

MTA Today

A publication of the Massachusetts Teachers Association

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COALITION FIGHTS CHARTER CAP LIFT



**SAVE OUR
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS**

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Recognizing All-Star Educators

Holyoke High School Music Director Mark Todd was chosen to be an MTA Red Sox Most Valuable Educator last season. Todd was honored on the field during Red Sox Mascot Day at Fenway Park. Although the MTA Red Sox Reading Game has been discontinued this year, the Most Valuable Educator program is in full swing. To nominate a public school educator, another school worker or a volunteer to be an MTA Red Sox Most Valuable Educator, send an essay of up to 400 words to Most Valuable Educator, c/o Red Sox Community Relations, 4 Yawkey Way, Boston MA 02215. MVE nominations must be postmarked by June 30.

Photo courtesy of the Boston Red Sox

MTA Today

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This edition of MTA Today also includes
the Spring 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 Save Our Public Schools campaign is underway, with the MTA and other coalition members delivering the message that lifting the cap on charter schools would lead to the loss of billions of dollars in funding for public education.



Juan Cofield, president of the New England Area Conference of the NAACP, spoke at the launch of the campaign on March 16 outside the State House. Coverage begins on Page 6. Meanwhile, educators are holding forums on the right to opt students out of high-stakes standardized tests. A story on the forums appears on Page 3. This edition of MTA Today also includes a section on the upcoming Annual Meeting of Delegates, beginning on Page 21.

Cover photo by Eric Haynes
Cover design by Joshua Degregorio

Quote-Unquote

"Allowing additional charter school growth every year, without any end, will result in significant and irreparable harm to our public schools and the students who rely on them."

— Juan Cofield, president of the New England Area Conference of the NAACP, speaking against a ballot initiative that would lift the charter school cap

Forums focus on right to opt out

By Scott McLennan

Even parents who are active in their local schools often don't know that it is their right to opt their children out of high-stakes standardized tests such as the MCAS and PARCC exams.

But what many parents do know — and are growing increasingly frustrated about — is how such tests negatively affect their children.

This spring, the MTA's Education Policy and Practice Committee has been helping locals organize community forums so that parents and educators can share their stories and learn how to refuse standardized tests.

Members of the committee recently worked with Hull Teachers Association activist Deb McCarthy to organize a forum in Hingham at which parents exchanged emotionally charged stories and educators lamented the way standardized testing has co-opted learning. Participants also received samples of opt-out letters that parents can send to school administrators.

Alain Jehlen of Citizens for Public Schools and Monty Neill, executive director of FairTest, attended the forum on April 5 and told the audience that despite what some school districts claim, students are not required by the state to take the MCAS, PARCC or the forthcoming "MCAS 2.0"; that students won't be penalized for opting out; and that schools will not lose funding if students opt out.

Nationally, standardized testing in English language arts and math is coming under intense scrutiny, with parents and educators questioning the necessity and accuracy of the tests in determining how well students and their schools are performing.

At the Hingham forum, a group of mothers from Hull described how their children grew more sullen — and disengaged about school — once standardized testing became part of their academic lives.

One mother burst into tears when she described how her son, now 20, was a bright student who felt like a failure because he did not do well on the MCAS.

"I can't opt out anymore, but I'm here to tell you I support you," she said.

Educators at the event took issue with standardized testing's impact on what happens in the classroom. Not only do the tests drain too much time from learning, they said, but they have an insidious side effect: making students feel that they must always pursue the one right answer.

"Kids want that one definitive answer to a problem, and they are not as willing to be creative and look at all possible answers," said June Gustafson, vice president of the Hingham Education Association. "That's very sad for me as an educator."

Norton special education teacher Jennifer Skowronek was glad to see an opt-out forum in her district. She views the issue from the perspective of both a concerned teacher and a parent.



Photo by Scott McLennan

During a recent forum in Hingham, educators and parents discussed their concerns about the negative effects that high-stakes standardized tests are having on students.

'People look at data and think they are getting a picture of the kid, and that's not an accurate depiction at all of that student.'

— Teacher Jennifer Skowronek

"I left corporate America so I didn't have to look at data all day," said Skowronek, who began teaching eight years ago. "People look at data and think they are getting a picture of the kid, and that's not an accurate depiction at all of that student."

Skowronek decided she did not want to subject her daughter, a fourth-grader in Raynham, to such testing, but she didn't know that refusing the tests was an option until she heard about it through the MTA.

"My daughter's teachers know her better than the test does," Skowronek said.

At last year's Annual Meeting, delegates voted to support the right of parents to opt their children out of high-stakes standardized testing and urged the MTA to assist locals that want to organize forums.

Dan Clawson, a member of the Education Policy and Practice Committee, emphasized the importance of publicly sharing the decision to opt out.

"You want to protect your kid, and at the same time it's sending an important message," he said. "When you discuss this decision, others feel comfortable doing it."

When Skowronek discussed her own decision on a Facebook group page of Raynham parents, others followed suit, and more parents began to consider removing their children from testing.

Across the state, the opt-out movement is spreading in the form of resolutions passed

by school committees, city councils and other municipal bodies.

