

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Commonwealth charter proposals fail to advance

By Laura Barrett

The winter that just ended marked the first time in more than 15 years that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education did not approve any new Commonwealth charter schools — a development resulting from effective community and local association advocacy against the proposed schools and significant flaws in the two applications submitted.

In both Brockton and the region that would have been served by the academy, teachers, school administrators, parents, local leaders, legislators and students came out in force against the charter applications.

In February, Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester announced that he would not recommend that the board approve the New Heights Charter School in Brockton or the regional Academy for the Whole

Child Charter School, which was to be based in Fitchburg.

“We are thrilled by the commissioner’s decision to not advance the Commonwealth charter school applications in Brockton and

Fitchburg,” said MTA President Barbara Madeloni. “This was the right decision for the students and residents in these communities.”

In both Brockton and the region that would have been served by the academy, teachers, school administrators, parents, local leaders, legislators and students came out in force against the charter applications.

Representative Claire Cronin (D-Easton), who describes herself as “a proud graduate of the Brockton Public Schools,” explained why she became involved.

“It was a real team effort,” she said, noting that the entire legislative delegation representing Brockton joined with city and school officials and the Brockton Education Association in fighting the charter application. “I felt that there was nothing new or innovative in there that Brockton wasn’t already providing. Overall, I felt the addition of a charter school would undermine growth and success and inclusiveness of the Brockton system.”

Kim Gibson, president of the BEA, echoed that sentiment.

“This community has a huge amount of pride in our district public schools, and that’s where we want the state to put its resources and support,” she said.

Sean Walker, vice president of the Fitchburg Education Association, voiced a similar message about the commissioner’s decision to not recommend the Academy for the Whole Child Charter School.

“I see this as an affirmation of the good work of the Fitchburg Public Schools,” Walker said.

Agreement ‘opened up many questions’

Continued from previous page stressed the need to continue to monitor the situation.

“It is important that members question these and other mandates and keep the MTA leadership informed about requests or demands that make them uncomfortable,” Madeloni said. “This security agreement opened up many questions about the DESE’s relationship with Pearson and about privacy rights for students and members. The MTA is exploring these questions with the ACLU. We have to remain alert and fight back when we see something we don’t like.”

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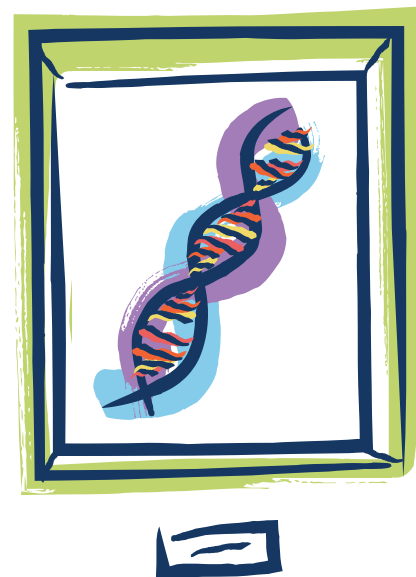
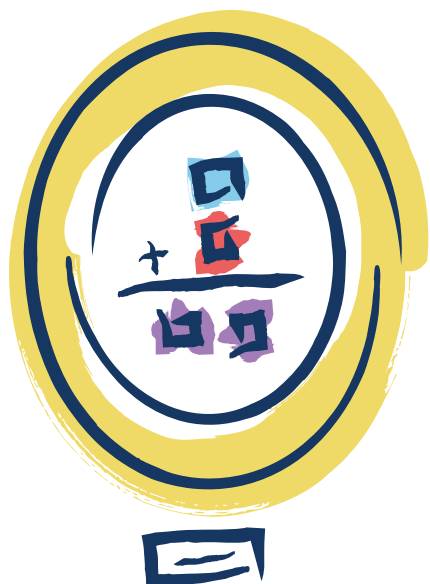
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Potholes and your auto insurance

Nothing can bring you — and your car — down like the potholes that are so common at this time of year.

In Massachusetts, our pavement is battered in all four seasons, enduring contraction and expansion from freezing and thawing all winter and deterioration brought on by the heat in summer.

We all experience the effects firsthand, and we all know the damage potholes can do to our cars.

By the end of February, Boston had already received 532 pothole complaints.

So, how can we prevent damage to our cars and prepare to fight the battle against potholes?

Preventing pothole damage

As is the case with all issues involving insurance, prevention is the least expensive way to avoid problems. There's a good deal you can do to prevent pothole damage even as you navigate our hazardous roads.

First, make sure your tires are always properly inflated to the right pressure for the season. As we move into the warmer months, check the owner's manual for your car to confirm that you are maintaining correct tire pressure.

Second, ensure that your tires have adequate tread. Not only does the correct amount of tread help prevent hydroplaning in summer storms, but the combination of proper tread and inflation also helps ensure that your tires will safely and quickly roll over road hazards.

Third, have your mechanic check your shocks and struts. While your tires are the primary contact with rough terrain, your car's suspension needs to be able to spring and flex, too.



Roadside assistance

In an ideal world, preventive measures would be 100 percent effective.

But the unexpected does happen. When you hit a pothole, have a flat tire and need help, the roadside assistance endorsement on your current auto insurance policy will come to the rescue.

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For a quick quote or more information about the roadside assistance program, please visit www.educatorsinsuranceagency.com.

To learn more about roadside assistance and to help prepare for pothole season, contact an Educators Insurance adviser 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.

You can also visit the Educators Insurance website, www.educatorsinsuranceagency.com.

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With thousands of products to choose from, interest-free financing and low electronic payments over 12 months, PayCheck Direct offers MTA members an exciting shopping program. It's easy, affordable and interest-free!

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YOUR ORGANIZATION

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

Your membership in MTA Retired and NEA Retired gives you the ability to keep abreast of educational, political and legislative issues. The MTA dedicates significant resources to maintaining and improving benefits for retired members.

CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT

As a member of MTA Retired and NEA Retired, you will participate in the governance of your union. You will help elect two retired members to the MTA Board of Directors and one retired member to the MTA Executive Committee — members with full voting rights.

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

In addition, MTA provides some financial support for MTA Retired delegates to the MTA Annual

Meeting, the annual NEA Representative Assembly, the NEA Retired Annual Meeting and the NEA Retired Regional Conference.

MTA BENEFITS

MTA Benefits, a wholly owned subsidiary of the MTA, can help you make the most of your retirement years. MTAB provides members with a vast array of money-saving programs for auto, homeowners and dental insurance; reverse mortgages; credit cards; travel and car rentals; and a wide range of discounts on items you purchase every day. All programs are designed to provide you with the added security you need during this special time in your life. For more information, call 800.336.0990 or log on to www.mtabenefits.com.

COMMUNICATIONS

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

MTA RETIRED MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

For decades, MTA has led the way for most of the key legislation enacted to improve benefits for retired members.

- **MTA believes that our members should have a financially sound retirement upon the completion of active employment.**
- **MTA serves as a strong advocate for its retired members through MTA's Legislative Program. Through organized political action under the auspices of the MTA, your concerns about COLAs, Social Security, pension benefits and improving the standard of living for retirees are actively addressed.**
- **MTA's Division of Government Relations provides research on, and testimony for, maintaining and improving post-retirement benefits.**
- **Government Relations has five registered lobbyists who advocate for active educators and retired members. When MTA lobbyists speak to legislators, legislators know that they represent more than 110,000 members.**



Membership Form

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Name _____

Address _____

City _____

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Prior Local Association _____

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- MTA Retired Life \$550
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and

- NEA Retired Annual \$30
- NEA Retired Life \$250

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We keep on working for you after your retirement!

Awards, debate and speeches in the mix

By Jean Conley

The 170th Annual Meeting of Delegates on May 8 and 9 will feature speeches by education activists and tributes to individuals who have shown a deep commitment to public education, organized labor and the MTA.

New business items will be debated and delegates will weigh proposed changes to the association's bylaws, standing rules and resolutions. In addition, elections will be held for seats on the Board of Directors.

The Annual Meeting will be held at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston, with MTA President Barbara Madeloni presiding.

"I am honored and excited to preside over the democratic debate that is the MTA Annual Meeting," Madeloni said. "As this is my first time doing so, I hope as well that members will take the plunge and stand to speak to the issues that matter to them. The more voices that are heard, the stronger our union will be."

The Annual Meeting will be called to order at noon on Friday, May 8. That day's session will include leadership reports delivered by Madeloni, MTA Vice President Janet Anderson and Executive Director-Treasurer Ann Clarke.

Also on Friday, 12 public educators will be recognized for their work on the Teacher Leadership Initiative, a partnership involving the MTA, the NEA, the Center for Teaching Quality and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

On Saturday, delegates will vote to fill vacancies on the Board of Directors, see award presentations, hear the keynote speech and act on other business, including the budget.

The keynote address will be delivered by Jesse Hagopian, a Seattle teacher and social activist who edited the book "More Than a Score: The New Uprising Against High-Stakes Testing."

Hagopian was the leader of a 2013 test boycott at Garfield High School, where he teaches history and serves as adviser to the Black Student Union. He argues that the current education "testocracy" is "killing creativity and teaching our kids that making a mistake is a horrible transgression."

The boycott "changed my life and ignited a movement," Hagopian writes in "More Than a Score," which is dedicated to the "test-defiers of tomorrow who don't yet know the might of their courage."

The Massachusetts Teacher of the Year — social studies teacher Jeffrey Shea of Belmont High School — will also address the delegates on Saturday morning.

Shea is a proponent of the idea that all students must receive a global education. Working with



JEFFREY SHEA



SUSAN LEE WEISSINGER



HARNEEN CHERNOW



LISA GUISBOND

'The more voices that are heard, the stronger our union will be.'

— MTA President Barbara Madeloni

colleagues, he searches for ways to create more authentic learning activities for his students so they can develop skills and perspectives that are crucial to success in today's interconnected world.

The Friend of Education, Friend of Labor and MTA President's awards will also be presented.

Susan Lee Weissinger, who retired recently as MTA's general counsel, will receive the Friend of Education award.

A native of Alabama, Weissinger began her legal career in the South with a prestigious clerkship for the Honorable Robert S. Vance, a U.S. Court of Appeals judge for the Fifth Circuit. Vance, a strong supporter of civil rights, was killed by a pipe bomb sent to his home in 1989.

In 1979, Weissinger moved north and was hired by the City of Worcester Law Department. She joined the MTA as a staff attorney in 1982 and eventually handled countless cases.

Her own long-held support for civil rights made Weissinger an especially determined advocate for the rights of educators. Over the years, she developed areas of deep expertise in health insurance, labor law and retirement rights. After 28 years as a staff attorney, she was named MTA's general counsel in 2010.

Lisa Guisbond, executive director of Citizens for Public Schools, will receive the President's Award.

Guisbond became interested in education policy as a public school parent of two children with special learning needs. She is an assessment reform analyst at the National Center for Fair & Open Testing, known as FairTest, and the principal author of reports on educating the whole child and the failure of the No Child Left Behind law. Her articles on education and assessment have appeared in a wide range of national publications.

Guisbond served on former Governor Deval Patrick's Readiness Project, studying the MCAS and other standardized assessments.

