

MTA Today

*A publication of the Massachusetts Teachers Association
Volume 46, No. 2/Fall 2015*

CHARTER BATTLE HEATS UP

***MTA fights efforts
to privatize schools***





2016 HCR AWARD NOMINATIONS

The MTA Human Relations Committee is soliciting nominations for the 2016 MTA Human and Civil Rights Awards, which honor those who have shown extraordinary dedication to civil rights and human relations.

The awards will be presented on Friday, June 17, at the 33rd annual Human and Civil Rights Awards celebration at the Westin Waltham Boston Hotel.

For further information, please e-mail Mary Gilgallon, director of the Division of Governance and Administration, at mgilgallon@massteacher.org.

NOMINATIONS ARE DUE MARCH 25
Forms are available at massteacher.org/hcr

MTA Today

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*This edition of MTA Today also includes
the Fall edition of the MTA Advantage*



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MTA'S MISSION STATEMENT

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

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ON THE COVER

The fight against Commonwealth charter schools has continued to gain strength this fall, with MTA members testifying at a State House hearing and working in a coalition with parents, social justice organizations and community activists. Coverage of the charter issue begins on Page 6. Lucas Donohue, pictured in his classroom at the Cunniff Elementary School in Watertown, is featured in a story beginning on Page 7. Donohue contrasts his experiences as a public school teacher in Watertown with his years in two highly regimented charters. Meanwhile, educators turned out at a hearing on Nov. 16 to oppose the adoption of PARCC and demand a moratorium on high-stakes testing. The next day, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted to implement a PARCC-infused version of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System. A story appears on Page 3.



Cover photo by Chris Christo
Cover design by Joshua Degregorio

Quote-Unquote

"Charters were originally intended to provide innovative education models that could be shared with all students. That didn't happen."

— State Senator Marc Pacheco, lead sponsor of legislation seeking a moratorium on Commonwealth charter schools

BESE approves PARCC-infused MCAS

By Laura Barrett

Despite opposition from many educators, parents and school committee members, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted 8 to 3 on Nov. 17 to adopt a new PARCC-infused MCAS test starting in 2017.

An amendment was adopted to hold schools and districts harmless based on the results of the 2017 test.

“Educator and parent advocacy led the commissioner to back off from his long-term explicit support for PARCC,” MTA President Barbara Madelon said after the BESE meeting. “But no one is fooled by the shell game of hiding PARCC inside the so-called MCAS 2.0. This decision continues the destructive practice of distorting the purpose of teaching and learning through an obsessive focus on standardized test results.”

Thousands of member e-mails were sent to BESE members expressing the MTA’s support for a three-year moratorium on all high-stakes use of tests and opposition to the adoption of PARCC. In addition, educator advocacy caused school committees in more than a dozen communities and the Boston City Council to approve MTA-backed resolutions in favor of a moratorium.

Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester had proposed the hold-harmless provision just for districts that administer PARCC in the spring of 2016. The BESE voted 7 to 4 to also hold schools and districts harmless based on results from the new test.

The three members voting against the overall plan were, notably, the members representing teachers, students and parents: labor representative Ed Doherty of AFT Massachusetts; student member Donald Willyard, chair of the State Student Advisory Council; and parent representative Mary Ann Stewart, who is on the board of the Massachusetts Parent Teacher Association. Representatives of business and other interests voted in favor of the plan.

Willyard, the only BESE member young enough to have experienced test-driven education firsthand, said, “I can and should be impeached if I go against how the students feel about this particular issue. I learned that we go to school to learn; unfortunately, that isn’t the case anymore. I’m going to school to pass, and that’s unacceptable to me.”

Board Chairman Paul Sagan, former president and CEO of Akamai Technologies, opposed the hold-harmless extension, contending that it would mean backing away from “our obligation” to hold adults in the system accountable.

Secretary of Education James Peyser, Governor Charlie Baker’s representative on the board, was also strongly against extending the hold-harmless provision for another year.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education must now contract with a testing firm to develop the so-called “next generation” MCAS tests.



Photos by Jair Mendes

A public hearing on high-stakes testing drew a large crowd to the Malden High School auditorium on Nov. 16. Kalpana Guttman, bottom left, a literacy specialist in the Newton Public Schools, received a round of applause from the audience when she suggested that BESE members should take the PARCC test before voting. Malden High School teacher Jessica Haralson, bottom right, was among the MTA members holding signs outside before the hearing began.

Most of the test items will be taken from the bank of items created for the PARCC Consortium by the giant testing company Pearson.

Districts that administered PARCC in 2015 will have to administer it again in 2016, while the rest will have the option of administering MCAS or PARCC. The 2016 MCAS test will contain some PARCC items.

A paper version of both tests will be available for the next three years, but the commissioner said

he expects all districts to be administering the tests online as of 2019.

Through the class of 2019, students will continue to be required to pass the grade 10 MCAS English language arts, mathematics and science tests.

The DESE is also planning to develop a new standardized history and social studies test, adding a fourth subject to the increasingly unpopular mandated testing load.

Please turn to **Speakers**/Page 4

Together, we are making a difference

29,074

That is how many signatures MTA members had contributed to the Raise Up Massachusetts tax amendment signature drive as *MTA Today* went to press.

In collecting those signatures, the MTA stood as a leader in the Raise Up coalition, showing that we will work with our union brothers and sisters and other community members to make Massachusetts a great state for public education and for all working people.

This campaign showed us what we can do when we join in collective action — just as the educators of Newton showed what they could do when they united in solidarity around their contract campaign; just as the members of the Massachusetts Community College Council are showing as they band together to implement work to rule; just as members are showing as they join parents, students and



Barbara Madeloni
MTA President

community leaders in telling our legislators loud and clear to keep the cap on charters; and just as educators across the state showed when they used their voices to pressure Commissioner Mitchell Chester to back off from his open love affair with PARCC and hide PARCC inside MCAS.

We are just beginning to feel and use our power. And it feels good.

Legislators in the State House recognize it. People on the street recognize it. One of the fun moments of the fall was marching in the HONK! Festival — a parade of brass bands and community activists. Observers were cheering not only for

educators, but also for the MTA. “Go MTA!” “Go MTA!” It was thrilling.

We are making a difference.

In the year ahead, our challenges are not going to shrink. We are committed to legislative priorities that include a moratorium on high-stakes testing, keeping the cap on charters and fighting the ballot initiative that seeks to lift the cap, continuing to work for the tax amendment, promoting anti-bullying legislation, and fighting for the rights of adjuncts and more full-time faculty at our public colleges and universities.

Member participation is key not only to the success of these efforts, but also to the ongoing strength of our union. Our statewide initiatives gain their power when we begin by acting locally. And acting locally — like all organizing — begins with conversations, developing relationships, sharing concerns and asking each other: “How can we change this situation?”

The MTA will be working with you and your local leadership to engage in these conversations. We will continue to support local actions that build power and achieve victories, and we will connect our wins to broader statewide efforts from preK-12 through higher education.

I know that there are critical issues not being directly addressed by our legislative priorities. I hear from members every day about the ways that District-Determined Measures, student growth percentiles, performance-based funding and teacher evaluations have become systems that at best occupy too much of your time and at worst threaten the core and security of your work. We need to name these problems, educate the community and organize locally to put a stop to bad policies.

Members are raising concerns, for example, about the loss of seniority about to hit in September 2016 — the result of the “Stand for Children”

We are rekindling memories of standing up and fighting back — and discovering that when we join in collective action, we are not only stronger but happier as well.

compromise — and they are looking to prepare to push back.

These are difficult times to be a union member, an educator and a person committed to economic and racial justice.

But they are exciting times as well because we are teaching each other that we do not have to accept injustice. We are rekindling memories of standing up and fighting back — and discovering that when we join in collective action, we are not only stronger but happier as well.

You can read about some of your successes in this issue of *MTA Today*. You can also read about how to become even more active in the union by nominating yourself to serve as a delegate to the Annual Meeting or run for another MTA position. Find a way — your way — to participate in the power we are building.

When I took office about a year and a half ago, it was with the hope and promise that our membership would become more involved in the union at both the local and statewide levels and more involved in the broader community through alliances and elections. As we turn the corner into another crucial year for both our union and our nation, it is more important than ever for all of us to be informed, engaged and involved in the issues that matter most to us.

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

Barbara

Speakers criticize excessive focus on standardized testing

Continued from Page 3

At a public hearing on the commissioner’s plan held in Malden on Nov. 16, even supporters expressed concern about how soon districts will be expected to have the technological capacity to administer the tests online.

The needed technology and staff will cost districts millions of dollars.

Opponents expressed that concern and many others.

“PARCC is a terrible failure,” said Newton teacher Kalpana Guttman.

Guttman noted that many test items were badly written or not developmentally appropriate, that it took “armies of IT staff” to get Newton’s schools ready for the test, that computers used for testing were not available for instruction, and that educators

were provided with no useful information or item analysis from this year’s PARCC results, rendering the test useless for informing instruction.

Guttman concluded with a request to the BESE: “I urge members to take the test before you vote tomorrow,” she said.

Others, including Madeloni, received loud applause when speaking broadly against the excessive focus on testing.

“What troubles me is the narrowness of the question you are asking — MCAS versus PARCC? In the hours and hours we’ve spent talking about testing in intricate detail, what haven’t we been talking about?” she asked.

“We haven’t been talking about joyful learning,” Madeloni said. “We haven’t been talking about creativity and imagination. We haven’t been talking

about the moral courage that we study in literature and in history. We haven’t been talking about what it means to be citizens of a democracy.

“Let’s have a three-year moratorium on high-stakes testing to have that deeper conversation,” she said.

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*, 2 Heritage Drive, 8th floor, Quincy, MA 02171-2119, or e-mail it to mtatodayletters@massteacher.org. For additional information, please refer to the guidelines posted on www.massteacher.org.

MTA-backed candidates running for MTRB seats

Two MTA-endorsed candidates — Jacqueline Gorrie and Dennis Naughton — are running for seats on the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement Board.

Two of the board's seven members are elected to four-year terms by the members of the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System. There are three candidates for the two seats.

Voting is now underway. Ballots — which have been mailed to active and retired teachers who are members of the MTRS — should be postmarked no later than Dec. 5 to ensure they will be received and counted on time. Anyone who has not yet returned a ballot is reminded that the deadline is fast approaching. The MTRS is also permitting electronic voting. MTRS members may vote online by entering the unique code that arrives with each mailed ballot. Instructions for online voting are included in the mailing.

The MTRS, the largest of the Commonwealth's 104 contributory retirement systems, provides retirement, disability and survivor benefits to Massachusetts teachers, administrators and their families.

MTA President Barbara Madeloni said it is crucial that MTA members who are eligible to participate in the election do so. Gorrie and Naughton, both MTA/NEA Retired members, "have shown decades of commitment to public education, their local

associations and the MTA," Madeloni said. "They will bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to a board that has a huge impact on the lives of educators. I urge you to take the time right now to vote."

Naughton, who taught in the Millis Public Schools for 36 years before retiring, is running for re-election. He served as president of the Millis Teachers Association for 19 years and has been a member of both the MTA Board and the MTA Executive Committee. He has been a member of the MTRB since 2011 and was chosen by his fellow MTRB members to serve as a trustee on the Pension Reserves Investment Management Board.



Dennis Naughton

At the NEA Representative Assembly in July, Naughton proposed an amendment requiring the NEA to oppose efforts to replace defined-benefit retirement plans with mandatory defined-contribution plans, which shift investment risk and fees to individual teachers. The amendment passed overwhelmingly.

"I am only too aware of the unfair attacks on teacher benefits that have been taking place across the country — including right here in Massachusetts," Naughton said. "I am committed not only to defending our existing defined-benefit retirement system, but

also to increasing the dollar amount upon which our cost-of-living adjustment is calculated."

Gorrie has been a member of both the MTA Board of Directors and the NEA Board, and she has served on and chaired numerous committees at both levels. She is currently a Statewide Retired District Director on the MTA Board.

Gorrie retired after 36 years of teaching kindergarten in Taunton. During that time, she served the Taunton Education Association in numerous capacities, including 10 years as president and many years as vice president/grievance chair, secretary and building representative. She served on many negotiating teams and currently serves as the retired member on the TEA Executive Board.