The resolutions pledge support for parents and students who refuse testing, support for educators who speak out against standardized testing, and in some cases supporting MTA-backed legislation in favor of a moratorium on the high-stakes uses of testing.

On March 10, the New Salem/Wendell School Committee unanimously passed a resolution supporting parents who opt their children out of PARCC tests this spring.

The resolution also encourages teachers and staff members to let parents know they have the choice of opting out.

But in other places, parents and educators have been subjected to misinformation. In Framingham, for example, the school district circulated a press release stating that students are required to participate in standardized testing.

Framingham Teachers Association Co-President Sarah McKeon told the School Committee that it was wrong for parents to be told their children must take the tests and affirmed the FTA's role in supporting parents no matter which decision they make.

Bob Erlandsen, vice president of the Cohasset Teachers Association, told the participants at the Hingham forum that educators are not against accountability; they just want assessments that are meaningful.

"We'd love to see performance-based assessments created by teachers," he said. "That's not something easily standardized. But kids aren't big data."

For information on opting out of standardized tests, visit www.massteacher.org/optout.

Let's step up and win the charter fight

Has your school district cut the jobs of paraprofessionals? Do you have certified librarians in every school? Are your class sizes growing?

Are these cuts due to charter schools taking funds away from your district?

Do you know how much money your district is losing to charters?

Throughout Massachusetts, more than \$400 million is being drained from local public schools this year and given to charters, which serve only 4 percent of the students in our Commonwealth.

What does this mean to students, educators and our communities? Fewer education support professionals, the loss of librarians, larger class sizes and reduced access to a broad curriculum are just a few of the many impacts we hear about when we ask how the loss of funds affects our public school districts.



Barbara Madeloni
MTA President

As if this were not bad enough, proponents of a two-track system — led by Governor Charlie Baker and Secretary of Education James Peyser and funded by hedge fund managers — are looking to raise the cap on charters through a ballot initiative this November. If the proposal passes, as many as 12 new charters could be opened each year, drawing even more funds from public schools and destabilizing districts as further resources are removed.

The ballot question represents a profound threat to public education in Massachusetts. Across the country, in cities such as New Orleans, urban public education is already being undermined by charters.

If this ballot measure is approved, in a few short years the same thing could happen to public schools in our own urban centers. Meanwhile, suburban districts could be slowly bled of resources by “boutique” charter schools.

To learn more about the impact that charter schools are having on public education, please visit massteacher.org/charters. To see how much money Massachusetts school districts are losing, go to massteacher.org/chartermap.

We must defeat this ballot initiative in order to preserve public education in Massachusetts. We can win if we educate ourselves, reach out to parents and our communities, and work together to demand that we keep the cap on charters and instead focus our attention as a Commonwealth on fully funding public schools.

As we move forward with this campaign, there are a few things to keep in mind.

First, we know that the public respects the voices of educators — and the voice of the MTA. Let's raise our voices in social media, through letters to the editor, and in conversations with family members, friends and parents.

Second, our success in this campaign will be built on the strength of our coalitions. The fight to fully fund public education is one that we share with parents, students, school committees and superintendents. Our sisters and brothers in labor want to preserve public schools and the unions that support them. In this campaign, we will build strength in our locals and then extend our solidarity to the communities in which we live and teach.

Third, while the charter proponents are well-funded and have people in power on their side — from the governor to the speaker of the House to the opinion writers of *The Boston Globe* — we have something much more powerful: our numbers, our relationships and our collective action. We can no longer respond to their threats with fear; rather, we must respond with strength, conviction and a well-organized strategy to win back public education. As is the case with every mandate and threat coming

down on us, their assault can be defeated by our ability to organize and act together.

Fourth, the assault we are under from charter proponents is part of a broader attack on public education and our unions. High-stakes testing is a weapon in this nefarious campaign, as it is used to “prove” that schools are failing and open the door to charters. Profound underfunding weakens our public education system and invites parents to look for more well-resourced options — even if those resources are stolen from the very schools that the child has just left. Our organizing to fight high-stakes testing, including the growing opt-out movement, is a tool in the effort to stop the expansion of charters. The Fair Share Amendment, if successful, will allow for adequately funding public education and push back against the austerity under which we all have been living.

But just as the assaults are broad, national and multifaceted, so is the organized resistance. We have allies from Hawaii to Maine, from Washington to Florida. More important, we have allies in our schools, in our communities and in the State House.

In the last year, your efforts have shifted the conversation about charter schools. More and more people understand that charters siphon off vital funds, harm our public schools, and do not serve students with the greatest needs.

In the months ahead, we have more to do to educate voters and expose the myths of charter schools. We will need you — trusted, committed educators — to tell the story of why we need to stop the expansion of charters and instead deepen our commitment to public education.

I will be calling on you. Your colleagues will be calling on you. Our allies in the Save Our Public Schools coalition will be calling on you. Let's step up and win this one for the students and communities of Massachusetts, for the birthplace of free universal public education.