The Friend of Labor Award will be presented to Harneen Chernow, state director of the Massachusetts 1199SEIU Training and Upgrading Fund, a labor-management partnership that provides thousands of health care and home care workers with training and career opportunities.

She has served as the director of education and training for the Massachusetts AFL-CIO and has also worked extensively with the public higher education system to strengthen opportunities for working adults.

A member of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for the past 11 years, Chernow chaired the Proficiency Gap Task Force and worked on subcommittees addressing the achievement gap, 21st-century skills, the education budget and career readiness.

She advocates for a public education system that engages educators in policy design and alleviates the impacts of poverty, limited English proficiency and special needs on educational outcomes. She has two children in the Boston Public Schools.

The proposed MTA operating budget of \$44,999,435 for fiscal 2015-2016 will also be presented and voted on. The Advisory Budget Committee, the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors have proposed annual dues of \$464 for full-time active members, a \$5 increase over the current year. Dues for secretaries, clerks and custodians would be \$279, a \$3 increase. Dues for aides, food service personnel and other education support professionals would be \$140, a \$2 increase.

In addition, the proposed Public Relations/Organizing Campaign budget will be considered. The general dues assessment for the PR/Organizing budget would be \$30. For secretaries, clerks and custodians, the assessment would be \$18; aides, food service personnel and other education support professionals would be assessed \$9. The amounts are unchanged from the current year.

To see a copy of the Annual Meeting schedule of events and business session agenda, please visit www.massteacher.org/am.

Candidates vie for seats on MTA Board of Directors

The Annual Meeting of Delegates will feature contests for eight seats on the Board of Directors.

Christine Boseman and Janelle Quarles, both of the Classified Staff Union at UMass Boston, are vying for the At-Large seat for Ethnic Minority Membership. Ann O'Halloran and Jacqueline Gorrie are candidates for the Statewide Retired District seat.

Other District Director contests are: Shannon Wetherell of the Leominster Education Association and David Kelly of the Fitchburg Education Association, 7B; Christine Scully and Leonard Zalauskas, both of the Educational Association of Worcester, 10B; Nancy Aykanian of the Westwood Teachers Association and Maryann Ziemba of the Millis Teachers Association, 28D; Janina (Gina) Garro of the Revere Teachers Association and Eric Forman of the North Reading Education Association, 25F; Candace Shivers and Colleen Avedikian, both of the Massachusetts Community College Council, 44H; and Craig Slatin of the Massachusetts Society of Professors-Lowell and Lois Powers of the Classified Staff Union, 47H.

Candidates declared elected

All other candidates for the Board have been elected under the election waiver in the MTA Bylaws. The provision states that if there is only one candidate for an open position, the election is waived and the candidate is declared elected. Terms on the Board begin July 1 and last for three years.

The candidates declared elected under the election waiver are:

- District 9B:** Jennifer Lee, Wachusett Regional Education Association
- District 35C:** Robert Powers, Education Association of Freetown-Lakeville
- District 42C:** David McGlothlin, Provincetown Association of Educators
- District 14D:** Sarah McKeon, Framingham Teachers Association
- District 32D:** Lynn Howard, Weymouth Educators Association
- District 30E:** Peter Schoonmaker, Sharon Teachers Association
- District 24F:** Heather Colton, Beverly Teachers Association
- District 19G:** Jacquelyn Lawrence, Somerville Teachers Association
- District 46H:** Dan Clawson, Massachusetts Society of Professors-Amherst

Candidates who supplied photos are pictured with this article. In contested races, biographical statements of Board candidates who submitted them appear below and on Page 23.



Christine Boseman



Ann O'Halloran



Jacqueline Gorrie



Jennifer Lee



Leonard Zalauskas



David McGlothlin



Sarah McKeon



Nancy Aykanian



Maryann Ziemba



Lynn Howard



Peter Schoonmaker



Heather Colton



Janina Garro



Eric Forman



Candace Shivers



Colleen Avedikian



Dan Clawson



Craig Slatin



Lois Powers

Biographical statements of candidates for Board of Directors

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AT-LARGE ETHNIC MINORITY

Christine Boseman, Classified Staff Union

Twenty-four-year employee at UMass Boston, union steward for 10 years, Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee chair for three years. I received my B.A. in labor studies in May 2013; a committee member of EMAC, EOC and WILD for eight years and an ESP member for eight years.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AT-LARGE ETHNIC MINORITY

Janelle Quarles, Classified Staff Union

I am running for the MTA Board seat to represent ethnic minorities. I am the president of CSU, a diverse group of ESPs at UMass Boston, and I have been your ethnic minority delegate to Annual Meeting for the last four years. I respectfully ask for your vote.

Biographical statements of candidates for Board of Directors

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

STATEWIDE RETIRED

Ann O'Halloran

Great potential awaits within an activist MTA Retired. Our voices and actions can profoundly influence policies across the Commonwealth. Strong unions and grassroots organizing make a huge impact. Imagine the strength that vibrant retiree activism could create! Focus on less testing, more learning. Resist privatization. Let's make it happen!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

STATEWIDE RETIRED

Jacqueline Gorrie

Currently representing you as your Statewide Retired District MTA Board member, I've used my experience as a former local president and MTA and NEA Board member to advance our interests on pensions, GPO/WEP and COLA. I ask for your vote to continue the work I've begun on your behalf. Thanks.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 10B

Leonard Zalauskas, Educational Association of Worcester

Please vote for me. I will work hard for you.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 28D

Nancy Aykanian, Westwood Teachers Association

In a climate of corporate educational "reforms" that value data over teacher expertise and students' well-being, I will be a strong advocate for teachers in 28D and across the state. I support a democratic, proactive MTA that defends public education against those seeking to undermine and ultimately privatize it.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 28D

Maryann Ziemba, Millis Teachers Association

With enthusiasm, passion, and experience, I ask for your vote to continue to be your voice on the Board. As a local president, a mentor to new members and an active supporter of pro-union and pro-public-education legislation, I proudly serve to protect our children and fellow educators.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 25F

Janina (Gina) Garro, Revere Teachers Association

I'm a 20-year veteran teacher. Each year, more of our time is taken up with initiatives that don't help us or our students. I initiated a button campaign — "I am a teacher" — a message uniting us to take back control of our teaching. Together we can reclaim public education.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 25F

Eric Forman, North Reading Education Association

I have served my local, North Reading Education Association, as building representative for five years, vice president for four years, and president for four years. I am an appointed member of the Professional Ethics Committee and an elected member of the Candidate Recommendation Committee for Congressional District 6 for MTA.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 44H

Candace Shivers, Mass. Community College Council

My name is Candace Shivers, and I am asking you for your vote for the 44H MTA Board of Directors seat. I am running for re-election because I want to continue the fight to make sure the voice of the community college is not forgotten. Thank you in advance.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 44H

Colleen Avedikian, Mass. Community College Council

I am an associate professor of sociology at BCC and college educator since 1993. Currently serving as secretary of my local, I have been active in union work for 20 years. My interests include adjunct faculty issues, shared governance and promoting accessible public education that meets needs of all students.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 47H

Craig Slatin, MSP-Lowell

I am running for District Director to help strengthen MTA's higher education organizing and increase the control of staff and faculty over our workplaces. I will work with the MTA leadership to craft a progressive agenda for public education and mobilize statewide to make it happen.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 47H

Lois Powers, Classified Staff Union

Dedicated, trusted, proven activist for improving quality of life for all educators and protecting our hard-won rights. These are ongoing targets. I'm career resource librarian at UMass Boston, VP of my local. I respectfully ask for your vote so I can continue striving to meet your expectations and our goals.



Amendments to resolutions are recommended

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

Resolutions may be submitted by any member to the Resolutions Committee by the second Friday in January. They also may be submitted by the end of business on Friday at the Annual Meeting of Delegates. In addition, the committee may propose resolutions.

All resolutions submitted are considered by the committee, and those submitted by the January deadline are also brought before the Board of Directors. To become an official position of the MTA, a resolution must be adopted by the delegates at the Annual Meeting.

The revisions printed here were recommended by the Resolutions Committee.

The Board voted unanimously on March 21 to recommend passage by the delegates.

In instances where the proposal is to amend an existing resolution, the current version is shown first and the proposed modifications are shown below it.

A section that has a line through it is proposed for elimination; a section that is underlined is a proposed addition.

All current resolutions are posted on the MTA website. To review the resolutions and bylaws, please visit www.massteacher.org/resolutions.

Current A-6 Financing of Public Education

The Massachusetts Teachers Association urges the Legislature to properly fund all public education on an equitable basis, including those special programs which are state-mandated.

The MTA believes that public education should be financed largely by the state through equitable taxes, thereby lowering local taxes and ensuring the availability of quality education to all students. The state should build a reserve fund through existing and new revenue sources as a means of protecting public schools and children from inevitable economic downturns. The MTA condemns all state and local agencies which, under the guise of economy, use budgetary practices and procedures which result in the reduction of the quality of education from preschool through graduate studies. Furthermore, the MTA strongly opposes any effort to impose an unrealistic budgetary limit.

The MTA believes that public education should receive the highest priority during any municipal or state fiscal crisis. Therefore, the MTA opposes the closing of schools and/or the reduction of staff during any such crises and urges the Legislature to meet its constitutional responsibilities by providing sufficient funds to any school district faced with severe financial problems. (74, 77, 78, 80, 81, 82, 88, 07)

Proposed Amended A-6 Financing of Public Education

The Massachusetts Teachers Association urges the Legislature state and federal governments to properly fund all public education on an equitable basis ~~including those special programs which are state-mandated~~, and opposes unfunded education mandates.

The MTA believes that public education should be financed largely by the state through equitable taxes, thereby lowering local taxes and ensuring the availability of quality education to all students. The state should build a reserve fund through existing and new revenue sources as a means of protecting public schools and children from inevitable economic downturns. The MTA condemns all state and local agencies that, under the guise of economy, use budgetary practices and procedures that result

in the reduction of the quality of education from preschool through graduate studies. Furthermore, the MTA strongly opposes any effort to impose an unrealistic budgetary limit.

The MTA believes that public education should receive the highest priority during any municipal or state fiscal crisis. Therefore, the MTA opposes the closing of schools and/or the reduction of staff during any such crises and urges the Legislature to meet its constitutional responsibilities by providing sufficient funds to any school district faced with severe financial problems. (74, 77, 78, 80, 81, 82, 88, 07, 15)

Current B-11 The Environment and Natural Resources

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that preservation of natural resources is vital to the future quality of life. The MTA also recognizes the importance of all matter within the life cycle and urges the establishment of programs to teach students the concepts of and appreciation for the interdependence of all living organisms.

The MTA urges its members to support and teach educational programs that develop in students an understanding of their responsibilities to all living and non-living things, positive behaviors toward the environment, and an understanding of the need to protect the Earth's resources. The MTA also recognizes the importance of programs designed to improve the ecological balance and shall actively support federal, state and local programs that seek to combat the pollution of the environment.

Additionally, the MTA, recognizing that alternative energy use will reduce dependence on fossil fuels, strongly urges that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its cities and towns actively pursue the use of alternative energy resources in public buildings. (70, 79, 80, 85, 88, 89, 91, 99, 02)

Proposed Amended B-11 The Environment, and Natural Resources and Climate Change

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that preservation of natural resources is vital to the future quality of life. The MTA also recognizes the importance of all matter within the life cycle

and urges the establishment of programs to teach students the concepts of and appreciation for the interdependence of all living organisms.