Jacqueline Gorrie

Gorrie said she would be honored to represent her fellow educators on the MTRB.

"Educators must define the future of our profession," she said. "Working to protect our pensions and benefits only reinforces my belief that educators should feel supported as they enter our profession, be respected as they grow in our profession, and be treated with dignity as they retire from our profession."

Message to legislators: Put educators on the BESE

By Scott McLennan

Carrying petitions signed by nearly 5,000 people who support adding educators to the state's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, Arlington Public Schools speech and language specialist Mary Cummings told legislators that it's difficult to fully understand the profession of teaching "unless you're in it."

"Our public schools are the best in the country," and that's because of the efforts of public school educators, Cummings said as she testified before the Joint Committee on Education on Sept. 9 in support of legislation that would designate two seats on the BESE for educators.

House 375 and Senate 269 stipulate that the governor would choose one BESE member from a list of three candidates submitted by the MTA and one from a list provided by the American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts.

Under current law, actively employed educators are prohibited from serving on the 11-member board, which sets policy for all public schools in the state. But the appointed board does have seats designated especially to represent other interests, such as parents, students and business.

Responding to questions from legislators after testifying in support of the bills, MTA President Barbara Madeloni told the Education Committee that the existing BESE seat designated for a labor

'It's a perspective missing on the board ... and it's important to add that perspective. It's not about creating tension, but to strengthen the board.'

**— Sean Garballey
State Representative**

representative is not the same as having educators on the board.

"The labor designee looks at broad issues of working conditions, and that's different from what a teacher or a paraprofessional will be looking at," Madeloni said. "An educator will look at what regulations mean to the 5-year-olds or to the 15-year-olds once those regulations enter the classroom."

Representative Sean Garballey (D-Arlington), lead sponsor of the House version of the bill, recalled that when he was a school committee member, he considered it vital to know the views of classroom teachers when the committee was debating policy.

"It's a perspective missing on the board ... and it's important to add that perspective," Garballey said. "It's not about creating tension, but to strengthen the board."

Senator Ken Donnelly (D-Arlington), sponsor of the Senate bill, said that a board with so much

influence over a profession needs input from those in the field.

"I was a firefighter, and a lot of people know about fires. But not many people have been in a burning building," he said.

MTA leaders, members and staff also testified in support of a bill to shift the cost of national background checks from employees to the state and a bill that would reverse the course of a 2014 Supreme Judicial Court ruling that drastically alters the application of "just cause" in terminations of educators with Professional Teacher Status.

Speaking in support of Senate Bill 350, which would restore the ability of an arbitrator to determine whether an educator was justly terminated for a job infraction, Madeloni said that the SJC disregarded the Legislature's intent, which was spelled out in the Education Reform Act of 1993.

"This is a dangerous decision that overturned 20 years of case history and now leaves educators' right to a fair dismissal process in shambles," she said.

Madeloni also spoke in support of House Bill 494, which would make the state responsible for the costs of national background checks for all current and future public school employees with any direct access to students. Licensed educators who have already paid would be able to deduct the \$55 fee from their next license renewal, and non-licensed employees would be reimbursed the \$35 fee if they have already paid it.

National spotlight on charter fight

By Laura Barrett

The MTA is fighting back against a multipronged attack by well-funded interests that are seeking to lift the cap on charter schools and pave the way for greater privatization of our public schools.

Because the state's public schools are considered by many to be the best in the country, the attacks have placed Massachusetts in the national spotlight.

Charter supporters have filed a lawsuit, collected signatures for a ballot question and filed several cap-lift bills, including one submitted by Governor Charlie Baker.

In response to the bills, the Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance delivered a letter to the state Senate in late October that concluded, "We speak with one voice in response to this threat: Enough. We cannot compromise out of fear. We urge you to oppose lifting *any* of the existing caps on Commonwealth charter schools."

The MEJA is a coalition of community, educator, parent, student and social justice organizations. The letter detailed several key reasons for its position.

■ **This year alone, charters are diverting more than \$419 million from district schools**

after reimbursements are taken into account.

This leaves district schools with inadequate resources to provide their students with the basic education services, enrichment activities and social services they need and deserve.

■ **Charters are often approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education over the strong objections of a large majority of local taxpayers, residents and elected officials in the affected communities.** In addition, once a charter is approved, parents and students have nowhere to turn to address problems caused by the school.

■ **Most charter schools fail to serve as many high-need students as their sending districts,** especially English language learners who have very little English proficiency, students with significant disabilities and very low-income students. As a result, districts have fewer resources to educate a higher-need population, leading to flight from district schools and a downward spiral.

■ **Most urban charters use a hyper-disciplinary model that drives out students who don't fit their paradigm,** contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline. In addition, despite repeated unverified claims of long waiting lists, charters generally fail to fill vacancies when these students leave or are pushed out.

Last year the Senate rejected charter cap-lift bills. If that happens again this session, as the MEJA urges, the issue is expected to be on the ballot next fall. The ballot question would allow the state to approve 12 new charter schools every year on top of the number permitted under existing state law.

These new charters could be opened in any community in the state regardless of student performance, the impact on a district's finances or charter enrollment practices that push out high-need students. In fact, the state could replace all of the public schools in a given district with charter schools, undermining rights for educators and students alike.

"The charter movement generates profits for private interests in large part by wiping out unions," said MTA President Barbara Madeloni. "Anti-worker forces have smashed unions in the private sector and now they are going after public-sector unions with a vengeance because we are a potent force for economic justice, employee rights and democracy. We will fight this by taking our case for excellent public schools for all directly to the voters."

For more information and updates, please go to massteacher.org/charterschools.

Loss of funding is key focus of hearing testimony

By Scott McLennan

A steady procession of advocates for public education — including parents, educators, administrators, legislators, civil rights activists and labor leaders — underscored the destabilizing effects that Commonwealth charter schools are having on district public schools during testimony at a recent State House hearing.

The MTA and its community partners in the Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance are among those supporting Senate 326, one of the many charter-related bills heard by the Legislature's Joint Committee on Education on Oct. 13. The bill, filed by Senator Marc Pacheco (D-Taunton), would place a moratorium on any charter school expansion for three years and require all teachers in charter schools to be fully certified.

Members of MTA locals from around the state waited several hours in Gardner Auditorium before being able to testify on behalf of S. 326 and against legislation filed by Governor Charlie Baker that would expand charter school growth.

Union leaders joined superintendents and school committee members on community-based panels testifying about the adverse effects that charter schools have on public schools.

Educators hammered home the point that the method by which charter schools are funded unfairly



Senator Marc Pacheco (D-Taunton) testified about the impact that charter schools are having on public education amid a standing-room-only crowd at a State House hearing on Oct. 13.

Photo by Chris Christo

siphons money from traditional district public schools. At the same time, they said, charter schools do not face the same challenges as district public schools.

Several of those testifying provided data showing that district schools have far greater proportions of English language learners and students with special needs than the charter schools that enroll students from those communities.

"When did it become acceptable to take resources away from one child to give to another child?" asked Fall River Educators' Association

President Rebecca Cusick. She described how students from disadvantaged backgrounds are particularly hurt when the traditional schools they attend lose significant resources to charter operators who "prey upon the hopes and dreams of parents."

"If the wealthiest sent their children to the same schools as the poorest, schools would get everything they needed," she said.

Ludlow School Committee member Jake Oliveira framed the funding issues in practical terms.

Please turn to **Diversion**/Page 13

An approach 'all about discipline'

Policy questions aside, what is life really like inside a charter school? And how does it compare to life in a district public school? MTA member Lucas Donohue has experienced both worlds — and he recently shared his story with MTA Communications Specialist Laura Barrett on two occasions, first by phone and then in his classroom. Donohue worked at the Mystic Valley Regional Charter School in Malden for nearly three years and then took a job at the Dorchester Collegiate Academy — DCA — for a year. He is now in his fourth year at Cuniff Elementary School in Watertown, where he teaches fifth grade. On Sept. 28, the day of our visit, Donohue was in the middle of a reading lesson. He is soft-spoken but had his students' full attention as he read them a story and got them talking about the author's point of view. During our conversation after school, a sixth-grade girl dropped by to visit. Donohue appeared to be the kind of supportive teacher students remember — and visit — for years to come. Not all charter schools are the same, but Donohue's experiences are similar to those described by other charter teachers, parents and students. Many charters employ the "no excuses" and direct-instruction models that Donohue discusses. Here is his story, edited for clarity and length.



Photo by Chris Christo

Lucas Donohue asks questions about the author's point of view as he reads a story to his fifth-grade class at Cuniff Elementary School in Watertown. A former charter school teacher, Donohue is now in his fourth year at the district public school.

teach a skill and then give students a worksheet to practice that skill. There was no authentic reading or teaching for depth of understanding.

In Watertown, it is completely different. My partner teacher and I go through a process that is much more organic. We look at the needs of our students and develop lessons to address those needs. I get to pick the text that I think is right for my students, and the students get to pick out books that interest them. My classroom is full of books.

Our relationship with our students is also different. At the charter schools, it was all about discipline. For example, at DCA we had to hand out ROCS — Reminders of Community Standards. You could get one for a uniform infraction or for talking in the hallway or for celebrating after you got a good grade.

If you got so many ROCS in a week, that would lead to a call home. If you got more, that would lead to a detention. Students found themselves in trouble all the time and it was usually for small things, such as not having a shirt tucked in. The discipline would compound and all of a sudden good students were in detention nearly every day.

This rigidity was also applied to the teachers. Teachers were not seen as professionals. When you were sick, even if just for one day, you were required to provide a doctor's note and if you didn't, they would write you up. This contributed to the feeling that this was not a career, it was just a job.

When I went for my evaluation, it had nothing to do with helping me become a better teacher. Both charter schools had principals who had never taught a day in their lives. They focused on random, trivial

things. One year I didn't get a raise because I wore a sweater vest over a shirt and tie but I didn't tuck in my shirt. There was no discussion about instructional processes or how to become a better teacher.

In Watertown, I find the evaluation process useful. My principal taught for years and has valuable insights for me. She values what I have to say. She wants me to experiment to get better and knows that mistakes are part of the process. She is supportive and helps me grow as an educator, yet she doesn't nitpick. We'll talk in a constructive manner about how a lesson went and how I could do better.

The charters had an unprofessional relationship with the teachers. At DCA I had a contract that said my workday was from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. About two weeks after I started, my principal came to us and said, "Our scores are low on MCAS, so two times a week you have to work until 5:30, providing students with an hour of tutoring at the end of the day."

As teachers we said, "But our contract says 7:30 to 4:30. Are we going to be paid for this extra time? Or do we get to leave earlier another day?" He said, "No. We just rewrote your contract. If you don't like it, you can get another job."

This is not how you treat a professional. If you need the job and you care about the kids, you have very little recourse. Are you going to take your employer to court?

We also didn't have a set salary schedule. The raises were very political and depended on how much the principal liked you. You could get a 3 or 4

Please turn to **Teaching**/Page 24

■■■■■
Mystic Valley hired me as a reading specialist even though I have no credentials in reading. I took the job because I really wanted to teach and I needed a job. I was excited to get it.

Most charter school teachers I worked with were young and inexperienced, but talented and hardworking and caring. The problem is, the charter school environment relies on inexperienced people who are paid relatively small amounts of money.

In a charter school, the teachers don't last. Of all the teachers I started with at Mystic Valley, there are only two left seven years later. Some years we'd lose 40 percent of the teachers.

Now I'm in Watertown and I'm loving it. Teachers are equally committed to the kids as they are in charter schools, but they are able to do it for a career. It's a profession. Teachers get training and support and are in for the long haul.

Both charters I worked at were very top-down. One used the direct-instruction method, which is not real teaching since every lesson is 100 percent scripted. There was no room for creativity, flexibility and growth for the teacher.

The teacher says something and the kids say it back. It is all very behavioristic. It is kind of a throwback to an earlier time. Think of it as an industrialized school system where every kid is walking the same way and doing the same thing at the same time. It robs the joy from teaching.

Each of these schools was 110 percent directed toward getting good test scores. For example, we didn't read whole books; we had basal readers that

'Equality, Activism and the Road Ahead'

EMAC Conference participants to hear from nationally prominent speakers

By Jean Conley

This year's Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee Conference will offer participants the chance to discuss some of the most pressing issues facing educators today, attend workshops to build their skills, and broaden their professional networks.