The MTA urges its members to support and teach educational programs that develop in students an understanding of their responsibilities to all living and non-living things, positive behaviors toward the environment, and an understanding of the need to protect the Earth's resources. The MTA also recognizes the importance of programs designed to improve ecological balance and shall actively support federal, state and local programs that seek to combat the pollution of the environment.

The MTA further believes that students should be taught about the impact of human behavior on global climate change and about environmentally sound practices that lessen that impact.

Additionally, the MTA, recognizing that alternative energy use will reduce dependence on fossil fuels, strongly urges that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its cities and towns to actively pursue and promote the use of alternative energy resources ~~in public buildings~~. (70, 79, 80, 85, 88, 89, 91, 99, 02, 15)

Current B-32 Standardized Testing Of Students

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that the primary purpose of standardized tests should be to improve the quality of education and instruction for students. Standardized tests are most useful when selected or developed by educational professionals closest to the classroom and integrated with assessment information specific to district programs.

The MTA urges locals to advocate developmentally appropriate assessment techniques that are bias-free, reliable and valid.

The MTA also believes that when a test is mandated at the state or national level it should only be used to evaluate programs toward meeting state or national standards and/or goals. The MTA opposes any use of standardized tests when scores are:

- used as criteria for the reduction or withholding of any educational funding;
- used inappropriately to compare students,

Continued on next page

Amendments to resolutions are recommended

Continued from previous page

educators, programs, schools and communities;

- used as a single criterion for high-stakes decision-making;
- used inappropriately to evaluate teachers;
- used to design programs for “teaching to the test” rather than to the content measured by the test.

The MTA further believes that the administration of a standardized test includes the responsibility to educate the stakeholders in the purpose of the test, the meaning of test results and the accurate interpretation of conclusions, while protecting the privacy rights of students and educators. (99)

Proposed Amended B-32 Standardized Testing Of Students

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The MTA urges locals to advocate developmentally appropriate assessment techniques that are bias-free, reliable and valid.

The MTA also believes that when a test is mandated at the state or national level it should only be used to evaluate programs toward meeting state or national standards and/or goals. The MTA opposes any use of standardized tests when scores are:

- used as criteria for the reduction or withholding of any educational funding;
- used inappropriately to compare students, educators, programs, schools and communities;
- used as a single criterion for high-stakes decision-making;
- used inappropriately to evaluate teachers educators;
- used to design programs for “teaching to the test” rather than to the content measured by the test.

The MTA further believes that the administration of a standardized test includes the responsibility to educate the stakeholders in the purpose of the test, the meaning of test results and the accurate interpretation of conclusions, while protecting the privacy rights of students and educators. (99, 15)

Proposed New B-33 (and renumber the rest of Section B) B-33 Time to Learn

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that an excessive focus on high-stakes tests and other mandated assessments has a negative effect on the quality and breadth of the education

provided to students. This excessive focus constrains the curriculum that districts can provide and limits students’ time to learn. (15)

Proposed New C-21 (and renumber the rest of Section C) C-21 Nutrition

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that proper nutrition is essential to child development and student success. School food service programs must be nutritionally sound, appealing and affordable. Serving sizes should be appropriate for various age groups within a school. A choice of nutritious beverages and plant-based foods should be available.

The MTA also supports nutrition programs that are regulated by uniform standards, readily accessible, are medically correct for students and employees who have special, documented dietary needs, and are supported by public funds.

The MTA believes that the way public funds are allocated for school food service programs must maintain quality and appropriate levels of service. (15)

Current D-11 Evaluation of Personnel

The Massachusetts Teachers Association accepts the concept of educator accountability for the provision and maintenance of high-quality education when and where educators have a significant role in the formulation of goals, policies and procedures.

The MTA supports the requirement that local associations bargain educator evaluation instruments appropriate to the roles of the individual educators and their use for the improvement of instruction, professional growth and education personnel accountability. The MTA believes that the primary goal of evaluation should be improvement of instruction.

The MTA believes that the establishment of performance criteria within evaluation must ensure that objectives are attainable and that evaluation takes into account all community and environmental factors that affect the learning process, including adequate funding.

The MTA further believes that state education associations must be integral to the establishment of any performance criteria promulgated by the Commonwealth. (73, 85, 90, 10)

Proposed Amended D-11 Evaluation of Personnel

The Massachusetts Teachers Association accepts the concept of educator accountability for the

provision and maintenance of high-quality education when and where educators have a significant role in the formulation of goals, policies and procedures.

The MTA supports the requirement that local associations bargain educator evaluation instruments appropriate to the roles of the individual educators and their use for the improvement of instruction, professional growth and education personnel accountability. The MTA believes that the primary goal of evaluation should be improvement of instruction.

The MTA believes that the establishment of performance criteria within evaluation must ensure that objectives are attainable and that evaluation takes into account all community and environmental factors that affect the learning process, including adequate funding.

While evaluations may be used in some employment decisions, evaluations should not be used to adversely affect an educator’s license.

The MTA further believes that state education associations must be integral to the establishment of any performance criteria promulgated by the Commonwealth. (73, 85, 90, 10, 15)

Current E-2 Educational Personnel Involvement in Statewide Educational Policy

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that educational personnel from all levels should be involved in the establishment of statewide educational policy. Therefore, the MTA encourages the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the governing boards of higher education to include MTA designees on its task forces and committees, including those that deal with curriculum frameworks, statewide student testing programs and teacher licensure and evaluation. (77, 78, 85, 86, 89, 99, 09)

Proposed Amended E-2 Educational Personnel Involvement in Statewide Educational Policy

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that educational personnel from all levels should be involved in the establishment of statewide educational policy. Therefore, the MTA encourages the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the governing boards of higher education to include MTA designees on its task forces and committees, including those that deal with curriculum frameworks, statewide student testing programs and teacher licensure and evaluation.

The MTA also supports the inclusion of a significant number of preK-12 educators as voting members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. (77, 78, 85, 86, 89, 99, 09, 15)

Amendments to bylaws are proposed

The following is Bylaw Amendment #1: Proposal to Fill Unexpired Term for Statewide Retired Director. It would revise Section 6E(2)d of Article VII, "Nominations, Elections & Terms of Office." The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

d. The Board shall then elect a Statewide Retired District Director who shall take office immediately upon election unless otherwise specified and shall serve until the next June 30, if the term expires then. Otherwise, the interim Director shall serve until the next election, at which time he/she is eligible to be a candidate to fill the unexpired term.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

d. The Board shall then elect a Statewide Retired District Director who shall take office immediately upon election unless otherwise specified and shall serve until the next June 30, if the term expires then. Otherwise, the interim Director shall serve until the next election, at which time he/she is eligible to be a candidate to fill the unexpired term.

d. The Board shall then elect a Statewide Retired District Director who shall take office immediately upon election unless otherwise specified and shall complete the unexpired term.

Submitters' rationale: The purpose of this proposed bylaw change is to align the term of office for an interim Statewide Retired Director with the term of office for an interim District Director.

Submitted by:
Paul Toner, Cambridge Education Association
Gerard Ruane, MTA Retired

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:
Recommends Adoption (7-0)

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (39-13)

Impact statement: This amendment changes the duration of the term of an interim Statewide Retired District Director approved by the Board. The proposal would allow an interim Statewide Retired District Director approved by the Board to complete the entire unexpired term.

The following is Bylaw Amendment #2: Proposal to Fill Unexpired Term of At-Large Director for Ethnic Minority Membership. It would revise Section 5E(2)d of Article VII, "Nominations, Elections & Terms of Office." The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

d. The Board shall then elect an At-Large Director for Ethnic Minority Membership who shall take office immediately upon election unless otherwise specified and shall serve until the next June 30, if the term expires then. Otherwise, the interim Director shall serve until the next election, at which time he/she is eligible to be a candidate to fill the unexpired term.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

d. The Board shall then elect an At-Large Director for Ethnic Minority Membership who shall take office immediately upon election unless otherwise specified and shall serve until the next June 30, if the term expires then. Otherwise, the interim Director shall serve until the next election, at which time he/she is eligible to be a candidate to fill the unexpired term.

d. The Board shall then elect an At-Large Director for Ethnic Minority Membership who shall take office immediately upon election unless otherwise specified and shall complete the unexpired term.

Submitters' rationale: The purpose of this proposed bylaw change is to align the term of office for an interim At-Large Ethnic Minority Membership Director with the term of office for an interim District Director.

Submitted by:
Paul Toner, Cambridge Education Association
Gerard Ruane, MTA Retired

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:
Recommends Adoption (7-0)

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (29-22)

Continued in following columns

Proposed Bylaw Amendment #2 — continued from previous columns

Impact statement: This amendment changes the duration of the term of an interim At-Large Director for Ethnic Minority Membership appointed by the Board. The proposal would allow an interim At-Large Director for Ethnic Minority Membership appointed by the Board to complete the entire unexpired term.

The following is Bylaw Amendment #3: Proposal to Fill Unexpired Term of At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals. It would revise Section 8E(2)d of Article VII, "Nominations, Elections & Terms of Office." The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

d. The Board shall then elect an At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals who shall take office immediately upon election unless otherwise specified and shall serve until the next June 30, if the term expires then. Otherwise, the interim Director shall serve until the next election, at which time he/she is eligible to be a candidate to fill the unexpired term.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

d. The Board shall then elect an At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals who shall take office immediately upon election unless otherwise specified and shall serve until the next June 30, if the term expires then. Otherwise, the interim Director shall serve until the next election, at which time he/she is eligible to be a candidate to fill the unexpired term.

d. The Board shall then elect an At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals who shall take office immediately upon election unless otherwise specified and shall complete the unexpired term.

Submitters' rationale: The purpose of this proposed bylaw change is to align the term of office for an interim At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals with the term of office for an interim District Director.

Submitted by:
Paul Toner, Cambridge Education Association
Gerard Ruane, MTA Retired

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:
Recommends Adoption (7-0)

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (32-22)

Impact statement: This amendment changes the duration of the term of an interim At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals appointed by the Board. The proposal would allow an interim At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals appointed by the Board to complete the entire unexpired term.

Four candidates declared elected to Retired Members Committee

Four MTA members have been elected to vacancies on the Retired Members Committee under the MTA waiver policy.

Those elected were Richard Connole, Paul Mazut, Julia Monteiro Johnson and Kathleen Roberts.

The MTA policy governing election waivers for the Retired Members Committee states that if the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of positions to be filled, elections may be waived and the candidates declared elected.

Terms on the Retired Members Committee begin July 1 and last for two years.

Amendments to bylaws are proposed

The following is Bylaw Amendment #4: Nomination at the Annual Meeting of Delegates. It would revise Article VII, Section 2, "Nominations, Elections & Terms of Office: President and Vice President." The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Section 2B(2)c.
Nomination papers must be filed with the Credentials and Ballot Committee prior to the close of the first business session.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Section 2B(2)c.
Nomination papers must be filed with the Credentials and Ballot Committee ~~prior to the close of~~ **no later than three hours after the start of** the first business session.