"Equality, Activism and the Road Ahead" is the theme of the conference, which will be held at the Sheraton Framingham Hotel and Conference Center on Dec. 4 and 5.

EMAC Chair Christine Boseman stressed that all MTA members are invited to the event. While last year's 35th anniversary conference celebrated those who were the driving force behind ethnic minority participation and advancement in the association and built the strong foundation for EMAC, this year the focus will be on the future.



Jitu Brown

"We look forward to hearing from activists in other parts of the country who can help inform the debate on issues such as equality and fairness," Boseman said. "Our keynote speakers and many of our workshops will address those issues directly."

"The important thing we want to take away from this conference is finding more ways to stand up and make our voices heard — as educators, as ethnic minorities and as members of communities," Boseman added.

After registration and check-in on Friday, a dinner will open with welcoming remarks by Boseman and MTA President Barbara Madeloni, followed by the evening's keynote speaker, Jitu Brown.



Brown is the national director of the Journey for Justice Alliance, a coalition of 21 parent-led organizations across the country demanding alternatives to the privatization and dismantling of public school systems.

Brown has been an organizer in the Kenwood Oakland neighborhood of Chicago for two decades, bringing parent voices to the table on school issues. He is an outspoken critic of the elimination of community voice from the decision-making process regarding public schools, and last year he became a lead organizer of the hunger strike for Chicago's Dyett High School.

Madeloni said she has been moved and inspired by Brown's courage and leadership.

"The Fight for Dyett hunger strike taught me what passion, conviction and courage look like on the ground," she said.

She added that Brown "embodies what it means to care deeply for our students and communities and take action in the face of injustice. It is an honor that he will be coming to share his wisdom and organizing knowledge with us."

The dinner on Friday night will be followed by music and dancing.

Saturday morning workshop sessions include Community Organizing; Diversity: Challenges in the Labor Movement; Documented, Undocumented, and DACAmented: How to Talk About Immigration Status in Schools; and Working with English Language Learners.

The lunchtime keynote speech on Saturday will be given by Clayola Brown, whose union activism began in the early 1960s when she and her mother campaigned to organize the Manhattan Shirt Factory in Charleston, South Carolina.



Clayola Brown

She is the first female president of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, which was founded in 1965 by civil rights leaders fighting for workers' rights and civil rights.

The organization is named for Randolph, an integral figure in the early Civil Rights Movement who organized and led the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the first predominantly African American labor union.

Saturday afternoon workshop sessions include Destroying the School-to-Prison Pipeline, an Introduction to iPads, and Minorities in the Media. A wrap-up session will conclude the conference.

To register for the conference online, please visit www.massteacher.org/emac. For further information, e-mail coordinator Jennifer Freeling in the Division of Training and Professional Learning at events@massteacher.org or call the division at 617.878.8153.

Springfield celebrates success of grant effort

By Scott McLennan

One year, the Hiram L. Dorman School in Springfield counted 64 out-of-school suspensions. Last year there were three.

Educators and administrators at Dorman credit the improved school climate to a concerted effort in helping parents support their children's education.

Much of that work, the educators say, was achieved through home visits during which classroom teachers got to know their students' families while parents and caregivers grew more at ease with the school.

"I'm more interested in a dashboard of indicators than any one standardized test to figure out how well a school is doing," said National Education Association President Lily Eskelsen García, who visited the school on Oct. 28. "When you look at a

drop in suspensions like that, that's a good indicator for school climate and learning."

Eskelsen García's visit was in celebration of a successful collaborative program that enlisted Springfield educators, parents and administrators in trying to close student achievement gaps.

The NEA Foundation provided a \$1.2 million grant for the program, called the Springfield Collaboration for Change, and the city was required to match the funding. With the five-year NEA grant coming to an end, the program must now find the funds to sustain itself.

Five elementary schools participated in the program, which was shaped in large part by members of the Springfield Education Association.

The schools reported both academic improvements and better working environments as a result



Photo by Scott McLennan

NEA Foundation President Harriet Sanford, left, watched teacher Gail Roberts-Reese work with a student at the Samuel Bowles School.

Please turn to **Springfield**/Page 25

Open bargaining builds union power

By Jean Conley

Open and transparent bargaining about the “big issues” that really matter to educators — such as respect, equity and time for teaching and learning — helps build union power.

That framework, which was central to the discussion at a recent MTA Collective Bargaining Summit in Springfield, helped the 140 participants rethink some of the approaches they have historically taken toward negotiations.

A good deal of the focus was on three key questions:

- “What gives you joy in your work with students?”
- “What drains the joy out of your work with students?”
- “What can be proposed in bargaining that can bring back the joy and relieve the stress?”

MTA President Barbara Madeloni welcomed the members who attended the daylong summit on Oct. 3, saying the conversations that would be inspired by it “remind us to keep the ‘collective’ in collective bargaining.”

Madeloni said that union activism often “starts one to one, with individual conversations,” but eventually becomes like weaving a piece of fabric. “We have to start with individual relationships and stitch that fabric together,” she said.

The summit was built around three workshops. One addressed the nuts and bolts of increasing membership participation. Another concerned negotiating contracts that address members’ key issues, and the third focused on building on one-to-one and small-group conversations to bring in fellow members, parents and others in the community, then writing a platform statement that highlights key issues.

Members of the Concord Teachers Association kicked off the event, with CTA President Merrie Najimy explaining that open bargaining goes well beyond the usual mandatory subjects — wages, working conditions and hours.

Open bargaining requires “engaging and involving your rank and file and the community — parents and allies — from the beginning of the process,” Najimy said, and then developing an “aspiration statement” or platform. The platform can be broad, such as, “What are the kinds of schools that we want our children to learn in and that we want to work in?”

She said that tying specific contract proposals to that platform is key, as well as “committing yourself to an open and transparent process from the beginning to the end, which includes promising never to have a conversation with the other side away from the negotiating table.”

CTA members recounted a series of crises beginning five years ago — unilateral decision-making by the district superintendent, an attempt to privatize school bus transportation, and community anger over an expensive high school building project. In the end, they said, dealing with these pressures



Photo by Jean Conley

Phil Dowgiert of Springfield told summit participants that his local is building coalitions with other stakeholders to “bring more community voices” into the bargaining process.

helped revitalize the union because educators used them to build relationships — both within the membership and with parents and other allies.

Roseanne Swain, a veteran music teacher and a member of the CTA negotiating team, said the crises showed members that “the power is in the numbers.”

“Actually, because of what the administration did, we became a stronger unit,” she said.

The idea for the recent summit took root last February at another MTA bargaining summit that brought in organizers from St. Paul, Minnesota, Portland, Oregon, and Chicago.

The speakers talked about how a combination of approaches — extensive community organizing, forums providing ways for stakeholders to hear educators’ concerns, and open discussion of issues with people who might be unfamiliar with the role of unions — creates the supportive relationships that lead to effective bargaining.

Those ideas resonated with members of the CTA, who decided to employ some of the approaches they had learned at the February summit as they opened bargaining on a new contract in March. The local also brought up the idea of open bargaining, which had not been tried before in Concord. “Could we really do that here?” wondered CTA Vice President Karin Baker.

Najimy and Phil Dowgiert of the Springfield Education Association brought a new business item to the MTA’s 2015 Annual Meeting directing the statewide association to focus some of its training

and development resources on open and transparent bargaining with an eye to training locals to bring big issues to the table. The NBI was adopted.

John Peachey, co-chair of the bargaining team and a 24-year veteran of the Concord Public Schools, said that actively listening to the concerns of members and residents has made a “huge difference” in how the CTA engages with the community.

As bargaining has continued, members and other stakeholders have been showing up at negotiating sessions. The response, Peachey said, has been amazing. “Members are actively engaged,” he said. “The teachers are all coming out and making time for the sessions.”

Peachey noted that more than 80 teachers came to the last bargaining session. “It was standing room only,” he said. “The administrators who came had to go find their own chairs.”

Lorie Kelly, a third-grade teacher and president of the Lynnfield Teachers Association, attended the summit with fellow bargaining team members Linda DaCorta and Tamara Tate. Kelly said the trio returned re-energized as they head into bargaining on one of their contracts.

She said the team “hit some roadblocks” the last time it bargained and wasn’t looking forward to more. The summit, she added, “reminded us of the important work of pre-bargaining,” including person-to-person contact, charting, and having intentional professional conversations that help generate proposals among the membership.

Please turn to **Summit**/Page 25

Organizing, gratitude and pride

Retirees focus on union-building and pay tribute to 'Honor Our Own' winner

By Scott McLennan

MTA's retired members provide an invaluable combination of expertise and action as they advocate for the teaching profession and their fellow educators.

That was the message MTA leaders delivered at the annual MTA Retired Members Gathering on Sept. 28 at the Sheraton Framingham Hotel and Conference Center.

MTA President Barbara Madeloni, MTA Vice President Janet Anderson and Executive Director-Treasurer Ann Clarke thanked the retirees for their ongoing advocacy, from protecting workers' rights to fighting bad education policies.

Madeloni pointed out that there are several ongoing battles that educators — retired and active alike — are facing. They include attempts to reduce the public employee pensions that educators rely on in retirement, campaigns to lift the cap on charter schools in Massachusetts, and continuing efforts to introduce a new regime of high-stakes standardized testing.

"Organizing is another word for building relationships for concerted action," Madeloni said.

She lauded the hundreds of retired educators on hand — from across the state and representing the full range of public education — for continuing to stay connected to their union.

"We will not win the battles money to money and cost to cost," Madeloni said. "We will win through member-to-member engagement. I hope that you can teach younger members to use relationships to build power the way you did."

Anderson drove home the point by singling out Retired Members Committee Co-Chair Richard Liston for his leadership of the Everett Teachers Association during turbulent times that led to strikes. The strikes yielded better working conditions for educators and better learning conditions for students.

Addressing all of the retirees, Anderson said, "Thank you. We still need you."

Committee Co-Chair Kathleen Roberts urged her fellow retirees to support the Raise Up Massachusetts ballot initiative, which would raise revenues for public schools and transportation projects through an increased tax rate on annual income over \$1 million.

Roberts pointed out that to qualify for the higher tax rate, someone would need to earn more than \$19,000 per week. She joked that she didn't know of any Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System checks that reached that threshold.

The annual gathering once again provided a way for retirees to donate educational supplies and materials to a school district working with a large number of students in financial need. This year, the donated goods went to the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District.



Above, retired Stoughton educator Susan Cogliano made her way to the podium to accept the Honor Our Own Award. Cogliano, a former Stoughton Teachers Association president and MTA Board member, was nominated for the award by current STA President John Gunning. At left, Senate District Coordinators Mo Guernon and Kathi Rogers, both MTA Retired members, helped gather signatures for the ballot initiative to raise revenues for public education and transportation.

Photos by Scott McLennan

'I was proud to represent the STA, and I believe that I always put the needs of our students and rights of our members first. But I could not have done it alone.'

**— Susan Cogliano
Honor Our Own Award winner**

Also in keeping with tradition, the Honor Our Own Award was presented. Susan Cogliano, a retired Stoughton science teacher, received this year's award for her outstanding contributions as an educator and a union leader. Stoughton Teachers Association President John Gunning nominated Cogliano.

Cogliano worked in the Stoughton Public Schools for 35 years and was STA president from 2008 to 2011. She also served on the MTA Board of Directors.

After accepting the award, Cogliano said, "When approached with the idea to run for union president, I was very reluctant but eventually said yes. It certainly removed me from my comfort zone and took me to places that I would not normally have gone.

"I was proud to represent the STA, and I believe that I always put the needs of our students and rights of our members first," she continued. "But I could not have done it alone. We had an incredible leadership team and our very professional and encouraging MTA field rep, Jackie McDonough, who brought the best out in everyone."

Members spent the rest of the gathering attending one or more of the workshops offered during the day, which covered topics ranging from legal and financial matters to unwinding with a yoga lesson.

MCCC fights 'unfair' contract demands

Members take action in response to proposals for 'numerous takebacks'

By Scott McLennan

Full-time faculty and staff members represented by the Massachusetts Community College Council have begun job actions and protests at the state's 15 community colleges in response to contract negotiations that union leaders decry as disrespectful in tone and disappointing in content.