Submitter's rationale: The recommended filing deadline of three hours after the start of the first business session will allow the Credentials and Ballot Committee time to certify the candidate so that only certified candidates for President and Vice President will be allowed to address the Annual Meeting of Delegates. Without this amendment, anyone announcing his or her candidacy would be entitled to address the delegates before being certified as a legitimate candidate for office. Affording candidates three hours to mount a campaign and gather signatures at Annual Meeting is reasonable.

Submitted by:
MTA Task Force on Campaigns and Elections

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:
Recommends Adoption (7-0)

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (45-8)

Impact statement: Candidates for President and Vice President may submit nomination papers at the Annual Meeting. Currently papers must be filed by the end of the first business session. This amendment would set a deadline of three hours after the start of the business session to give a specific amount of time for the Credentials and Ballot Committee to certify the papers before the candidates address the delegates.

The following is Bylaw Amendment #5: Election of President and Vice President. It would revise Article VII, Section 2, "Nominations, Elections & Terms of Office: President and Vice President." The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Section 2C(2)
The President and Vice President shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates by the delegates.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Section 2C(2)
The President and Vice President shall be elected by **majority vote of the delegates** at the Annual Meeting of Delegates. ~~by the delegates.~~ **In the event that a majority is lacking on the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held between the two highest vote-getters.**

Submitter's rationale: The requirements of a majority vote and the second ballot between the two highest vote-getters were in MTA's Standing Rules. Because standing rules can be amended by the Annual Meeting, it is recommended that these important voting requirements be set forth in MTA's Bylaws.

Submitted by:
MTA Task Force on Campaigns and Elections

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:
Recommends Adoption (7-0)

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption with a Substitute Amendment (50-0)

Section 2C(2)
The President and Vice President shall be elected by ~~majority vote of the delegates at the Annual Meeting~~

Continued in following columns

Proposed Bylaw Amendment #5 — continued from previous columns

~~of Delegates: by the delegates by a majority of the delegates voting at the Annual Meeting. In the event that a majority is lacking on the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held between the two highest vote-getters.~~

Impact statement: This amendment does not change the manner of electing the President and Vice President, but moves the provision into the bylaws rather than only referring to it in the standing rules.

The following is Bylaw Amendment #6: Election of At-Large Director for Ethnic Minority Membership. It would revise Article VII, Section 5, "Nominations, Elections & Terms of Office: At-Large Director for Ethnic Minority Membership." The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Section 5C(2)
The At-Large Director for Ethnic Minority Membership shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Section 5C(2)
The At-Large Director for Ethnic Minority Membership shall be elected **by majority vote of the delegates** at the Annual Meeting of Delegates. **In the event that a majority is lacking on the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held between the two highest vote-getters.**

Submitter's rationale: The requirements of a majority vote and a potential second ballot between the two highest vote-getters are in MTA's Standing Rules. Because standing rules can be amended at the Annual Meeting, it is recommended that these important voting requirements be set forth in MTA's Bylaws.

Submitted by:
MTA Task Force on Campaigns and Elections

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:
Recommends Adoption (7-0)

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption with a Substitute Amendment (48-0)

Section 5C(2)
The At-Large Director for Ethnic Minority Membership shall be elected ~~by majority vote of the delegates at the Annual Meeting of Delegates by a majority of the delegates voting at the Annual Meeting of Delegates.~~ **In the event that a majority is lacking on the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held between the two highest vote-getters.**

Impact statement: This amendment does not change the manner of electing the At-Large Director for Ethnic Minority Membership, but moves the provision into the bylaws rather than only referring to it in the standing rules.



For information, call
800.392.6175, Ext. 8265

Amendments to bylaws are proposed

The following is Bylaw Amendment #7: Election of At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals. It would revise Article VII, Section 8, "Nominations, Elections & Terms of Office: At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals." The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Article VII, Section 8C(2)
The At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Article VII, Section 8C(2)
The At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals shall be elected **by majority vote of the delegates** at the Annual Meeting of Delegates. **In the event that a majority is lacking on the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held between the two highest vote-getters.**

Submitter's rationale: The requirements of a majority vote and a potential second ballot between the two highest vote-getters are in MTA's Standing Rules. Because standing rules can be amended at the Annual Meeting, it is recommended that these important voting requirements be set forth in MTA's Bylaws.

Submitted by:
MTA Task Force on Campaigns and Elections

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:
Recommends Adoption (7-0)

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption with a Substitute Amendment (50-0)

Article VII, Section 8C(2)
The At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals shall be elected ~~by majority vote of the delegates~~ at the Annual Meeting of Delegates **by a majority of the delegates voting at the Annual Meeting of Delegates. In the event that a majority is lacking on the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held between the two highest vote-getters.**

Impact statement: This amendment does not change the manner of electing the At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals, but moves the provision into the bylaws rather than only referring to it in the standing rules.

The following is Bylaw Amendment #8: Election of District Directors. It would revise Article VII, Section 4, "Nominations, Elections & Terms of Office: Board of Directors." The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Section 4C(2)
The District Directors shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates by only those delegates from within the candidate's district.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Section 4C(2)
The District Directors shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates by only those delegates from within the candidate's district. **The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected.**

Submitter's rationale: The requirement of a plurality vote was in MTA's Standing Rules. Because standing rules can be amended at the Annual Meeting, it is recommended that this important voting requirement be set forth in MTA's Bylaws.

Submitted by:
MTA Task Force on Campaigns and Elections

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:
Recommends Adoption (7-0)

Continued in following columns

Proposed Bylaw Amendment #8 — continued from previous columns

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (48-0)

Impact statement: This amendment does not change the manner of electing the District Directors, but moves the provision into the bylaws rather than only referring to it in the standing rules.

The following is Bylaw Amendment #9: Election of Regional Executive Committee Members. It would revise Article VII, Section 3, "Nominations, Elections & Terms of Office: Regional, Statewide Retired and At-Large Executive Committee Members." The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

D(2) Eight Regional Executive Committee members shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates.
• Seven (7) members shall be elected by the delegates from the geographical regions to be represented.
• One member shall be elected from the public higher education membership.

D(3) One Statewide Retired Region Executive Committee member will be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates by the delegates representing the Statewide Retired District.

D(4) One At-Large ESP Executive Committee member will be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates by all delegates.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

D(2) Eight Regional Executive Committee members shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates.
• Seven (7) members shall be elected by the delegates from the geographical regions to be represented.
• One member shall be elected from the public higher education membership.
• **The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected.**

D(3) One Statewide Retired Region Executive Committee member ~~will~~ **shall** be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates by the delegates representing the Statewide Retired District. **The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected.**

D(4) One At-Large ESP Executive Committee member ~~will~~ **shall** be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates by all delegates. **The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. In the event that a majority is lacking on the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held between the two highest vote-getters.**

Submitter's rationale: The requirement of a plurality vote is in MTA's Standing Rules. Because standing rules can be amended at the Annual Meeting, it is recommended that this important voting requirement be set forth in MTA's Bylaws.

Submitted by:
MTA Task Force on Campaigns and Elections

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:
Recommends Adoption (7-0)

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption with a Substitute Amendment (56-0)

D(4) One At-Large ESP Executive Committee member ~~will~~ **shall** be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates by all delegates. **The candidate receiving the highest number of a majority vote of the delegates voting at the Annual Meeting of Delegates votes shall be declared elected. In the event that a majority is lacking on the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held between the two highest vote-getters.**

Impact statement: This amendment does not change the manner of electing members of the Executive Committee, but moves the provision into the bylaws rather than only referring to it in the standing rules.

Amendments to standing rules are proposed

The following is Standing Rule Amendment #1. It would revise Section 1 of Standing Rule 9, "Nominations and Elections." The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Section 1 (a) At least two (2) weeks prior to the Call of the Annual Meeting of Delegates, the Executive Director-Treasurer of the Association shall cause to be published in the official publication a picture and biographical statement of each candidate who has filed the required nomination papers in accordance with the Bylaws, Article VII, Sections 2B, 3B, 4B, 5B, 6B. The Executive Director-Treasurer shall cause to be announced to the Annual Meeting the names of those candidates nominated under Article VII, Sections 2B, 3B, 4B, 5B, 6B.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Section 1 (a) At least two (2) weeks prior to the Call of the Annual Meeting of Delegates, the Executive Director-Treasurer of the Association shall cause to be published in the official publication a picture and biographical statement of each candidate who has filed the required nomination papers in accordance with the Bylaws, Article VII, Sections 2B, 3B, 4B, 5B, 6B. **In the first report of the Credentials and Ballot Committee**, the Executive Director-Treasurer shall cause to be announced to the Annual Meeting the names of those candidates nominated under Article VII, Sections 2B, 3B, 4B, 5B, 6B.

Note: This standing rule change will take effect on the date that the Board of Directors revises its campaign and election policies based on the recommendations of the Campaigns and Elections Task Force established by the Board in June 2014. A Board vote is expected in August 2015.

Submitter's Rationale: MTA's parliamentarian has advised that the MTA Standing Rules should address the conduct of the Annual Meeting. The task force has recommended that the stricken-through portion of this standing rule be deleted and included in Board policy.

Submitted by:
MTA Task Force on Campaigns and Elections

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (46-9)

Impact statement: If the delegates vote to delete the stricken-through portion, the Board would consider including the provision in Board policy as recommended by the task force.

The following is Standing Rule Amendment #2. It would revise Section 1 of Standing Rule 9, "Nominations and Elections." The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Section 1 (b) Each candidate for statewide office, or designee, shall be given an opportunity to speak for five (5) minutes. Any candidate who is unopposed, however, may waive the right to speak by notifying the President of the MTA by April 30.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Section 1 (b) Each candidate for **President or Vice President, statewide office**, or designee, shall be given an opportunity to speak for five (5) minutes **as the last item of business on Friday at the Annual Meeting.** ~~Any candidate who is unopposed, however, may waive the right to speak by notifying the President of MTA by April 30.~~

Note: This standing rule change will take effect on the date that the Board of Directors revises its campaign and election policies based on the recommendations of the Campaigns and Elections Task Force established by the Board in June 2014. A Board vote is expected in August 2015.

Submitter's rationale: The amendment specifies that speeches by candidates for President or Vice President are the last item of business on the first day of the Annual Meeting, as is current practice. Since candidates for President or Vice President can submit papers at Annual Meeting, a speech waiver by April 30 is never utilized.

Submitted by:
MTA Task Force on Campaigns and Elections

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (54-0)

Continued in following columns

Proposed Standing Rule Amendment #2 — continued from previous columns

Impact statement: This change in the standing rule will clarify our practice that allows a candidate for President/Vice President to choose not to speak at the last minute.

The following is Standing Rule Amendment #3. It would revise Section 1 of Standing Rule 9, "Nominations and Elections." The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Section 1 (c) Each candidate in a contested election for District Director, Regional Executive Committee member, or designee, shall be given three (3) minutes to speak to the respective district or region delegates.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Section 1 (c) Each candidate in a contested election for **Statewide** District Director **or Statewide** Regional Executive Committee member, or designee, shall be given three (3) minutes to speak to the respective ~~district or region~~ delegates.