"I'm perplexed," said MCCC President Joe LeBlanc. "Everyone says how great we are and how important the community colleges are for the state, but when it comes to showing that respect during bargaining or putting cash on the table, it's a different story."

Twelve months ago, the MCCC Day Unit representing full-time faculty and staff made a formal request to bargain a three-year successor contract with the colleges and the state Board of Higher Education. But it took several more months for the colleges to start meeting with the MCCC



bargaining team and still a few more to begin discussions of the financial provisions of the contract.

MCCC bargaining team Chair Claudine Barnes characterized the negotiations as atypical and unfortunate. She blamed the BHE and the college representatives at the table.

"This has been unfair to our members and to students. They are forcing us into job actions. Their proposals have numerous takebacks

'Even when there was just a threat of actions taking place, management pulled some of the bad proposals off of the table. I think this is teaching newer members — and reminding all members — of the need for collective action and the importance of solidarity.'

— MCCC bargaining team Chair Claudine Barnes

and it's a lousy monetary package," she said.

The BHE and college presidents are offering smaller raises than those seen in recently settled contracts for faculty and staff members at the state universities and on University of Massachusetts campuses.

Equally troubling are proposals by the colleges that strip away professional judgment, change the faculty tenure process to include student outcomes and weaken workers' rights.

LeBlanc and Barnes described the package offered as straining the day unit and forcing out part-time workers while creating an environment that will make it more difficult to attract highly qualified full-time employees.

"Why are they pushing us on student outcomes? That is completely unheard of in higher ed," LeBlanc said. "Is it because they want us to be more like the local high school? I hope not."

As *MTA Today* went to press, MCCC members on most of the community college campuses had voted to adopt work-to-rule actions in response to the proposals, and the remaining campus chapters were scheduling votes on actions.

Under work to rule, MCCC members withdraw from all voluntary work and adhere strictly to the guidelines of the existing contract.

MCCC members have also been speaking out at meetings of campus boards of trustees about their frustrations over the current round of bargaining and have been carrying signs demanding a fair contract at stand-outs held when state officials were visiting. MCCC members on all campuses are wearing buttons and stickers designed to raise awareness of the contract issue.

Barnes said the demonstrations and member actions are having an impact. On some campuses, she said, the actions have led to alliances between the MCCC and students, as well as between the union and members of the boards.

"Even when there was just a threat of actions taking place, management pulled some of the bad proposals off of the table," Barnes said. "I think this is teaching newer members — and reminding all members — of the need for collective action and the importance of solidarity."

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Budget commission says funding falls short

By Scott McLennan

The long-standing formula used to determine how much K-12 public school districts should spend to provide an adequate education to students is woefully outdated, and the Commonwealth needs to immediately invest nearly \$500 million more to sufficiently meet existing needs.

That was a key finding of the Foundation Budget Review Commission, which examined the public school funding formula established in the state's 1993 Education Reform Act. The MTA advocated for legislation establishing the commission. MTA President Barbara Madeloni was a member of the panel, which also included legislators and representatives of municipal government and business.

Senator Sonia Chang-Díaz and Representative Alice Peisch co-chaired the commission, which had 19 additional voting members. The panel examined what the foundation budget should be and how it should be calculated for cities and towns.

The commission's final report, released in late October, states: "Reports from the field and the research community alike in recent years have suggested that the (public education) system is fiscally strained by the failure to substantively reconsider the adequacy of the foundation budget since 1993, and that the formula may need retooling

The commission found current state funding sorely lacking. Communities combine local funds with Chapter 70 appropriations in order to meet foundation budget levels, and the commission determined that the state needs to increase its contributions to cities and towns.

to meet the needs of the 21st century. Moreover, 22 years after the advent of education reform, the challenge we have not yet achieved desired results on is to deliver quality consistently to all geographies and all demographic groups across our state."

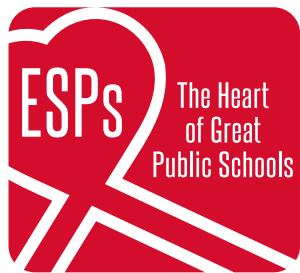
The commission found that dramatic cost increases for special education services and employee health insurance have eaten into school budgets to the point where academic and enrichment programs are jeopardized. The commission also recommended recalibrating the funding requirements necessary for educating English language learners and other high-need students.

The commission found current state funding sorely lacking. Communities combine local funds with Chapter 70 appropriations in order to meet foundation budget levels, and the commission determined that the state needs to increase its contributions to cities and towns.

"I am not surprised by what the commission discovered through its work, which is why the MTA was eager to be in the coalition of community activists who want to raise revenue for public education through an increased tax rate on income over \$1 million," Madeloni said. "The assumed costs of certain services have not been aligned with reality for some time, and our public schools have paid a terrible price with increased class sizes, user fees and program cuts."

Madeloni said that the commission's findings should be a starting point for a vigorous assessment of what constitutes an adequate education. She pointed to the hours of testimony the commission heard at public hearings held across the state over the last year. During the hearings, some educators lamented the loss of arts and cultural programs while others described a lack of basic school supplies.

"We can't become distracted by the costs of special education and insurance and totally miss the point of making sure that all students and educators have what they need to be successful," Madeloni said. "I'm proud of our members who testified before the commission, and by continuing to organize around the Raise Up Massachusetts revenue initiative, we will hold the state accountable for providing the resources necessary for excellent public schools that are committed to educating all children."



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Diversion of funds to charter schools forces cuts

Continued from Page 6

The \$300,000 being diverted from public schools to the charter schools attended by 19 Ludlow students this year means the town has to consider cutting five classroom teachers, he said.

MTA President Barbara Madeloni testified that the state should be focusing its attention on making sure all public schools are sufficiently funded and have the resources to meet the needs of all students, and she

cautioned against creating a system of schools unaccountable to any locally elected officials.

"Charter schools place private interests over the public good," Madeloni said. "We need exactly the opposite. We need more democracy and a stronger commitment to the common good, to public education for democracy, and to fully funding all of our public schools so that all of our young people have the schools they deserve."

Pacheco said he filed S. 326 because he was concerned that charter schools, created under the Education Reform Act of 1993, were not meeting their original intent: to develop best practices to be shared with all public schools. "We are spending a lot of money to benefit a minority of students in the Commonwealth," Pacheco said.

He noted that \$419 million in state education funding is being diverted this year from public schools, which serve more than 96 percent of the state's nearly 1 million public school students. "I am here to speak on their behalf," the senator said.

The packed public hearing began with testimony from state Auditor Suzanne Bump, who questioned the data provided by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education — and often touted by the Baker administration — to claim that charter schools outperform traditional public schools and that there is a long waiting list for charter school seats.

"After two decades and the transfer of millions of public dollars into the hands of private charter schools," Bump said in her prepared remarks, "there is still little more than anecdotal evidence of outcomes to support the contention that charter schools are better suited to meet the needs of our students, and charter

schools are still experiments."

Civil rights activists Juan Cofield and Mel King also testified against charter school

expansion, arguing that public funds need to be spent on schools that provide opportunities for all.

"Lifting the cap on charter schools will only widen the school-to-prison pipeline," said Cofield, president of New England Area Conference of the NAACP, referring to the hyperdisciplinary policies employed by many charter schools that lead to students being pushed out.

King, a community activist and former state representative and professor in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, told the committee not to "buy into the hypocrisy of legislation" seeking to lift the charter cap.



Mel King

For more information on the impact of charter schools in Massachusetts, please visit massteacher.org/charterschools. To see photos of the hearing, go to <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mtacomunications/albums/72157659485746749>.

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Educators seek support for early education

By Scott McLennan

Armed with research and firsthand classroom knowledge, MTA members testified on Sept. 16 in support of a bill to create publicly funded universal prekindergarten and full-day kindergarten across the state.

"In terms of access, there is no reasonable basis on which to justify treating the programs for younger children — 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds — differently from the K-12 programs for older children," said Arthur MacEwan, professor emeritus in the Department of Economics and a senior research fellow at the Center for Social Policy at UMass Boston.

MacEwan spoke in support of Senate Bill 268, "An Act for Universal Early Education and Full-Day Kindergarten," during a hearing before the Legislature's Joint Committee on Education. He

told legislators that high-quality early education provides the foundation for students to become stronger learners for their whole lives. He also pointed out that providing publicly funded high-quality education for young children would make it possible for some parents to re-enter the workforce.

In addition, MacEwan stressed the importance of making access truly universal. "There is substantial evidence that while children from low-income families gain the most from early childhood education, their gain is greater in programs that are diverse in terms of the income levels of the children's families than in programs targeted at children from low-income families," he said.

Bonnie Page, president of the Malden Education Association; Rebecca Cusick, president of the Fall River Educators' Association; and Jackie Lawrence, president of the

Please turn to **Educators**/Page 14

Another winning season for MTA-Sox partnership

By Bob Duffy

Fifteen years after he became a spokesperson for the MTA Red Sox Reading Game, pitcher Pedro Martinez was back this year — this time as the subject of the book featured in reading game materials.

To honor Martinez, who was recently inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame, New England native and author/illustrator Matt Tavares wrote “Growing Up Pedro.” The book tells the story of Martinez growing up in the Dominican Republic and falling in love with the game of baseball, then realizing his dream to become a Major League player.

Another Red Sox pitcher, Craig Breslow, was the team’s spokesman for the MTA Red Sox Reading Game this year, as he was in 2014.

Breslow, who is also the team’s representative to the Major League Baseball Players Association, took a brief paternity leave last June to celebrate the birth of twins.

The reading game got underway in the spring, with students in kindergarten

through eighth grade each pledging to read nine books over the summer.

The pledge cards of 100 students were drawn randomly from among the thousands submitted, and those students and their teachers received two tickets each to a Sox game against the Philadelphia Phillies on Sept. 5. Five grand prize winners were also selected to join Red Sox mascot Wally the Green Monster and MTA President Barbara Madeloni on the field for a special ceremony prior to the game.

Another annual MTA-Red Sox partnership, the Most Valuable Educator program, recognizes great educators and staff at public schools throughout Massachusetts. Those chosen are also invited onto the field for a pregame celebration.

Sarah McKeon, co-president of the Framingham Teachers Association, was one of those chosen this season.

“I was honored to be chosen as a Red Sox Most Valuable Educator,” McKeon said. “It was a dream come true to be on the field at Fenway Park and receive an ovation from Red Sox Nation.”



Photo courtesy of Boston Red Sox

Grand prize winners of the 2015 Red Sox Reading Game joined Wally the Green Monster, MTA President Barbara Madeloni and University of Massachusetts Lowell mascot Rowdy the River Hawk at a Red Sox game on Sept. 5. Left to right are winners Aubrey Legrow of Beverly, Connor Rheame of West Springfield, Ethan Warhaftig of Hingham and Lilah Michaud of Shrewsbury. Winner Quintin Furtado of Westport is not pictured.

Educators seek legislative support for early education

Continued from Page 13

Somerville Teachers Association, were on a panel supporting the bill.

“In Fall River, 55 percent of our children entering kindergarten have had no preschool experience as compared to 28 percent statewide. This means that many of our children enter the classroom for the first time with limited social experiences and greater academic needs,” Cusick said.

Lawrence spoke about the successes she has seen in her district as preK and kindergarten programs have expanded.

“I believe this should serve as a model for all of our cities and towns,” she said. “In high-quality prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms, students learn to be learners, explorers and citizens.”

MTA President Barbara Madeloni, who also testified in support of the bill, cautioned against any approach that would over-regulate the education process by requiring constant data collection on the Commonwealth’s youngest students.

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Student association wins recognition for continued growth

By Scott McLennan

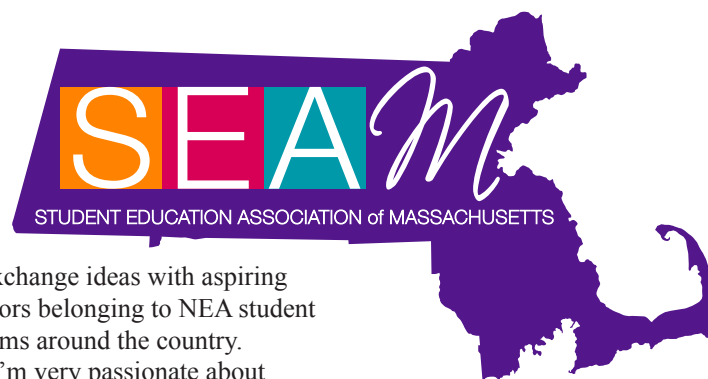
The Student Education Association of Massachusetts is growing, and people are noticing.

At its Student Leadership Conference this year, the National Education Association presented SEAM with awards for an overall membership increase and for forming a new chapter.

But an association that helps

future educators get off to a good professional start while they are still in college can never be too large, so SEAM has been reaching out to community college students in hopes of seeding new chapters.

SEAM, which is guided by MTA members and staff but led by students, provides a forum for professional development and networking. Members of the Massachusetts association not only routinely meet with their peers around the state, but



also exchange ideas with aspiring educators belonging to NEA student programs around the country.

"I'm very passionate about becoming a teacher, and I feel as though SEAM has given me so many opportunities to meet other people who are as passionate as I am," said Westfield State University student Megan Juchno, SEAM's student co-chair.

There are SEAM chapters at Westfield, Bridgewater and Fitchburg state universities. Even though SEAM is primarily at public universities, Juchno said, the organization felt it was important to connect with students at private institutions that have active education departments. Nichols College in Dudley has a SEAM

chapter, and a chapter was recently organized at Anna Maria College in Paxton.

Because many teachers leave the profession within their first five years, the MTA felt it was important to begin developing leadership and professional skills within the ranks of higher education students planning teaching careers.

"Because of SEAM, I've made a lot of connections and been able to have experiences that I know will help me once I am a practicing teacher," Juchno said.

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PLEASE NOTE:

All consultations are now by appointment only during the hours listed.

AUBURN — Louise Gaskins: first Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Central Office, 48 Sword St., Auburn; 508.791.2121, or at home, 978.448.5351.

QUINCY — Harold Crowley: Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., MTA, 2 Heritage Drive, 9th Floor, Quincy; 617.878.8240 or 800.392.6175, ext. 8240.

CAPE COD — Lawrence Abbruzzi: second Saturday of each month, 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, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Fitchburg Teachers Association office, 78 Franklin Rd., Fitchburg; Call 978.297.0123 or e-mail: zibstar702@verizon.net.

HOLYOKE — Ron Lech: third Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Western Office, 55

Bobala Road, Suite 3, Holyoke; 413.537.2335, or at home, 413.893.9173.

LYNNFIELD — Mary Parry: third and fourth Saturdays of each month, 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.

PITTSFIELD — Ward F. Johnson: second Saturday of each month, 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 — Mary Hanna or Edward Nelson: third Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Southeast Office, 756 Orchard Street, third floor, Raynham; 508.822.5371. Call Nelson at home, 774.239.7823, or Hanna at home, 781.545.2069.

HIGHER EDUCATION AT-LARGE — Edward McCourt, Wellesley; 781.325.2553; e-mail: emccourt.mccc@gmail.com.

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.

MTA leaders elected to state AFL-CIO posts

MTA President Barbara Madeloni has been elected to serve as executive vice president of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO.

The election took place at the state AFL-CIO's Constitutional Convention, which was held from Sept. 30 to Oct. 2. During the convention, MTA Vice President Janet Anderson was elected to serve as an AFL-CIO vice president.

Madeloni was elected to an at-large executive vice president position for the Massachusetts chapter, which includes more than 750 affiliated unions representing about 400,000 working families in the public, building and construction trades and industrial/service sectors.

Acting on one of the resolutions proposed at the convention, delegates voted unanimously to

Acting on one of the resolutions proposed at the convention, delegates voted unanimously to oppose any attempt to raise or eliminate the cap on Commonwealth charter schools.

oppose any attempt to raise or eliminate the cap on Commonwealth charter schools.

Steven A. Tolman was elected to a second term as president of the Massachusetts chapter.

"I am proud to work alongside Barbara Madeloni in her new role on my leadership team as executive vice president," Tolman said. "We are lucky to have Barbara helping to lead the charge against the right-wing assault targeting labor and educators. With Janet Anderson also joining our

Board as a vice president, educators will be well represented in our statewide labor movement."

Madeloni said of her new role, "I am honored to be given this opportunity. President Tolman understands that the assault on our public schools and educator unions is part of a broader assault that impacts all working people. He is committed to coalition-building and rank-and-file activism. With our sisters and brothers from across the state, we can reignite the labor movement and use our collective power to fight for social and economic justice."

Anderson said she is "looking forward to working closely with labor leaders from all over Massachusetts to ensure we continue to do the important work we've always done — advocating for our members, their families and working people everywhere."



MTA Headquarters and the Metro Service Center have moved to Quincy

The address for both is:
Massachusetts Teachers Association
2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor
Quincy, MA 02171-2119

The phone numbers are:

MTA Headquarters
617.878.8000
800.392.6175

Metro Service Center
781.380.1410
800.479.1410

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

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a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		70,761	71,411
b. Legitimate Paid	1. Outside County Paid/Requested Mail Subscriptions	69,808	70,411
	and/or Requested	N.A.	N.A.
	2. In-County Paid/Requested Mail Subscriptions	N.A.	N.A.
	Distribution	N.A.	N.A.
	3. Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Etc., Outside USPS	N.A.	N.A.
	4. Requested Copies Dist. by Other Mail Classes Through USPS	N.A.	N.A.
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation		69,808	70,411
d. Nonrequested	1. Outside County Nonrequested Copies, Including Samples	670	705
	Distribution	N.A.	N.A.
	2. In-County Nonrequested Copies	N.A.	N.A.
	(By Mail and	N.A.	N.A.
	Outside the Mail)	N.A.	N.A.
	3. Nonrequested Copies Dist. Through USPS by Other Mail Classes	N.A.	N.A.
	4. Nonrequested Copies Distributed Outside the Mail	N.A.	N.A.
e. Total Nonrequested Distribution		670	705
f. Total Distribution		70,478	71,116
g. Copies Not Distributed		283	295
h. Total		70,761	71,411
i. Percent Paid		99.05%	99.01%

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		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Previous 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Requested and Paid Electronic Copies		48,437	49,392
b. Total Requested and Paid Print Copies (Line 15c)			
	+ Requested/Paid Print Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	118,245	119,803
c. Total Requested Copy Distribution (Line 15f)			
	+ Requested/Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	118,915	120,508
d. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Both Print & Electronic Copies)		99.44%	99.41%

I certify that 50% of all my distributed copies (electronic and print) are legitimate requests or paid copies.

17. **The Statement of Ownership will be printed in the Fall 2015 issue of this publication.**
18. **James P. Sacks, Editor**

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including multiple damages and civil penalties).

PS Form 3526-R

Nomination papers available

MTA members who intend to seek election to MTA office at the 2016 Annual Meeting of Delegates or to run for NEA Director may now request nomination papers.

Annual Meeting elections will take place in May for President, Vice President, Regional Executive Committee seats, and District Director and Statewide Retired District Director positions.

Four members of the Retired Members Committee will be elected.

There are also two NEA Director seats and six Alternate NEA Director seats up for election. The directors and alternates will be elected by direct-mail ballot. Ballots will be sent to the entire membership in March.

Applications for nomination papers for MTA office must be submitted in writing to the office of the Executive Director-Treasurer, MTA, 2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor, Quincy, MA 02171-2119. Although there is no deadline for requesting them, nomination papers for MTA office must be filed with the Executive Director-Treasurer by 5 p.m. on Friday, March 4, 2016, regardless of postmark.

Nomination papers for the NEA Director and Alternate NEA Director posts may be requested in the same manner, but must be filed no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 8, 2016.

No person may be a candidate for more than one office. Each candidate must specify the office sought, the term of the office, his or her MTA individual membership ID number (which can be found on the MTA membership card), home and school addresses, telephone numbers, fax numbers, e-mail addresses and local association affiliation.

All candidates must comply with the nomination and election provisions of the MTA Bylaws and policies, which will be made available to candidates.

President and Vice President*: The President and Vice President will be elected for two-year terms commencing July 15, 2016. A candidate must be an active MTA member** or a retired MTA member within the Statewide Retired District. A local affiliate shall not be represented

ELECTION TIMELINE

NOMINATION DEADLINES

December 30

Candidate Recommendation Committee

January 8

Regional Ethnic Minority Delegates to MTA Annual Meeting

January 8

Statewide Retired District Delegates to MTA Annual Meeting

January 8

Statewide, Regional and Retired Delegates to NEA RA

January 8

NEA Directors and Alternate NEA Directors

March 4

President

March 4

Vice President

March 4

Regional Executive Committee Members

March 4

Statewide Retired District Directors

March 4

District Directors

March 4

Retired Members Committee

April 8

Student Delegate Election to the NEA RA

FILING DEADLINES FOR PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

January 8

Bylaws

January 8

Initial Deadline — Standing Rules and Resolutions

on the MTA Board of Directors by more than one officer (President or Vice President).

Regional Executive Committee members*: There will be four seats up for election for Regional Executive Committee positions. The seats are for Regions B, D, E and H. A candidate must be an active MTA member** and must be employed in education within the electoral region in which the candidate seeks office. All terms will be for three years.

District Directors — MTA Board*: There will be 12 seats up for election for District Director positions

on the MTA Board. All terms will be for three years. The open districts are 33C, 36C, 41C, 39E, 40E, 12F, 13F, 16G, 17G, 20G, 48H, and 49H. Each candidate must be an active MTA member** and must be employed in education within the electoral district in which the candidate seeks office.

Statewide Retired District Directors*: There will be two Statewide Retired District Director seats up for election on the Board. The terms last for three years. Candidates must be members of the Statewide Retired District. There is a self-nomination process,

with a deadline of March 4, 2016.

NEA Directors* and Alternate NEA Directors: Two NEA Director seats with terms expiring in 2016 will be filled by direct-mail vote in March and April, in tandem with NEA statewide and regional delegate elections. The term for each is three years, beginning Sept. 1, 2016, and expiring Aug. 31, 2019, in accordance with the NEA’s fiscal year. Likewise, six vacancies for Alternate NEA Director will be filled. Each candidate must be an active NEA member**, as determined by the NEA Constitution and Bylaws,

Please turn to **MTA**/Page 20

**DELEGATES TO THE NEA RA • REGIONAL ETHNIC MINORITY DELEGATES TO THE MTA ANNUAL MEETING
STATEWIDE RETIRED DISTRICT DELEGATES TO THE MTA ANNUAL MEETING**

A candidate must file this nomination form or a facsimile with the Executive Director-Treasurer by 5 p.m. on Friday, January 8, 2016, regardless of postmark. ADDITIONAL FORMS MAY BE REQUESTED OR THIS FORM MAY BE DUPLICATED. FORMS MAY BE FAXED TO JOHN CONNELLY AT 617.570.4908.

NAME OF CANDIDATE: _____

MEMBER ID #: _____

E-MAIL: _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

WORK E-MAIL: _____

SCHOOL ADDRESS: _____

WORK PHONE: _____

LOCAL ASSOCIATION: _____

DISTRICT/REGION: _____

- ☐ **STATEWIDE – Non-Supervisor**
- ☐ **REGIONAL – Non-Supervisor**
- ☐ **STATEWIDE OTHER**
(Administrator or Supervisor)
- ☐ **RETIRED**

18 Fall 2015

NEA RA delegates to be elected by mail

Statewide, regional and retired delegates from Massachusetts to the 2016 NEA Representative Assembly will be elected by mail ballot in March and April.

The nomination period for delegates is now in process and will close at 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 8, 2016. The nomination form is on Page 18 of this issue of *MTA Today*.

The election period runs from March 7 through April 22, 2016. Ballots for statewide and regional delegates will be mailed to eligible active MTA/NEA members and will be accompanied by bio/statements and photos of candidates who submit them.

Retired delegate ballots and bio/statements will be mailed only to retired and retired life NEA members. The distribution of statewide and regional seats will be voted on by the MTA Board of Directors at its meeting on Jan. 30; candidates will be informed of the final allocation plan and will be given an opportunity to alter the designation for the level they seek to represent.