Note: This standing rule change will take effect on the date that the Board of Directors revises its campaign and election policies based on the recommendations of the Campaigns and Elections Task Force established by the Board in June 2014. A Board vote is expected in August 2015.

Submitter's Rationale: This amendment reflects current practice.

Submitted by:
MTA Task Force on Campaigns and Elections

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption with a Substitute Amendment (54-3)

Section 1 (c) Each candidate in a contested election for **District Director, At-Large Director for Ethnic Minority Membership, At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals, Statewide Retired District Director, Regional Executive Committee Member, Statewide Retired Region Executive Committee Member, and At-Large Education Support Professional Executive Committee Member, or their designees**, shall be given three (3) minutes to speak to the respective delegates.

Impact statement: This amendment will move current practice from Board policy to the MTA Standing Rules.

The following is Standing Rule Amendment #4. It would revise Section 1 of Standing Rule 9, "Nominations and Elections." The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Section 1 (d) The members of the Bylaws and Rules Committee under the direction of the chair of said committee shall be responsible for timing all speakers. Each speaker shall be given a one-minute warning before the time has elapsed, and the timekeeper shall stand at the end of the allotted time.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Delete Section 1 (d).
~~Section 1 (d) The members of the Bylaws and Rules Committee under the direction of the chair of said committee shall be responsible for timing all speakers. Each speaker shall be given a one-minute warning before the time has elapsed, and the timekeeper shall stand at the end of the allotted time.~~

Note: This standing rule change will take effect on the date that the Board of Directors revises its campaign and election policies based on the recommendations of the Campaigns and Elections Task Force established by the Board in June 2014. A Board vote is expected in August 2015.

Submitter's Rationale: MTA's parliamentarian has advised that the MTA Standing Rules should address the conduct of the Annual Meeting. The task force has recommended that this portion of the standing rule be deleted and included in Board policy.

Continued on Page 30

Amendments to standing rules are proposed

Proposed Standing Rule Amendment #4 — continued from Page 29

Submitted by:
MTA Task Force on Campaigns and Elections

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (54-0)

Impact statement: If the delegates vote to delete, the Board would consider including the provision in Board policy as recommended by the task force.

The following is Standing Rule Amendment #5. It would revise Section 2 of Standing Rule 9, “Nominations and Elections.” The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Section 2 (a)
(a) The President, Vice President, At-Large Director for Ethnic Minority Membership, and the At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals shall be elected by a majority vote of those voting. In the event that a majority is lacking on the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held between the two highest vote-getters.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Section 2 (a)
Delete Section 2 (a) and renumber the remaining sections:

(a) ~~The President, Vice President, At-Large Director for Ethnic Minority Membership, and the At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals shall be elected by a majority vote of those voting. In the event that a majority is lacking on the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held between the two highest vote-getters.~~

Note: This standing rule change will take effect on the date that the Board of Directors revises its campaign and election policies based on the recommendations of the Campaigns and Elections Task Force established by the Board in June 2014. A Board vote is expected in August 2015.

Submitter’s Rationale: MTA’s parliamentarian has advised that the MTA Standing Rules should address the conduct of the Annual Meeting. The task force has recommended that this portion of the standing rule be deleted and included in the bylaws.

Submitted by:
MTA Task Force on Campaigns and Elections

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (52-0)

Impact statement: This portion of the standing rule would be replaced by bylaws if proposed Bylaw Amendments #5, #6 and #7 are approved by Annual Meeting delegates.

The following is Standing Rule Amendment #6. It would revise Section 2 of Standing Rule 9, “Nominations and Elections.” The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

(b) District Directors shall be elected by only those delegates from the district in which the candidate is employed. The candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Section 2 (b)
Delete Section 2 (b) and renumber the remaining sections:

(b) ~~District Directors shall be elected by only those delegates from the district in which the candidate is employed. The candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected.~~

Note: This standing rule change will take effect on the date that the Board of Directors revises its campaign and election policies based on the recommendations of the Campaigns and Elections Task Force established by the Board in June 2014. A Board vote is expected in August 2015.

Continued in following columns

Proposed Standing Rule Amendment #6 — continued from previous columns

Submitter’s Rationale: MTA’s parliamentarian has advised that the MTA Standing Rules should address the conduct of the Annual Meeting. The task force has recommended that this portion of the standing rule be deleted and included in the bylaws.

Submitted by:
MTA Task Force on Campaigns and Elections

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (53-0)

Impact statement: This portion of the standing rule would be replaced by a bylaw if proposed Bylaw Amendment #8 is approved by Annual Meeting delegates.

The following is Standing Rule Amendment #7. It would revise Section 2 of Standing Rule 9, “Nominations and Elections.” The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

(c) Regional Executive Committee members shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates by the delegates from the regions to be represented. The candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Section 2 (c)
Delete Section 2 (c) and renumber the remaining sections:

(c) ~~Regional Executive Committee members shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates by the delegates from the regions to be represented. The candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected.~~

Note: This standing rule change will take effect on the date that the Board of Directors revises its campaign and election policies based on the recommendations of the Campaigns and Elections Task Force established by the Board in June 2014. A Board vote is expected in August 2015.

Submitter’s Rationale: MTA’s parliamentarian has advised that the MTA Standing Rules should address the conduct of the Annual Meeting. The task force has recommended that this portion of the standing rule be deleted and included in the bylaws.

Submitted by:
MTA Task Force on Campaigns and Elections

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (53-0)

Impact statement: This portion of the standing rule would be replaced by a bylaw if proposed Bylaw Amendment #9 is approved by Annual Meeting delegates.

The following is Standing Rule Amendment #8. It would revise Section 2 of Standing Rule 9, “Nominations and Elections.” The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Section 2 (g) In the event of a tie vote by two (2) or more candidates in an election, a runoff election will be held between or among the tied candidates to fill the available seats.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Section 2 (g) In the event of a tie vote by two (2) or more candidates in an election, a runoff election will be held between or among the tied candidates to fill the available seats. **With the consent of the candidates in a runoff election, the election may be decided by the toss of a coin.**

Note: This standing rule will take effect on the date that the Board of Directors revises its campaign and election policies based on the recommendations of the

Continued on next page

Amendments to standing rules are proposed

Proposed Standing Rule Amendment #8 — continued from previous page

Campaigns and Elections Task Force established by the Board in June 2014. A Board vote is expected in August 2015.

Submitter's Rationale: This amendment would add the option of a coin toss.

Submitted by:
MTA Task Force on Campaigns and Elections

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends to amend by adding the word "fair" before the word "coin" in the last sentence.

Recommends rejection of the proposed standing rule as amended (35-16).

Impact statement: Proposed amendment would allow candidates in a runoff election to elect to decide the outcome by the toss of a coin.

The following is Standing Rule Amendment #9. It would affect Sections 2 and 3 of Standing Rule 9, "Nominations and Elections." The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Section 2 (h) The order of candidates' names on a runoff election ballot for majority and plurality elections will be listed by the same order as the initial ballot.

Section 3 (a) All candidates shall be required to file with the Credentials and Ballot Committee a complete account of campaign expenditures within twenty-one (21) days after the Annual Meeting, on a form provided by the Association.

(b) The Credentials and Ballot Committee shall certify the receipt of these reports.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Delete Sections 2 (h) and 3:

Section 2 (h) The order of candidates' names on a runoff election ballot for majority and plurality elections will be listed by the same order as the initial ballot.

Section 3 (a) All candidates shall be required to file with the Credentials and Ballot Committee a complete account of campaign expenditures within twenty-one (21) days after the Annual Meeting, on a form provided by the Association.

(b) The Credentials and Ballot Committee shall certify the receipt of these reports:

Note: These standing rule changes will take effect on the date that the Board of Directors revises its campaign and election policies based on the recommendations of the Campaigns and Elections Task Force established by the Board in June 2014. A Board vote is expected in August 2015.

Submitter's Rationale: MTA's parliamentarian has advised that the MTA Standing Rules should address the conduct of the Annual Meeting. The task force has recommended that these portions of the standing rules be deleted and included in Board policy.

Submitted by:
MTA Task Force on Campaigns and Elections

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (47-8)

Impact statement: If the delegates vote to delete, the Board would consider including the provision in Board policy as recommended by the task force.

The following is Standing Rule Amendment #10. It would affect Standing Rule 10, "Distribution of Campaign Materials." The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Section 1. All campaign materials shall be properly identified by source and sponsorship.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Delete Standing Rule 10:

Section 1. All campaign materials shall be properly

Continued in following columns

Proposed Standing Rule Amendment #10 — continued from previous columns

Section 2. No campaign literature or related materials may be distributed or posted within the seating area of the auditorium, registration areas or polling areas or where such materials are visible from these areas.

Section 3. At Meetings of Delegates, the Credentials and Ballot Committee is authorized to remove campaign materials and prohibit practices that are inconsistent with the committee's guidelines.

Section 4. Candidates shall be responsible for the removal of all campaign materials at the termination of the Meeting of Delegates.

identified by source and sponsorship:

Section 2. No campaign literature or related materials may be distributed or posted within the seating area of the auditorium, registration areas or polling areas or where such materials are visible from these areas:

Section 3. At Meetings of Delegates, the Credentials and Ballot Committee is authorized to remove campaign materials and prohibit practices that are inconsistent with the committee's guidelines:

Section 4. Candidates shall be responsible for the removal of all campaign materials at the termination of the Meeting of Delegates:

Note: This standing rule change will take effect on the date that the Board of Directors revises its campaign and election policies based on the recommendations of the Campaigns and Elections Task Force established by the Board in June 2014. A Board vote is expected in August 2015.

Submitter's Rationale: MTA's parliamentarian has advised that the MTA Standing Rules should address the conduct of the Annual Meeting. The task force has recommended that this standing rule be deleted and included in Board policy.

Submitted by:
MTA Task Force on Campaigns and Elections

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (44-11)

Impact statement: If the delegates vote to delete, the Board would consider including the provision in Board policy as recommended by the task force.

The following is Standing Rule Amendment #11. It would affect Standing Rule 11, "Electioneering." The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Section 1. No electioneering shall be allowed within the polling area.

Section 2. At a special delegate assembly, the Credentials and Ballot Committee will have the final decision on whether and to what extent campaigning for elective office may take place.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Delete Standing Rule 11:

Section 1. No electioneering shall be allowed within the polling area.

Section 2. At a special delegate assembly, the Credentials and Ballot Committee will have the final decision on whether and to what extent campaigning for elective office may take place.

Note: This standing rule change will take effect on the date that the Board of Directors revises its campaign and election policies based on the recommendations of the Campaigns and Elections Task Force established by the Board in June 2014. A Board vote is expected in August 2015.

Submitter's Rationale: MTA's parliamentarian has advised that the MTA Standing Rules should address the conduct of the Annual Meeting. The task force has recommended that this standing rule be deleted and included in Board policy.

Submitted by:
MTA Task Force on Campaigns and Elections

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (42-9)

Impact statement: If the delegates vote to delete, the Board would consider including the provision in Board policy as recommended by the task force.

Annual Report of the Executive Director-Treasurer

Deep organizing and careful listening go hand in hand. They are key elements of the foundation of all strong unions, including the MTA. They have also been hallmarks of the past year — a period in which we have won our share of victories for students and public education while continuing to build our power to face down threats and to seize opportunities.