The MTA will be notified by the NEA in February of the number of delegates allocated to Massachusetts. The allocation of statewide and regional delegates will be based on electoral regions A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H. A list of local associations by electoral region is available upon request.

Tentative dates for the RA are July 2 through July 7, and travel dates are July 1 and July 8. The RA will take place in Washington, D.C. The statewide, regional and retired delegates from Massachusetts will attend, in addition to delegates elected by local associations.

The Credentials and Ballot Committee has adopted procedures for the election that call for ballots and other material to be sent directly to each NEA member in Massachusetts in a self-mailer that bears the notice: "Important: Ballots Enclosed." Ballots will be returned directly to the Credentials and Ballot Committee, and data from the returns will be tabulated and counted at MTA headquarters under the supervision of the Credentials and Ballot Committee.

There will be a \$1,200 stipend for statewide, regional, retired and student delegates.

Elected delegates are expected to comply with the accountability requirements set forth by the MTA. Funding will not be provided unless accountability requirements are met.

The policy procedure for the election of MTA Delegates to the RA should be reviewed carefully by anyone considering candidacy.

The policy procedure for the election of retired delegates is available upon request.

It states that this election "shall be subject to all restrictions, procedures, and deadlines set forth by the NEA guidelines and MTA's statewide and regional election process."

Inquiries concerning procedures for the nomination and election of NEA delegates may be addressed to John Connelly in the MTA Division of Governance and Administration at 617.878.8305. His fax number is 617.570.4908, and his e-mail address is jconnelly@massteacher.org.

Regional ethnic minority delegates to be chosen

Regional ethnic minority delegates to the 2016 MTA Annual Meeting will be elected by mail ballot in March and April in conjunction with NEA delegate/Director elections.

The nomination period for regional ethnic minority delegates is now in process and will close at 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 8, 2016. Nominations are open to all eligible ethnic minority members through a self-nomination process.

The nomination form appears on Page 18 of this issue of *MTA Today*.

Regional ethnic minority delegates will be elected by mail ballots forwarded in the same self-mailer as the NEA ballots.

The election period runs from March 7 through April 22, 2016. Ballots for regional ethnic minority delegates will be mailed to active MTA members, accompanied by bio/statements and photos of candidates who submit them.

The 2016 allocation of regional ethnic minority delegates will be based on MTA electoral regions and equal to the number of District Directors from each region. No more than one delegate from each district within a region will be elected, with the exception of 44H, which has three Directors.

There will be 49 vacancies for regional ethnic minority delegates. All terms will be for one year.

The regional vacancies are: Region A, seven vacancies; Region B, five vacancies; Region C, seven vacancies; Region D, five vacancies; Region E, five vacancies; Region F, six vacancies; Region G, six vacancies; and Region H, eight vacancies. Each candidate must be employed in education within the region in which the candidate seeks office.

Inquiries regarding procedures may be directed to John Connelly in the MTA Division of Governance and Administration at 617.878.8305. His e-mail address is jconnelly@massteacher.org, and his fax number is 617.570.4908.

Bylaws and Rules Committee now accepting proposals

The MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee will soon begin reviewing proposed amendments.

A proposal to amend the Bylaws addresses the governance of the association or the primary characteristics and functions of the MTA. A proposal to amend the Standing Rules addresses the procedures of the Annual Meeting of Delegates, nominations and elections or governance documents.

Filing process and deadline: Proposed changes to the Bylaws must be received in writing by the MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee by 5 p.m. on Jan. 8, 2016.

Proposed changes to the Standing Rules only may be submitted in writing to the MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee up to the opening of the first business session of the May 13-14 Annual Meeting in Boston.

However, early submission by the Jan. 8 deadline provides an opportunity for a full hearing by the committee, by the Board of Directors and at the April pre-convention meetings.

It also allows advance publication in the Spring issue of *MTA Today*.

Submitters will be informed of hearing dates and will be expected to meet with the committee to discuss the language and intent of their proposals.

Proper format: Please use the following format for each proposed amendment.

- Specifically cite all articles, sections and lines of the Bylaws or Standing Rules that are to be changed or affected.
- Set forth your proposal in two columns, comparing the proposed text opposite the present text. In the proposed language, underline amended or added language. Enclose in parentheses language to be deleted. Indicate the location of completely new language.
- Accompany each proposed amendment with a written rationale on its purpose, impact and intent.
- Include at the end of all proposals the submitter's name and local association information.
- Provide your full name, address, telephone number(s), fax number(s), e-mail address or addresses

Please turn to **Bylaws**/Page 21

MTA Resolutions Committee accepting proposals

Proposed revisions to MTA Resolutions are now being accepted.

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

A proposal for a new resolution or revision of an existing one may be submitted by any member.

The initial deadline for submissions to the Resolutions Committee is Friday, Jan. 8, 2016.

Proposed resolutions may also be submitted prior to the end of business

on Friday, May 13, at the Annual Meeting of Delegates. The committee may also propose resolutions.

All resolutions submitted are considered by the Resolutions Committee, and those submitted by the January deadline are also brought before the Board of Directors.

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

To see the current MTA Resolutions, please visit www.massteacher.org/resolutions.

Nominations sought for Candidate Recommendation Committee

Nominations are now open for the election of one member to the MTA Candidate Recommendation Committee.

The committee is responsible for making recommendations to MTA members to support candidates for state and federal office. There is currently an opening in Congressional District 1.

Terms on the committee are for three years. The committee member must reside in the congressional district to be represented.

Any MTA member interested in running for the CRC should contact John Connelly in the MTA Division of Governance and Administration to request a nomination form. He can be reached by calling 617.878.8305 or e-mailing jconnelly@massteacher.org.

The nomination form and a biographical statement of not more than 100 words must be received by Dec. 30.

Those eligible to vote for CRC members are delegates to the past

year’s MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates who reside in the specified congressional district.

Upon request, candidates will be provided with a list of MTA Annual Meeting delegates for the congressional district, along with names and addresses.

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

Ballots including the candidates’ biographical statements will be mailed to the electorate on the first Friday in February (Feb. 5, 2016) and must be returned no later than 5 p.m. on the last Friday in February (Feb. 26).

The CRC term will begin on March 15, 2016. Members of the CRC are eligible to be elected for two consecutive three-year terms. In no event can a person hold one of these positions for more than six consecutive years.

Statewide Retired District delegates to be chosen by mail ballot

MTA Statewide Retired District delegates to the 2016 MTA Annual Meeting will be elected by mail ballot in conjunction with the NEA delegate/director elections.

The nomination period for Statewide Retired District delegates is now in process and will close at 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 8, 2016. Nominations are open to all eligible MTA/NEA

retired members through a self-nomination process.

The nomination form appears on Page 18 of this issue of *MTA Today*.

Statewide Retired District delegates will be elected by mail ballots forwarded in the same self-mailer as the NEA retired delegate ballots.

The election period runs from March 7 through April 22, 2016.

Ballots for statewide retired delegates will be mailed to retired MTA/NEA members and will be accompanied by bio/statements and photos of candidates who submit them.

The 2016 allocation of Statewide Retired District delegates and successor delegates will be based on the number of MTA/NEA retired members from the Statewide Retired District on record no later than March

1, 2016. Terms will last one year.

The policy procedure for the election will be mailed to any candidate who requests a copy.

Inquiries may be directed to John Connelly in the MTA Division of Governance and Administration at 617.878.8305. They may also be e-mailed to jconnelly@massteacher.org or faxed to 617.590.4908.

Election waiver

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

MTA election process is underway

Continued from Page 17

for at least two years immediately preceding the election. The policy on eligibility and procedure for the direct election of NEA Directors and Alternate NEA Directors is available upon request.

For information on nominations and elections, please contact John Connelly of the MTA Division of Governance and Administration by calling 617.878.8305, e-mailing jconnelly@massteacher.org or faxing inquiries to 617.570.4908.

*In accordance with Article IX, Section 2B of the MTA Bylaws, all

members of the Board of Directors (including officers; Regional Executive Committee members; the Statewide Retired Region Executive Committee member; the At-Large ESP member; District, Statewide, and At-Large Directors; and NEA Directors) will be delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates. Election as delegates will occur simultaneous to, and by virtue of, election to the above-named offices.

**RIF’d members and members who have been granted leaves of absence by their employers may be considered active members employed in education.

Retired committee has four seats open

Four members of the eight-member Retired Members Committee will be elected by Statewide Retired District delegates to the 2016 MTA Annual Meeting in May.

Please see the Winter issue of the *MTA Reporter* for details and the self-nomination form for these positions.

The deadline for nominations is March 4, 2016. Terms last two years and begin on July 1.

Many hands make Ritzer peace garden a success

By Sarah Nathan

Quietly and without fanfare, the members of the Danvers Teachers Association recently unveiled a peace garden at Danvers High School to honor the memory and spirit of former colleague Colleen Ritzer.

"We wanted to do something locally, through the union, to remember one of our members who was tragically taken away from us," said DTA President Chris Hopkins.

Ritzer, a young, vibrant educator and self-described "math nerd" who taught at the high school, was found slain outside the school in October 2013. One of her former students is on trial in connection with the killing.

Tracie Ewing, a special education teacher and technical director for the high school theater troupe, took on the job of designing the garden.

"I wanted to create a space where people can sit together, reflect and follow through on the words of wisdom that Colleen passed on to us," said Ewing, who also serves on the DTA Executive Board.

In the courtyard outside the school's theater and library, the peace garden features a bubbling water fountain and two benches etched with two of Ritzer's favorite quotations: "Being good to people is a wonderful legacy to leave behind" and "Find something good in every day."



Danvers Teachers Association members Diane Morey, Chris Hopkins and Tracie Ewing, left to right, led the effort to establish a memorial peace garden to honor the memory and spirit of Colleen Ritzer. From start to finish, Hopkins said, the project has been a "real community effort."

Photo by Sarah Nathan

From start to finish, Hopkins said, the project has been a "real community effort." While the DTA conceived of the project and Ewing designed it, Danvers High School alumna and local landscaper Stephanie Halpin brought the garden to life.

The DTA and the district shared the cost of materials, and Halpin's company, D&S Landscaping, donated all of the labor. Halpin has also committed to doing seasonal maintenance.

The town's Public Works Department and many others have also helped and continue to contribute their labor to the garden. Special education students enrolled in the high school's life skills class are watering and caring for the garden on a regular basis.

Danvers High School Principal Susan Ambrozavitch, who enthus-

astically supported the idea when DTA members presented it to her, described the garden as "a nice, quiet, peaceful way of remembering Colleen."

"This staff has done an amazing job of coming together and supporting each other in a very positive way," she added.

Diane Morey, a social studies teacher who is also a member of the DTA Executive Board, said she is

committed to spreading the word about "anything good that has come out of this terrible tragedy."

Using a lighthearted, upbeat tone, Morey live-tweeted from the annual Step Up for Colleen 5K Walk/Run last spring. She has also tweeted about the Colleen Ritzer Memorial Scholarship Fund, which benefits high school students who plan to pursue education degrees in college, and the new peace garden.

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MTA GOVERNANCE POSTINGS 2016

Bylaws and Rules Committee assistance available

Continued from Page 19

and your MTA membership ID number, which can be found on your MTA membership card.

Who may submit proposals?

Individual MTA members, groups of members and local associations are eligible to submit proposed amendments to the MTA Bylaws and Standing Rules.

Members wishing to use an official title representing an MTA affiliate or committee are required to submit evidence that a vote was taken by authorized representatives of the affiliate or the committee.

Current document: A copy of the current document containing the MTA Bylaws, Standing Rules and

Resolutions is available to any member upon request.

Assistance: The Bylaws and Rules Committee and members of the MTA staff are available to discuss ideas for potential amendments and to provide technical assistance.

Inquiries and proposals submitted to the Bylaws and Rules Committee should be channeled through Mary Gilgallon, MTA Director of Governance and Administration. Her mailing address is MTA, 2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor, Quincy, MA 02171-2119. Her phone number is 617.878.8213, her fax number is 617.570.4908, and her e-mail address is mgilgallon@massteacher.org.

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Travel the world with Collette tours

In 1918, the first Collette tour — with travelers riding on a jitney bus from Boston to Florida — got underway. Nearly 100 years later, the company has evolved into a global firm providing guided travel for people all over the world.

Collette's headquarters is now along the Blackstone River in Rhode Island, just upstream from where America's Industrial Revolution began. It is a fitting location for a company dedicated to innovation.

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National award honors Haverhill educator's work

As a special education paraeducator in the life-skills program at Haverhill High School, Nancy Burke has always gone above and beyond for her students. Now she has a national award to show for her years of dedication.

Burke received a national Bammy Award from the Academy of Education Arts and Sciences on Sept. 26. The judges noted her ability to engage her students and improve the school climate through her work.

Bammys are cross-discipline awards that recognize the contributions of educators across the entire field of public education. The first paraeducator to be honored with a Bammy, Burke was one of five special education finalists for the award.

Burke's winning efforts included a project in which she, along with students and local volunteers, worked to build a garden that serves as an outdoor learning lab for the nearly 30 students in the school's life-skills program.

Nearly two years ago, Burke asked permission to build raised garden beds in a vacant interior school courtyard.



Photo by Sara Robertson

Friends, family members and colleagues of Nancy Burke, at left in the front row, gathered for a "watch party" at a hotel in Andover on the night that the Bammy Awards were announced via Skype. Alabama school food service worker Donna West, seated at right in front, was a finalist for a Bammy and flew to Massachusetts for the event.

With an \$800 NEA/MTA grant, Burke and her colleagues, assisted by students in general education classes

and several local Eagle Scouts, built the raised beds, benches and a ramp for wheelchairs.

In addition to growing healthy foods for students, the garden serves as a learning lab, a therapeutic garden and a safe and relaxing space that allows Burke's students fresh air and a way to connect with nature. The students learn to prepare the food they have grown in a kitchen in the school's special education department.

Burke said the garden "is a powerful learning tool for educating the whole child."

"School gardens create enthusiasm for learning, encourage healthy eating and foster team-building skills," she said.

She uses the garden to encourage her students to be creative and collaborate and to apply critical-thinking skills.

She learned that she had won at a "watch party" attended by family members, Haverhill High colleagues and other fellow Haverhill Education Association and MTA members, and representatives of the National Education Association. She was interviewed via Skype during the ceremony.

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Collective action carries the day



Photo by Sarah Nathan

The power of organizing and collective action made the difference for the Leominster Education Association this fall as members concluded negotiations on a new three-year contract. Educators showed up in force at School Committee meetings, as they did in the photo above on Oct. 5, proudly displayed their "Public Funds for Public Schools" stickers and distributed fliers at public events. In the end, the School Committee withdrew some of its most onerous proposals and educators got a contract that includes more teaching time, raises and more professional development.

Teaching in a 'toxic' environment

Continued from Page 7

percent raise if they liked you. If they just tolerated you, you might get a 1 percent raise. And then there was one teacher whose kids had high scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills who got \$10,000. But it was all random. You never knew what you were going to get.

The environment was toxic. The administrators claimed they wanted you to collaborate with one another, but there was a disincentive to collaborate since teachers were competing against each other for money.

As bad as it was for teachers, the environment for kids was often worse. I also saw a system designed to remove kids who needed the most help. For example, a number of our kids were Haitian Creole English language learners. Now, on paper these students got ELL services, but compared to real ELL services at a public school, they got no ELL services. Some of these students were kept back multiple times until their families said, "I've had enough of this" and moved them back to the public school.

The same was true for students on

Individualized Education Programs. I sat in IEP meetings with parents who didn't speak English and whose kids were being held back. The parents were never offered translators. I felt they were coerced into accepting the IEP determination without any real understanding of what it meant.

All this worked well for the charter schools, as they were able to remove kids who needed the most services and would lower test scores. For me, teaching these kids without them getting adequate support was like swimming in handcuffs.

Watertown is very diverse. I find the kids in my classroom fascinating, and they have varied needs and wants. The kids in the charter school were just the same. But there was no conversation about what made them special. It was all about meeting your objective, and the objective was the same every day: Improve their test scores. Now, the classroom is a learning experience for me. I am proud to call teaching both a career and a profession and to be able to do what I truly love every day.

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Springfield tour highlights success of collaboration

Continued from Page 8

of the effort, during which educators gained greater autonomy over professional development and lesson delivery.

MTA President Barbara Madeloni and SEA President Tim Collins joined Eskelsen García and NEA Foundation President Harriet Sanford for tours of Dorman and the Samuel Bowles

School, both of which were among the grant recipients.

In addition to making home visits, Dorman educators worked with community partners to create extended learning time programs, such as a summer literacy camp held at the school.

During the tour, visitors sat in with a team of Bowles teachers observing a

fourth-grade writing lesson. Afterward, substitutes took over classes for the day so that classroom educators, the principal and a coach could meet to discuss techniques that would best meet students' needs and avoid a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

The larger team observations and briefings occur periodically throughout the year, allowing educators to shape lessons around their own classroom observations — providing a form of data collection that has nothing to do with bubble tests.

Educators in the collaboration also drove some of the professional development they received.

SEA Vice President Maureen Colgan Posner gave one example of that at the Sumner Avenue School.

"This year we picked one topic to focus on, and that was the social and emotional health of children," she said. "That's what teachers really wanted to learn about and felt they needed help with. Our principal listened and made it happen."

Posner pointed out that education still tends to be a "top-down" system, but she said it does not have to be that way.

"Sumner Avenue shows what can happen when we start collaborating and we start letting teachers be the leaders," she said. "That's good for educators. That's good for administration, and it's especially good for kids."

Madeloni said that the results of the program in Springfield are just what she would expect to see in an environment in which educators are empowered.

"I saw teachers working together, using their professional knowledge and judgment to make decisions for the students in their classrooms," she said. "I heard from parents who were welcomed to the school and became active in the school community."

Madeloni said she hopes that as MTA members organize and use their collective power in alliance with parents and the community, "we should not rely on foundations for this type of funding, but have the public funding to initiate, support and sustain grassroots efforts to give every student in Massachusetts a high-quality education and every educator the autonomy and respect to lead the way in creating great schools."

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Summit helps members focus on 'big issues'

Continued from Page 9

She said the team would ask members to define those "big issues," then follow up with a survey as they decide how to approach the School Committee.

The team is unsure whether it will pursue open bargaining this time, she said, but the summit "brought back some enthusiasm" for the bargaining

process. "We're excited about that," she said.

Participants at the summit also got a surprise visit from presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, who stopped by on his way to a rally in the city. Sanders lauded the educators, calling them "the heroes and heroines of America today, with an enormously difficult but enormously important job."

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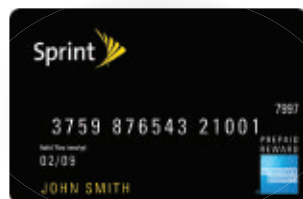
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Obituaries

Marion Bothwell, 94, of Newburyport. Was a career educator who had taught at Byfield Middle School and Malden Junior High School. Oct. 5.

Madeleine "Maddie" I. Boucher, 75, of Frostproof, Florida, formerly of Athol. Taught first grade in Gardner for 38 years. Oct. 3.

Joseph P. Clisham, 86, of Clinton. Was a mathematics teacher at Classical and Doherty high schools in Worcester

for 40 years, retiring in 1992. Oct. 16.

Francis A. Colosi, 90, of Marshfield, formerly of Randolph. Was an educator and administrator in the Randolph Public Schools for more than 40 years. Was active in the development of several school programs in Randolph and was involved in developing the Blue Hills Regional Technical School in Canton. Aug. 25.

Paul J. Corcoran, 76, of Lancaster. Began his teaching career

at Hudson High School and was an industrial arts teacher for nearly 30 years until his retirement. Sept. 27.

Diana C. Crooks, 74, of Bellingham. Was an elementary school teacher in Randolph for five years and in Easton for 33 years. Sept. 16.

Jeremy Eschelbacher, 44, of Berlin. Was a physics teacher in the science and technology department at Grafton High School. Aug. 17.

Anne G. Kivlan, 75, of Raynham.

Was a reading specialist for the Brockton Public Schools for 38 years. Sept. 2.

Mario Marchisio, 93, of West Boylston. Was the varsity football coach at Shrewsbury High School for 21 years. Aug. 19.

Joseph Marino, of West Roxbury. Was an elementary school teacher for the town of Needham for 35 years. May 27.

Kathleen Palli, 64, of Bellingham. Taught in the history and gifted and talented programs at Franklin High School for 34 years, retiring in 2007. Aug. 10.

Robert C. Powers, 85, of East Walpole. Served as the principal of Blackstone Millville Regional High School and retired in 1997 after 40 years in education. Aug. 10.

Jayne Shindler, 78, of Arden, N.C., formerly of Springfield. Taught third grade in Hampden for 20 years. May 22.

Emily Zarnoch, of Quincy. Was a teacher for Quincy Public Schools and was about to start teaching at Central Middle School. Aug. 4.

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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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MTA beats signature goal for tax initiative

By Laura Barrett

By mid-November, the MTA and other members of the Raise Up Massachusetts coalition had collected more than enough signatures to qualify a proposed constitutional amendment for the ballot.

The amendment would raise about \$1.5 billion annually for public education and transportation.

The coalition as a whole had amassed more than 150,000 signatures as of Nov. 16. More than 29,000 of them were collected by MTA members.

“The MTA committed to collecting 20,000, and we exceeded that goal,” said MTA President Barbara Madeloni. “This shows what we can do when we join in collective action as a union and as a member of a progressive coalition. Members understand that we need more resources for our students, our schools and our communities.”

The total number of raw signatures collected is far more than the 64,750 certified signatures that must be submitted to the secretary of state’s office by Dec. 2 to set the wheels in motion to get the amendment on the 2018 ballot.

If passed, the amendment would raise new revenues through a 4 percent additional tax on annual income over \$1 million. That threshold would be adjusted for inflation in the future.

News of the successful signature drive came just weeks after the Foundation Budget Review Commission concluded that the state is underfunding public schools by roughly \$500 million a year.

Cindy Tranfaglia, a building representative and a history teacher at Revere High School, was one of hundreds of local activists who found it easy to persuade members to sign.

“Just about everyone signed, even the principal. I only had one person who said, ‘I have to think about it and will get back to you later,’” Tranfaglia said.

Tranfaglia added that petitioners made it clear in at least one case that signing would help get the initiative before voters rather than serve as a guarantee of support for the amendment itself.



The initiative clearly spells out that the money must be spent for “quality public education and affordable public colleges and universities, and for the repair and maintenance of roads, bridges and public transportation.”

Once certified, the initiative must be approved by at least 50 of the state’s 200 senators and representatives in two consecutive joint legislative sessions. Supporters will have almost three years to make the case for the plan and to dispel several myths.

One is that Massachusetts is a “tax-and-spend” state.

Reporter Evan Horowitz set the record straight on that issue in a Nov. 4 *Boston Globe* article titled “‘Taxachusetts’ is a lie. Here’s why.”

Horowitz concluded, “Massachusetts may be a very liberal state, but it hardly takes a tax-and-spend approach to governance. Taxes are low, compared to other states, and government spending is even lower.”

Spending here is particularly low in two areas that would benefit from the Raise Up amendment.

“Relative to the size of our economy, the Bay State ranks dead last in spending for highways, roads, and bridges, and comes out among the bottom 10 in terms of higher education spending,” Horowitz wrote.

He noted that Massachusetts ranks 24th out of the 50 states in the share of income paid for all state and local taxes combined — mainly income, sales and property taxes. In New England, only New Hampshire residents pay a smaller share.

Creating a higher rate for the very wealthy requires a constitutional amendment because the Massachusetts Constitution requires a flat tax rate on earnings. Previous attempts to amend that requirement have failed, mainly because they appeared to give too much discretion to the Legislature to raise rates on middle-income residents.

The Raise Up proposal differs from the earlier ones because it allows just one higher bracket affecting only the very wealthiest taxpayers. A person making up to \$1 million a year would not pay any more. The new rate would only affect annual income over \$1 million.

The initiative also clearly spells out that the money must be spent for “quality public education and affordable public colleges and universities, and for the repair and maintenance of roads, bridges and public transportation.”