As I look back, I am reaffirmed in my belief that the MTA must center its priorities, actions and plans on sound principles, ambitious goals, a well-understood mission and an urgent sense of strategic intent.

As I look ahead, I remain confident that these imperatives, driven by members, have great potential to create a bright future for public education in our Commonwealth.

Today, however, there is a need to pause and examine where we stand in a complex world characterized by a perilous political and social landscape.

Our members have incredible courage and a profound vision for the schools that Massachusetts students deserve. Since the last MTA Annual Meeting — with leadership from MTA President Barbara Madeloni and Vice President Janet Anderson — they have proven their capacity for action without fail and without hesitation.

■ Last summer, with a vote looming on a bill that sought to raise the charter school cap, more than 1,100 members reached out to their state senators right away to urge its defeat. The legislation was stopped in its tracks.

■ Last fall, we found out that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education was considering proposals to tie licensure renewal or advancement to educators' evaluations or students' test scores. The overwhelming response? "None of the above." Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester heard the message loud and clear. The DESE abruptly dropped its ill-conceived ideas.

■ This spring, many of our higher education faculty and staff have been making it abundantly clear to legislators and administrators that their fairly

Energized, mobilized MTA members are organizing themselves to be the voice of public education and students. We have an outstanding staff, and we have the experience and resources to contend in any arena.

negotiated contracts must be implemented without fail — and that further health insurance cost shifting is wrong for our public colleges and universities.

■ At this writing, MTA educators are shoulder to shoulder with parents, students, elected leaders and many others in Holyoke, seeking to fend off a devastating state takeover of their school district.

■ In the days ahead, our energies will also remain focused in part on appropriately addressing unresolved issues related to the education reform agenda, including efforts to reauthorize the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act and to reach conclusions on the local level about District-Determined Measures.

These examples and others clearly illustrate the determination, initiative and creativity of our more than 110,000 members. But they also point to something else: the evolving challenges of a dangerous set of circumstances tied to policy, influence and control over state resources.

So at this moment, action — strategic and collective action — is essential to survival.

Based on decisions by the delegates last May, the MTA has been holding forums across the state, encouraging educators to express their views of what schools can be and how they can serve every student, including those who must cope with poverty and inequality. The hundreds of members who have attended have spoken out about the misuse of standardized testing, overwhelming state mandates, local budget shortfalls, cuts in art and music programs, problems caused by charter schools and issues plaguing the evaluation system.

The thread running through the discussions is knotted around standardized tests and assessments: "accountability" for students, educators, schools and districts being based on a numbers game; young

children being subjected to Teaching Strategies GOLD, which takes away educators' time and interferes with learning; and days and weeks overwhelmed by test prep.

This, in turn, drives a carefully crafted negative narrative that focuses on communities such as Holyoke, which is in danger of being declared Level 5 — and having its *public* schools removed from local control. This narrative underlies the push by Commonwealth charter schools to drain funds from towns and cities, distort student populations and push out English language learners and special needs students. It provides opportunities for various enterprises whose revenues depend on ever more testing, standardization and privatization — both for-profit and nonprofit — to increase their revenues in the education "marketplace."

Most important, it hurts students. As one member stated during a forum: "Kids are not data points; they are people."

Unfortunately, such sentiments are unlikely to get a fair hearing from the current leaders of the state's education bureaucracy. Commissioner Chester is driving the Holyoke takeover effort. Governor Charlie Baker — who defeated MTA-recommended candidate Martha Coakley in the November gubernatorial election — has called for more charter schools and has made his administration's agenda clear by appointing James Peyser the secretary of education and Paul Sagan to chair the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Both have histories of supporting charters and school privatization.

In such an environment, resilience — and resistance — will be at the forefront for the MTA and other unions whose members give their lives to public service. Fortunately, we are well equipped not only to oppose terrible ideas but to fight for fairness and help our communities and students thrive. Energized, mobilized MTA members are organizing themselves to be the voice of public education and students. We have an outstanding staff, and we have the experience and resources to contend in any arena.

That brings us right back to vision, strategy and power.

Even as the member forums were in full swing across the state, the MTA's Government Relations

Continued on next page



Ann Clarke



www.massteacher.org



Your Web link to news, member advocacy and educational resources

Annual Report of the Executive Director-Treasurer

Continued from previous page

Committee was developing a legislative agenda to carry forward our grassroots priorities. MTA-supported legislation would put moratoriums on the high-stakes use of testing and the expansion of Commonwealth charter schools, improve opportunities for English language learners, increase the availability of early education and full-day kindergarten, increase the proportion of higher education courses taught by full-time faculty and boost salaries and benefits for adjunct professors. Other bills would restore collective bargaining rights, eliminate fees for national background checks for educators and prohibit the bullying of public school employees.

Further information on legislation and many other crucial subjects is available on the MTA website, www.massteacher.org, which also features toolkits on issues such as high-stakes testing, charter schools and evaluation.

Meanwhile, our president is working with other members of the Foundation Budget Review Commission to produce a report based on hearings around the state that could help shape a positive debate about adequate funding for public education. The revival of the commission was a key MTA accomplishment in the legislative session that ended last year.

Also in the coming months, MTA members will be turning out in force for hearings on whether MCAS should be replaced with PARCC, working to end the Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment, and continuing to deepen alliances with the NAACP, Jobs With Justice, Raise Up Massachusetts, Health Care For All and other organizations and coalitions that are involved in efforts to advance the cause of social justice and help working families succeed. Members will participate

In December, more than 20 members of the MTA staff gathered with our state leaders for a retreat. Subsequently, workgroups were formed to help plan MTA efforts in four vital areas: charters, high-stakes testing, Level 4 and 5 schools, and turning the tide on the MKEA.

in ongoing efforts to bring fairness to our state's tax system. They will continue to weigh in at the federal level to seek renewal of the ESEA in a form that eschews the absurd testing mandates of No Child Left Behind and lives up to the law's original intent — leveling the playing field for all students.

As this all rolls out, the MTA will continue to provide opportunities for members — new teachers, ESPs and other educators in all categories — to network and learn, build upon their professional skills and make the most of the many special member benefits we offer through MTA Benefits. We will celebrate our unity and our history with pride, as members of the Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee did not long ago when they marked 35 years of activism.

This sounds like a lot. It is, and it is part of an even longer list.

Yet it all adheres to central structures that will help shape our activities moment by moment.

In December, more than 20 members of the MTA staff gathered with our state leaders for a retreat. Subsequently, workgroups were formed to help plan MTA efforts in four vital areas: charters, high-stakes testing, Level 4 and 5 schools, and turning

the tide on the MKEA. Another group is focused on ensuring that the contracts of our members at UMass are honored.

Now, the efforts have spread far and wide. Field representatives are working with locals and chapters around the state on these issues as well as on others that members believe are important.

They are basing their activities on four key principles:

- Engaging in internal organizing.
- Building coalitions with parents and community groups.
- Raising big issues at the state level and locally through collective bargaining.
- Developing a shared narrative about fighting for the schools our children deserve.

As always, the MTA's strategic intent is being kept front and center. It is summed up as follows: "The 'strategic intent' of MTA's Strategic Action Plan is to build power at the state and local level through the systematic engagement of more members and leaders (organizing them through a process of listening, asking, educating and mobilizing) so that members decide what matters to them and then lead the implementation and development of policy as the recognized voices of public education."

By continuing to act accordingly, we will accomplish what we must. We will amass more power and use it wisely on behalf of public education, which is at the heart of our democracy and our society.

A longer version of the Annual Report of the Executive Director-Treasurer, including sections on the work of each MTA division and department, will be in the Delegate Handbook for the 2015 Annual Meeting. The full report is also posted in the members' area of the MTA website.



2015 HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE
ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET
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ONLINE REGISTRATION www.massteacher.org/hcr

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Telephone reservations will NOT be accepted.

Since 1983, MTA's Human Relations Committee has reviewed nominations and selected the recipients of the annual Human and Civil Rights Awards. The annual HCR Awards Banquet, attended by educators from across the state, honors those who have shown extraordinary dedication to civil rights and human relations. Honoring those who dedicate themselves to equality for all is a proud tradition of the MTA.

Opposition to TS GOLD keeps growing

By Laura Barrett

Kindergarten teachers required to implement the Teaching Strategies GOLD kindergarten assessment are speaking out against the mandate.

TS GOLD is used in all but six of the 171 school districts implementing a new assessment in exchange for receiving state Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant funds.

Marguerite Foster-Franklin, a kindergarten teacher in Springfield, organized a meeting on March 30 at which 20 teachers met with Senator James Welch and Representatives Angelo Puppolo, Carlos Gonzalez and Eric Lesser to express their concerns. They asked the legislators to take action to decouple the TS GOLD requirement from the Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant program.

The next day, 42 teachers from 14 local associations held a regional forum on TS GOLD in Dedham at which they discussed why putting another assessment on top of those they already do is not helpful.

Members also expressed concerns about the privacy implications of uploading photos, videos and personal information about their young students to a private company's website without explicit parental permission.

In Stoughton, the school superintendent said after meeting with teachers that she will write a letter to state education officials urging them to drop the mandate.

On April 7, Somerville Teachers Association members voted unanimously at their annual meeting for a resolution calling for an end to the requirement. The vote was the culmination of several meetings on the issue involving STA members, parents and central administration officials.

"TS GOLD is a time-consuming and intrusive mandate that is not providing our teachers with any new information about their students," said Jackie Lawrence, president of the STA.

The STA's opposition was echoed in a letter that Somerville Superintendent Anthony Pierantozzi sent to the commissioner of education after he heard from teachers about

their concerns. His letter notes that there is a "breakdown of trust between parents/guardians and teachers" because of the TS GOLD data collection requirements.

The requirement stems from a federal Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant that Massachusetts applied for and received three years ago.

Under TS GOLD, teachers have to develop ratings on 19 behaviors or skills in two domains this year — Social/Emotional and Cognitive. They must document their ratings and enter data at two different checkpoints, the next of which is June 5. The process can include photographing or videotaping students and uploading those images and behavior reports to the TS GOLD website.

Next year, the requirement is slated to become even more burdensome, with a total of 66 ratings required in 10 domains.

More information about TS GOLD and the MKEA can be found at www.massteacher.org/mkea.

Failure to invest has major impact

Continued from Page 11

She said that her school has eliminated licensed librarians and curriculum coordinators over the past decade and now has fewer guidance counselors and education support professionals. There are no aides for recess or lunch, class sizes have increased, and funding has been cut for supplies. She said her school's technology is inadequate.

Clare Hammonds, a professor at the UMass Amherst Labor Center, testified that "a major result of the reduced investment in public higher education over the last decade is that our students take on an ever-increasing cost burden."

What this often means, she said, is "the choice between preparing for class and picking up an extra shift at work. It means the choice between not attending school at all and taking on massive amounts of debt."

For budget updates, please visit www.massteacher.org/edfunding.

UMass employees seek fairness on contracts

Continued from Page 10

highlighted the increased funding that UMass has received over the past few years and disputed Caret's contention that money for the full amount of the raises was not available.

Phillis also criticized claims that paying the contracts would force UMass to raise student fees. He pointed out that the UMass budget has enough money available to both cover the contracts and maintain a freeze on fees. He accused Caret of simply choosing to use the budget for other expenses. The situation is "unfair and unreasonable, pitting university constituencies against each other," Phillis said.

Members of the MSP, PSU and other bargaining units attended the meeting and helped deliver hundreds of postcards to the board members. The cards — filled out at various campus rallies in March and April and carrying the message "A Deal's a Deal" — urged the trustees to implement the ratified contracts and settle the PSU contract.

Additional actions are planned until the contracts are fully implemented and the PSU contract is settled.

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Consumer Loans: **Consumer loans qualifying for the .25% APR (annual percentage rate) discount are limited to personal and auto loans and require automatic payment from a Berkshire Bank checking account. Other fees may apply.

Visit gives students a feel for the U.S. Senate

Continued from Page 13

They also debated a bill on immigration that would forbid colleges from offering state and federal financial aid to undocumented immigrants and increase quotas for immigrants skilled in areas such as science and technology, where the need for workers is high.

They caucused in breakout rooms according to party and presented amendments. Then they tried to sell their amendments to colleagues on the other side of the aisle. Two of the amendments — calling for a quicker path to citizenship for immigrants who could fill high-need jobs and a restriction on work visas for those in service or farm-sector jobs — passed.

Two acting senators from each party spoke on the bill, using their own words and arguments. They were aided by the tablet computers, which the participants kept with them at all times and which offered cues to the positions that the senators they were portraying would take. Republicans even prepared to filibuster.

When the roll was called, they voted. Strong calls of “Aye!” from the life-skills special education students drew an ovation from both sides.

The bill passed by three votes. “I’ve done some mock sessions in my classes,” Whittier said, “but nothing like this.”

Two days later, 45 more Sutton High School sophomores, juniors and seniors visited. The 2½-hour sessions “were so fast-paced that the time passed very quickly,” Whittier said.

Back at school, Whittier surveyed his students and collected comments on the visits. Among them were the following:

■ “It was great to go through the actions ourselves. It taught me so much!”

■ “I learned about the process of passing a bill and how long it takes.”

■ “A great educational time for history students.”

■ “It has taught me the importance of compromise and encouraged me to pursue politics.”

Even the superintendent offered his own equally unqualified opinion. “We should do this every year,” he said.

Obituaries

Henry W. Burbine, 72, of Plymouth. Was an MTA field representative for 39 years in the Raynham office. Among other duties for the MTA, he assisted locals in the negotiating of contracts, handling grievances and strengthening union relationships. March 11.

Sandra J. Dobratz, 69, of Plymouth. Was an educator in Carver for 40 years. Feb. 11.

Clare E. Langer, 87, of Adams. Was an elementary school teacher for the Adams-Cheshire Regional School District in Adams until retiring in 1985. Jan. 22.

Jane E. Nerney, 72, of North Attleborough. Taught special education and administration in Fall River and Attleborough for more than 32 years. Jan. 27.

Dr. Joseph S. Nicastro, 95, of Quincy. Retired assistant superintendent and director of vocational education for King Philip Regional School District. Former teacher and administrator for Quincy Public Schools. Past treasurer of the Quincy Education Association. Nov. 6.

Eleanor Palais, 83, of Lexington. Was a mathematics teacher at Belmont High School, retiring after 32 years. Jan. 15.

Joan E. Rivers, 67, of North Adams. Was a teacher in the North Adams school system for many years. Jan. 13.

Betty Robichau, 98, of Edgartown. Taught first grade for many years, retiring in 1979. Jan. 23.

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¹ National Safety Council, Injury Facts, 2008 edition.

² U.S. Census Bureau, Selected Social Characteristics in the United States, 2009.

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IN-SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS — Hands-on Geography (K, 1st & 2nd, *Maps & Habitats*; 3rd, *Maps & Massachusetts Geography*; 4th and 5th, *Maps & United States Regions*; 6th and 7th, *World*). *Colonial School Days*, Grade 3; *Digging Up Colonial America*, Grade 5. Visit www.nowvoyagereducation.com, call Carol Cohen at 508.923.9431 or e-mail carolcohen173@gmail.com.

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TEACHING LIFE SKILLS USING NONFICTION — Social Studies/Science/Literary Connection, summer 2015. Workshops can also be contracted in school districts throughout the year. Trip to attend NCSS

national convention in New Orleans in November. For information, e-mail Carol Cohen at carolcohen173@gmail.com, call 508.923.9431 or visit www.nowvoyagereducation.com.

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VACATION RENTALS

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WATERFRONT TOWNHOUSE ON LAKE WINNIPESAUKEE in manicured Samoset Resort at the Breads with a view guaranteed to take your breath away! Sandy beach, two pools, marina, tennis courts, 2.5 bedrooms, two baths, Wi-Fi, laundry and air conditioning. Sleeps five to six. Check out <http://LEASUL0.wix.com/waterfront-townhouse>. Call 508.616.9838 or e-mail LeaSull@aol.com.

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MAINE — Housekeeping cabins at family camp on lovely secluded pond in mid-coast Maine, available late June through early September. Two-story cabins with three bedrooms and fireplaces, \$775 per week; three-room cabins, \$550. Contact campsearsmont@gmail.com.

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Massachusetts Teachers Association

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'Another great season' of books and baseball

By Bob Duffy

Pitcher Craig Breslow, now in his second year as the spokesperson for the MTA Red Sox Reading Game, says he is "looking forward to another great season" of championing the cause of literacy.

Breslow, a Yale University graduate and the son of two public school teachers, said he is "delighted" to again serve as the face of the reading contest.

"The opportunity to be an advocate for literacy is one that I welcome and cherish," he said, adding that he grew up "knowing the importance of education."

As part of the reading game, his photo will be featured all over the state. He will appear on posters, entry forms and bookmarks — all encouraging kids to read over the summer.

Breslow is consistently among the team's most active community volunteers. In addition to his work with the MTA, he hosts fundraising events for the Red Sox Foundation's Red Sox Scholar program and is active as a hospital volunteer.

Breslow also founded the Strike 3 Foundation, a charity that heightens awareness of and raises funds for childhood cancer research.

Also playing a key role again this season is The Hanover Insurance Group Foundation, which serves as the primary sponsor of both the reading contest and the MTA Red Sox Most Valuable Educator Program.

As the reading game gets underway, 15,000 posters and 500,000 entry forms and bookmarks are being prepared for distribution in schools around the state.



Photo by Rick Friedman

MTA Red Sox Reading Game spokesperson Craig Breslow and team mascot Wally the Green Monster hold a copy of this year's featured book, "Growing Up Pedro." The 2015 reading game season opens soon.

This year's poster features the just-published "Growing up Pedro," a book about former Red Sox favorite Pedro Martínez that was written and illustrated by Matt Tavares, a New

Englander and lifelong fan of the team.

The reading game is open to all students in kindergarten through eighth grade in Massachusetts who pledge to read nine books — one for each

'The opportunity to be an advocate for literacy is one that I welcome and cherish.'

— Red Sox pitcher Craig Breslow

position on the ball field — over the summer.

Each year, the pledge cards of 100 students are drawn from among the thousands submitted. Those students and their teachers receive two tickets each to a Sox game in September. Five grand prize winners are invited onto the field for a special ceremony.

The MVE program allows educators to be nominated for recognition at Fenway Park. Anyone can suggest that an outstanding teacher, education support professional, school staff member, coach or volunteer be honored. Each submission must include an essay explaining how the educator contributes to student achievement.

Each MVE receives free tickets to a Saturday home game and is cheered by the crowd.

To learn more about the MTA Red Sox Reading Game, please go to www.readingmatters.org. Information will be posted by early May, and visitors to the site can download entry forms and other materials. To nominate someone to be an MTA Red Sox Most Valuable Educator, send an essay of up to 400 words to Most Valuable Educator, c/o Red Sox Community Relations, 4 Yawkey Way, Boston MA 02215. MVE nominations must be postmarked by June 30. To find out more about visits from Red Sox mascot Wally the Green Monster, go to mlb.com/bos/fan_forum/wally_party.jsp.

THE MTA Advantage

VOLUME 27 / NUMBER 3 / SPRING 2015

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Preparing for the offer-to-closing process

Last in a three-part series for first-time homebuyers

This is the final article in an MTA Benefits series designed to help MTA members with the homebuying process. Part 1 explains why buyers should start early to meet the requirements of stricter new lending standards. Part 2 covers the steps that buyers should take to find the right home in the right location. Visit www.mtabenefits.com/mortgage-program.htm to read these articles.

"After finding the right home and presenting an offer that is accepted, buyers should start preparing for the process that takes them to the closing," said Paul Gershkowitz, first vice president of retail lending for Berkshire Bank Home Lending, a partner in the MTA Mortgage Program. "The better prepared buyers are, the smoother the process goes."

During this period, the buyer will be required to produce personal documents that the lender needs for the underwriting process. The buyer will receive disclosures from the lender that should be reviewed and returned with signatures.

Gershkowitz suggested a four-step plan for buyers and the use of online resources for more extensive information.*

STEP 1

Selecting an attorney experienced in real estate transactions. The bank loan officer will often suggest an attorney from an approved list. It is common in Massachusetts for the bank's attorney to also represent the interests of the buyer. The closing attorney can help the buyer negotiate a purchase-and-sales agreement as well as act as counsel to ensure that other documents related to the closing are properly prepared and executed.

STEP 2

Scheduling a home inspection. The most reliable inspectors are usually members of the National Association of Home Inspectors, American Society of Home Inspectors or International Association of Certified Home Inspectors. Experienced inspectors will be familiar with local building codes as they look at the plumbing, electricity, roof quality and a seemingly endless list of items to be checked. Gershkowitz pointed out that inspectors can be overzealous, so buyers

should not necessarily be alarmed when reading an inspection report. It is also important to hire companies that will test for termites, mold and other problems that could affect the structural integrity of the home. If cracks are visible in the walls or foundation, buyers may need to hire a structural engineer to determine the extent of the problem. Items the buyer wants corrected can be negotiated between the buyer and the seller with the help of the attorney. Issues uncovered in the inspection process also give the buyer the right to walk away from the purchase-and-sales agreement. See additional information in the **Field Guide to Home Inspections** by the National Association of Realtors: www.realtor.org/field-guides/field-guide-to-home-inspections.

STEP 3

Coordinating with the mortgage company. The mortgage company will work with the attorney to ensure that all legal documents needed for the closing are prepared and executed



"The better prepared buyers are, the smoother the process goes."

— Paul Gershkowitz

properly. These documents include the settlement statement, deed and promissory note. The attorney will explain the meaning of the documents at the closing. For more information, see **Understanding the Mortgage Documents** by Freddie Mac: www.freddiemac.com/homeownership/pdf/understanding_mortgage_documents.pdf.

STEP 4

Securing home insurance. Prior to the closing, the buyer must contact an insurance company and purchase a policy that properly insures the property at the time of closing. MTA members should contact MTA Benefits regarding selecting and purchasing the right home insurance policy.

For more information on the homebuying process and all the benefits you receive as an MTA member from Berkshire Bank, please call 866.475.HOME (4663) or e-mail HomeLending@BerkshireBank.com.