“The 1 percenters have gotten richer and richer while the rest are falling behind and experiencing profound economic vulnerability,” Madeloni said. “We now have a great opportunity to make the tax system fairer while raising funds to improve our schools and make our public higher education system more affordable.

“This is a great start to the campaign,” she said. “I look forward to members continuing to bring their energy and experience throughout the legislative process and the ballot campaign itself.”

For more information and updates, please visit www.massteacher.org/revenue or www.raiseupma.org.

THE MTA Advantage

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Bundle and save with Verizon FiOS

You can now get the Verizon features you want with **Verizon FiOS** — from premium movies to blazing-fast Internet speeds and clear digital voice services.

Watch, play, stream, download and upload faster with FiOS. And when you purchase a new Verizon Double or Triple Play bundle, you can save up to \$120 per year!

The discount is applicable to **new** High Speed Internet (HSI) and FiOS bundles:

- ▶ The FiOS Double Play bundle consists of Internet and choice of TV or home phone.
- ▶ The HSI Double Play bundle consists of Internet and home phone.
- ▶ FiOS and HSI Triple Play bundles consist of Internet, TV and home phone.



The discount on a new Triple Play bundle is \$10 a month, or \$120 per year. A \$5-per-month (or \$60-per-year) discount is available on new Double Play bundles.

Best of all, this discount is on the best available Verizon bundle offer, so you can really save BIG!

New Verizon customers who purchase bundled service and current customers who purchase new Internet or TV service are eligible for the discount. The discount only applies to Double and Triple Play bundles. Bundles do not include wireless service.

Is FiOS not available in your area? Don't worry. Members can still receive the Verizon discount with Verizon HSI service and DirecTV.



This offer is available only in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, the District of Columbia, Virginia, Florida, Texas and California.

Visit www.mtabenefits.com to see details of the current offer and to participate in this program.

Protect your identity this holiday shopping season

The holiday season is also known as the season of giving. While you're out buying gifts and donating to others, it's important to not give your identity away in the process. Whether you're shopping online for the perfect gift for your sister, braving the "Black Friday" madness at stores to stock up on toys for the little ones or making a charitable donation, it's important to do so safely and securely.



MTA Benefits' identity theft provider, LifeLock, offers 10 tips to avoid becoming a victim of identity theft this holiday season.

1. Use only secure sites when shopping online

To make sure a site is secure, look for "https" rather than "http" in the Web address of the page on which you enter your credit card information. You can also look for an icon that shows a locked padlock at the bottom of the screen, which is another sign of a secure site.

2. Pay with credit or cash

In stores and online, pay with cash or a credit card rather than a debit card. When paying with cash, no personal data can be compromised. Credit cards are the next best alternative since they typically offer better ID theft protection than debit cards.

3. Be proactive

Copy both sides of your credit cards and keep the copies in a safe place at home. If your cards are stolen, you will be able to quickly contact your bank and put a "hold" on your cards.

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New Hearing Plan Benefit

Hearing loss develops slowly and can often go unnoticed for years.

One of the most important factors in correcting a hearing problem is pinpointing the degree of *auditory deprivation* and determining how well the brain is able to understand sounds when it receives them.

When hearing loss prevents some sounds from reaching the brain over an extended period, the brain literally “forgets” how to recognize the meaning of those sounds and tries to fill in the blanks. With hearing deprivation, an individual may misunderstand the word “shoe” for “stew,” for instance, even with the assistance of the best hearing aids in the world.

In severe cases, “shoe” may sound like “pilgrim.” The longer hearing loss progresses without correction, the less improvement an individual will experience from hearing aids. The loss is most often permanent.

In some cases, however, wearing properly fitted hearing aids consistently improves understanding to a small degree. Over several weeks to a few months, the brain may be able to relearn some of the sounds it has been missing. In most cases, consistent use can help slow the damage.

Like regular exercise for any other part of the body, exercising your ears and brain keeps them functioning better for a longer period. The greatest benefit is provided when an individual with hearing loss in both ears wears two aids.

It bears repeating: The longer a loss goes untreated, the more permanent damage there is.

Now, members have a great reason to schedule a screening. MTA Benefits has a new hearing plan with **Hear In America**, whose mission is to make it easy for members to get high-quality hearing



care and the best value on hearing aid purchases and service through a nationwide network of hearing centers.

MTA members not only receive discounts of up to 70 percent on hearing aids, they also receive free annual screenings, a three-year repair warranty, lifetime clean-and-check office service and three years' worth of batteries. All of this can add up to thousands of dollars in savings. Members of your extended family are also eligible for this program.

Don't put off a hearing screening. Call 800.286.6149 today for more information or to register for the Hear In America program.

Glasses for \$29?



Five things you should know about Optical Academy:

1. The mobile optical shop will come to your local to make it **easy and convenient** for members to get eyewear, contact lenses and eye exams.
2. Optical Academy's eyewear is a **fraction of the usual cost**.
 - Single lens with frames – \$29; average retail starts at \$119
 - Progressives (no-line bifocals) – \$60; average retail starts at \$200
 - Bifocals (with line) – \$20; average retail starts at \$89.
3. If your prescription is out of date, you can get an eye exam for just \$30.
4. The on-site shop includes digital eye exam equipment, a large display of frames and accessories and a lab area.
5. Your **family members** can take advantage of this benefit!

**Members can save
hundreds of dollars!**

The on-site shop can be scheduled during the week or on weekends, after school or in the evening. A local must have **50 members/family members preregistered for an eye exam** in order to hold the on-site event.

Reserve your date today! Call Abby Ayoub at 800.530.2730 or e-mail her at Abby@optical-academy.com with the date, time (after school, in the evening or Saturday) and location you want.



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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

The Gift Guide

Finding the perfect gifts for your family members, friends and co-workers can be a difficult task — and often an expensive one. Here are a few ideas that not only make great gifts, but save you money.

One of the most popular programs among MTA members, **PayCheck Direct** allows you to purchase what you want now and pay for it over a 12-month period, interest-free and with no credit check. This is a great option for bigger-ticket items for which you'd like to spread out payments. Thousands of name-brand products can be found in this online store.

Gift options run the gamut, from storage and organizing solutions to board games and toys, laptops and big-screen TVs. Marmot outerwear and FRYE boots will keep the entire family warm this winter, and a new Keurig machine will make sure your hot chocolate is ready after a day of playing in the snow. Choose your payment schedule, whether once or twice per month. Payments are deducted automatically from your checking account.

A magazine subscription is the perfect stocking stuffer or gift for a co-worker. No matter what his or her hobbies or interests may be, the **MTA Magazine Service** offers hundreds of printed and digital options. Choose from a variety of titles including *ESPN*, *GQ*, *HGTV*, *O*, *The Oprah Magazine*, *Food Network*, *Rolling Stone*, *Seventeen*, *National Geographic Kids* and *American Girl*. With the MTA Magazine Service price guarantee, you'll also know you're getting the best publisher-authorized deal possible.

If you browse through the Access website, you'll find incredible deals and gift ideas. Do you know someone who could use some R&R? Purchase a **SpaFinder Wellness 365** gift card that can be used at thousands of locations across the country and you'll save 10 percent on your order. Movie lovers will enjoy a **Fandango** gift card, and they can choose the theater at which they'd like to redeem it. MTA members save 10 percent.



Samsonite luggage makes a great gift for the traveler on your list, and you'll save 15 percent in stores using the Access program. Calendars are fun for all ages and at **Calendars.com** there is something for everyone. Use the coupon above to get 10 percent off any order or visit the Access website, where you'll find a coupon for 20 percent off a \$50 purchase.

Browse your copy of the 2015-16 MTA Benefits & Discount Directory and you'll discover many more gift ideas. Do you prefer to give an experience



rather than a physical gift? **LEGOLAND® Discovery Center Boston** offers MTA members \$5 off each full-price ticket. If you know someone who loves ballet, purchase tickets to the **Boston Ballet's** performance of *The Nutcracker*, running through Dec. 31, and save \$10 per ticket. **The Bose® Corporation** will improve sound throughout your home with incredible products for your home theater — docking speakers, headphones and more. Give **Bose®** a call and mention your MTA membership for a discount!

Holiday Travel

Do you have plans to travel this holiday season?

Be sure to check out the great discounts available to you before finalizing your trip. Save 20 percent on **car rentals** through Avis, Budget, Hertz and others. **Orlando Member Discounts**, formerly Orlando Vacation, will help you save on hotels, condos or vacation homes. You can also get discounts on tickets to attractions such as Disney World, Universal Studios, Busch Gardens and the Kennedy Space Center. Transportation to and from the airport doesn't have to drain your wallet. **SuperShuttle** offers a 10 percent discount that can be redeemed using the Access discount program.

If you like cold weather, Access offers more than 100 discounts at ski areas across the country. In the *MTA Benefits & Discount Directory*, you'll find even more savings at locations in the Northeast, including Bretton Woods, Black Mountain, Killington Resort, Lost Valley, Okemo Mountain, Pats Peak and more!



For a full list of discounts, visit www.mtabenefits.com.

Prepare for the winter heating season



The past two winters have been the coldest in 20 years. That means you've been spending more to heat your home. While it's hard to predict what the approaching winter will bring, **Heat USA** has some tips on ways to save you money.

First, lower your thermostat 10 degrees at night. Lowering the temperature 10 degrees for eight hours can save you 10 percent to 15 percent on your bill.

Second, make strategic use of your ceiling fans. You can achieve better air flow throughout your house and use less heat. Turning on the fan

clockwise at a low setting will gently push the hot air down, keeping your rooms warmer during cold months.

Third, inspect your windows and doors. This is where the majority of heat loss occurs. Check around the edges of both windows and doors — even if they are new — for gaps and holes that could cause drafts. Replace worn weatherstripping on doors, and caulk windows to ensure a good seal. These are inexpensive fixes that can save you hundreds of dollars. And don't overlook electrical outlets. Insulation is not usually placed around them, so you can purchase foam gaskets to put behind wall plates for added warmth.

Last but not least, make sure your heating system has had its annual cleaning and tune-up to be certain it's running efficiently.

Heat USA, MTA's heating oil program partner, is the largest heating oil purchasing program

in the United States. It serves more than 80,000 members in 12 states and has more than 175 suppliers.

For 30 years, Heat USA has used the buying power of its membership to negotiate superior terms and conditions from local oil suppliers. By offering to bring significant new business to a supplier, Heat USA is able to secure benefits for its members that they wouldn't be able to negotiate on their own.

The average annual savings for an MTA member is **\$300 to \$500**. This includes the benefit of a **free full-service contract** offered by most of the suppliers in the Heat USA network.

To view a map of the areas covered by suppliers — and for more details on the special benefits offered to MTA members — visit www.heatusa.com/mta or call 888.432.8872.

Protect your identity this holiday shopping season

Continued from page 1

4. Keep money and credit cards in a safe place

Beware of pickpockets, especially in crowded malls and when you face major distractions, such as when your children are being photographed with Santa.

5. Don't leave your ID in your car when shopping

Parking lots are popular spots for identity thieves looking for personal information. Thieves will keep an eye out for exactly when you arrive and strike early, knowing that you are unlikely to return to your car anytime soon.

6. Be wary of people looking over your shoulder

Identity thieves have been known to snap photos, usually using their smartphones, of shoppers' credit cards. That person waiting behind you in line may look like he or she is texting, but without realizing it, you might be offering him or her a glimpse of your credit card information — and the thief is making a photo record.

7. Be sure your charitable donations go to legitimate organizations

Be careful of phishing scams and unofficial websites when making charitable donations this holiday season. When in doubt, look up the organization through the Better Business Bureau or through a respected list of nonprofits before contributing.

8. Never shop through e-mail

E-mail is an easy way for hackers to intercept your personal information. Often, e-mails targeting shoppers are not legitimate.

9. Check your statements twice

Especially during the holiday season, check your credit card statements to be sure all of your purchases are accurately recorded. Anything that looks suspicious could be a red flag indicating that your personal data has been compromised.

10. Write "Check Photo ID" on the back of your credit cards

This is just another measure to ensure that no one will use your credit card in a store. Asking the cashier to check the card against your photo ID adds another layer of protection.

Members receive a 10 percent discount and 30 days of free membership when they purchase LifeLock. For more information, click "Benefits" and look for Identity Theft Protection under the Financial category on the mtabenefits.com website.