*Accuracy of content on websites cannot be verified by MTA Benefits.

Accelerated growth in home equity loans

"With increasing home values, an expanding economy and mortgage interest rates at near-record lows, home equity borrowing is on the rise," said Ryan Shorette, vice president and eastern regional manager at Berkshire Bank. "During the past two years, Berkshire Bank has increased home equity production by 57 percent."

Whether you need a loan for a large purchase or you just want to have a secure line of credit for emergencies, put the collateral in your home to work for you. "A Berkshire Bank home equity loan or line offers affordable interest rates," Shorette said. "MTA members also receive special savings and services available only to them."

Home equity line of credit

Whether for home improvements or repairs, a dream vacation or a major purchase, or if you have education expenses or you're seeking debt consolidation, a home equity line may be right for you. With a home equity line, the borrower pays interest only on money that is used. Monthly payments are based on the amount borrowed and current interest rate. Berkshire Bank's home equity line of credit offers a 10-year period

in which to make withdrawals followed by a 10-year repayment period.

Home equity loan

A fixed-rate home equity loan provides a single lump-sum disbursement of funds to the borrower that is repaid over a specified period of time. The payment and interest rate remain fixed over the life of the loan.

Both fixed-rate and line-of-credit home equity loans may offer potential tax benefits. Consult a tax adviser for details.

MTA member-only benefits

Berkshire Bank offers special savings to MTA members who take out home equity loans. There are no application or closing fees, and there is a waiver of the annual fee for a home equity line of credit. This can add up to hundreds of dollars in savings. The 0.25 percent discount on a home equity loan results in an even greater benefit. For example, on a \$100,000 loan, an MTA member might save \$2,400 over a 10-year period.

MTA members start their relationship with Berkshire Bank with a free Elite Checking

account and a free concierge service known as "My Banker." The service provides 24-hour access to a specialized MTA banking representative who can respond to member questions.

"We are committed to giving MTA members the best products, services and savings," said Shorette.

The loan process

Typically, Berkshire Bank can be ready to close on a home equity loan or line within four weeks of receiving a completed application and all required documents. Loans range from \$15,000 to \$250,000. Eligible properties are one- to four-family homes, condos and second or vacation homes that are owner-occupied. Investment properties or non-occupied properties are not eligible.

What is the best time to apply?

"MTA members considering a home equity loan or line should act on it now while rates are still near historic lows," Shorette advises.

MTA members can apply for a home equity loan in person at any Berkshire Bank office, by visiting berkshirebank.com or by calling 800.773.5601.

The gift of reading

Summer is coming, and so is some well-deserved leisure time. That can mean catching up on all your reading. If magazines are your publication of choice, check out the MTA Magazine Service. There are hundreds of titles to choose from, and they are all offered at a discount. Look at these savings off the cover prices:



Boston Magazine – 12 issues for \$7.95, a savings of 87 percent

Time – 52 issues for \$29.95, a savings of 88 percent

Sports Illustrated – 56 issues for \$39.95, a savings of 86 percent

In addition to low prices, the MTA Magazine Service offers a **Triple Guarantee** — savings, quality and service. This includes a guarantee that if you find a lower publisher-approved price elsewhere, the difference will be refunded to you.

Did you know that each MTA member also gets a free subscription? *Harper's*, *Instructor*, *Kiplinger's Personal Finance*, *Discover* and *Weight Watchers* are just some of the titles offered free for one year. In order to claim your free title, you must be registered on MTAB's website. Register or log in at mtabenefits.com and click on "special offers."

The magazines aren't only for adults. The Magazine Service offers nearly 100 children's and teen magazines — with themes ranging from education to entertainment. *National Geographic Kids*, *Highlights*, *Zootles* and *American Girl* are among the titles. There's something for everyone. Magazines make great gifts, too! The next time you renew a magazine subscription, make sure you do it through the MTA Magazine Service. Even if you've ordered directly from the publisher in the past, you can renew through the MTA program. Go directly to www.MTAMagazineService.com or call 800.231.7022.



Editor: Elizabeth A. Bejoian
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No dues dollars are ever used to market MTA Benefits programs.

Tip Sheet

All discounts listed in the Tip Sheet
can be found at mtabenefits.com

A summer filled with fun awaits you

Travel options are endless through the MTA Vacation Center

Book your dream vacation package with **Endless Vacation Rentals**. MTA members are offered discounts of 25 percent on vacation rentals worldwide, with prices as low as \$396.75 for up to seven nights. Visit Hawaii, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia or South America. Be sure to check out the Last Minute Vacations selection for an even greater deal!

A trip to Orlando can be expensive, but with discounts of up to 35 percent from **Orlando Vacation**, it doesn't have to be. Purchase discounted tickets to Disney World, Universal Studios, Adventure Island and a variety of dinner shows such as Arabian Nights, Medieval Times and Pirates' Dinner Adventure. Hotels begin at \$42 a night, with options both inside and outside of the parks. Additional lodging choices include vacation homes, condos and townhomes. Vacation packages are also available at a discount and offer a combination of lodging and attractions. These and other travel discounts can be found at www.MTAvacations.com.



Theme park adventures

Whether you enjoy rides, games or live entertainment, **Canobie Lake Park** in Salem, N.H., has it all. MTA members receive \$7 off the cost of admission; tickets must be purchased through the MTA Benefits website. **Six Flags New England** has a full day's worth of fun for the entire family. New this season is the state-of-the-art Wicked Cyclone. **Story Land** in Glen, N.H., will bring out the child in you. With more than 20 attractions for children, this is a great place to bring the kids this summer. Visit mtabenefits.com/theme-parks.htm for more information and to purchase discounted tickets.

Enjoy the great outdoors

Sightseeing in Boston

See Boston through the eyes of a tourist this summer with one of the many MTA member sightseeing discounts. Take a walking tour of one of Boston's most famous neighborhoods with **Boston by Foot**. Save \$2 on the regular price of an adult ticket on one of nine tours, including the Freedom Trail, Beacon Hill and the North End. For a comprehensive tour of the city, take a bike tour with **Urban AdvenTours**. Sites include Fenway Park, Boston Common and the Charles River Esplanade; MTA members save 10 percent. Experience the world-famous **Boston Duck Tours** for a view of the city by both land and sea. The duck boats offer breathtaking views of the Boston and Cambridge skylines. MTA members save \$5 on the adult rate at the ticket booth; this offer is not valid online.

Appreciate wildlife

Visit nearly 200 different animals at **Zoo New England's** two locations. In Boston, the **Franklin Park Zoo** houses more than 100 animals and is home to an Amur leopard, one of the most endangered species on Earth. The Masai giraffe, the world's tallest mammal, can also be found here. At the **Stone Zoo** in Stoneham, you'll find exhibits including Windows to the Wild, Himalayan Highlands and the Barnyard. Get your sea legs ready and head out on a deep-sea fishing excursion with **Yankee Fleet of Gloucester**. MTA members pay \$29 for a half-day fishing trip that regularly costs \$49, and the discount extends to two other adults in the party. The **Magic Wings Butterfly Conservatory & Gardens** in South Deerfield is home to nearly 4,000 exotic and domestic butterflies in a tropical environment. MTA members save \$1 on admission. **York's Wild Kingdom** in York Beach, Maine, is one of our members' favorite discount locations. You'll have a fun-filled day at this combination zoo and amusement park. Call MTA Benefits for your \$12 admission coupon. Coupons must be presented upon admission to the park in order to qualify for the discount.



Keep saving all summer long with MTA Benefits

GET MORE OUT OF YOUR SUMMER FOR LESS WITH ACCESS DISCOUNTS

Everyday purchases



One great way to fund your summer fun is to cut expenses on everyday purchases. This is easy for MTA members because Access allows you to save on clothing, groceries, auto services and more. Whether or not you've used your savings benefits in the past, you're already a member. It's simple to join and to return again and again:

1. Go to mtabenefits.com and click the Access link.
2. Discover discounts in your ZIP Code.
3. Follow each merchant's instructions to print a coupon, save online or use a redemption code.

Fun at home

Once you have a stash of savings set aside, the next step is to stretch it as far as you can. Access is the nation's largest provider of deals at local businesses. There are hundreds of dining and recreation locations in Massachusetts, so even if you never leave your town or city limits, you can still save on outdoor adventures, museums, bowling, concerts and more. And what excursion is complete without a stop at your favorite restaurant?



Fun on the road

The MyDeals mobile app makes it easy to save anywhere in the nation by automatically bringing up the deals nearest you.



You can even track your savings. If you've never used the app before, these easy instructions will get you started:

1. Download the MyDeals app through Google Play or iTunes.
2. Log in using your MTA membership number.
3. Allow the app to use your phone's GPS or search by location.

Everyone has plans, big or small, for the summer. Make sure you incorporate savings into those plans. Visit mtabenefits.com or call 888.731.7061.

Optical Academy

It's not your eyes.
These prices really are out of sight.

Which would you rather pay?

- ▶ **Eye exam**
Retail price: \$149; MTA member price: \$30
- ▶ **Contact lens fitting**
Retail price: \$140; MTA member price: \$30
- ▶ **Frame**
Retail price: \$189; MTA member price: \$29
- ▶ **Single-vision lens**
Retail price: \$59; MTA member price: Included with frame

If you would rather pay the MTA member price, you'll want to get MTAB's partner, Optical Academy, to bring its mobile optical shop to your local. Members who have had the opportunity to purchase glasses through Optical Academy are amazed at the low prices they qualify for just by being MTA members. The figures above are the minimum savings available; members have saved anywhere from \$300 to \$1,000 with this program.

Jillian Annessi, a member of the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional Secretary and Aides Association, said at a recent event held in her local, "I have insurance

through the state, and contacts and glasses are much more expensive. I can't believe these prices. My mother came with me and is going to buy glasses herself." Local association President Judy Provencher organized the mobile shop event for her members and had only positive things to say about the experience.

"The Optical Academy, in a word, was wonderful! It was easy to book and they provided informational posters for our schools and handouts for our members. Customer service was great! They came to us stocked with so many frames it was hard to choose. Bringing my son for an exam — and ultimately a pair of glasses — was a joy! Thank you to MTA Benefits for providing this service to us."

In order to have the mobile shop visit a local association, 50 members must be preregistered for an eye exam at the event.

On-site events can be held during the day, after school or on weekends, and family members are invited. Don't order another pair of glasses before checking out the prices at Optical Academy. For more information, visit mtabenefits.com and click on "benefits," then "wellness," then "eyewear discounts." To schedule an on-site mobile shop in your local, contact Abby Ayoub at abby@optical-academy.com.

Disability open enrollment

Deadline is May 15

Time is growing short for eligible members to enroll in the MTA disability plan. It's not too late for presidents to schedule their districts' on-site meetings. Hundreds of members have met with enrollment counselors to learn more about the need for disability insurance. This is your last chance in 2015 to enroll, so don't delay. To schedule an on-site meeting, contact Diana Matheson at 888.636.0112, ext. 214, or dmatheson@enrollmentcompany.com. Enroll online at www.myenrollmentschedule.com/mta or by phone at 866.998.2915.



All program and pricing information was current at the time of publication (April 2015) and is subject to change without notice. To find out what may have changed, please call MTA Benefits at 800.336.0990.