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

Barbara

Letters to the Editor

The MTA should act now to organize charter schools

To the Editor:

I resolutely support everything that Brian Fitzgerald stated in his letter to the editor in the Winter edition of *MTA Today*.

Any group can meet. Any meeting can generate a vote. However, if no constructive action follows, what was the point of meeting and voting?

It is intolerable and unconscionable for the MTA

to have effectively turned its back on educators in charter schools.

Mr. Fitzgerald has asked the MTA to step forward, open its doors to membership for charter school educators and hence impede charter profiteers.

I am firmly in favor of what he has said and the position he has advocated.

MTA: Act now!

Dr. Gregory K. Maravelas
MTA Retired

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.

ESPs focus on ties with communities

'We are essential to the lives of our students,' award winner tells audience

By Jean Conley

Building relationships among educators, students, families and communities was a strong thread that ran through the 2016 MTA ESP Conference.

The idea is that by creating strong relationships, educators will be at the center of decisions about the future of Massachusetts public schools, colleges and universities.

The conference, held April 8 and 9, drew hundreds of education support professionals from across Massachusetts to the Sea Crest Beach Resort in Falmouth.

Activism was clearly on the minds of many ESPs as they told their stories about how charter school tuition is draining funds from their districts. Many participants wore Save Our Public Schools stickers throughout the conference. Workshops addressing a wide range of interests — from using technology to finding effective strategies to change behavior in the classroom — drew large crowds.

Saul Ramos, a paraprofessional in the Worcester Public Schools for the past 17 years, was named the 2016 ESP of the Year.

His first job as an ESP was serving as a one-to-one assistant to a kindergarten student who was visually impaired. To give his student every chance to succeed, Ramos learned Braille on his own, which allowed him to transcribe lesson plans and his student's work. He worked with that same student from 1999 until the student graduated from Worcester Technical High School in 2011.

As Ramos accepted the award on Friday evening, he expressed his gratitude to his mother, other family members and friends who attended the dinner, and he touched on the many relationships that have guided him personally and professionally.

"We are essential to the lives of our students," he told his fellow ESPs. "We change lives, and we save lives. We do it for the love of it."

Ramos stressed the need for educators to be active at the local, state and national levels. "We need to put our voices in the room and make sure that we are listened to," he said.

He noted the challenges that ESPs routinely face, such as "a lack of professional development opportunities and the lack of a living wage, requiring many of us to work a second or third job to support our families."

"Some of us even qualify for government assistance," he continued. "That should not be happening."

MTA President Barbara Madeloni pointed to the relationships that ESPs have built with their students, parents and communities, and she urged participants to have a say in the political decisions that affect them directly.



Workshops at the MTA ESP Conference covered a wide range of topics. Above, educators participated in a session about building effective teams. At left, ESP of the Year Saul Ramos, a paraprofessional in the Worcester Public Schools, stressed the need for educators to be active at the local, state and national levels. "We need to put our voices in the room and make sure that we are listened to," Ramos said. The conference, held at the Sea Crest Beach Resort in Falmouth, drew a large crowd of ESPs from across the state.

Photos by Jean Conley

She reminded participants that relationships will be crucial as the Save Our Public Schools coalition, of which the MTA is a member, organizes to fight a ballot question in November that would lift the cap on Commonwealth charter schools.

Madeloni urged ESPs to "access the relationships you have with your students, with parents and your communities."

"You're as close to students as anyone can be," she said. "Talk to people about why public education matters. It is up to us to use our relationships to knit together the fabric of a movement so that we can beat back those who are looking to undermine and destroy public education through this ballot initiative."

MTA Vice President Janet Anderson recounted a personal story that reflected the importance of the ties that bind ESPs and their students.

When she was a relatively new teacher, Anderson said, a paraprofessional in her Taunton classroom was troubled that a child in the class had come to school feeling ill for a few days.

Others, including the child's mother, were unaware just how sick the child really was. The

paraprofessional prevailed upon Anderson to insist that the child be seen by a doctor. In the end, she said, the paraprofessional may have been responsible for saving the child's life.

"How is it that others missed just how sick the child was?" she asked.

"We may not all save a life," she said, "but everybody in this room impacts students every single day. You make their immediate lives better. You make their future lives better."

A number of ESPs took time out between workshops to talk on videotape about the damage being done to their districts by Commonwealth charter schools.

Donna Beeler, who works with special needs students at Haverhill High School, said her district loses close to \$3 million a year to charters. She would like to see that money spent to replace decades-old textbooks and to fix school building issues that can cause health problems for students.

"If we want education that's up to date, we need up-to-date funding," she said.

Please turn to **ESPs**/Page 17

Save Our Public Schools coalition fights effort to lift cap on charters

By Laura Barrett

Retired Chicopee teacher Diane Jensen-Olszewski is deeply concerned about the impact of charter schools on early education and other services in districts such as hers.

Chicopee is losing more than \$1.7 million to charters this year.

“I think about how a lot of communities don’t have full-day kindergarten, so parents have to pay for the other half of the day,” Jensen-Olszewski said during an interview at a recent MTA event. “Schools lose programs. They lose wraparound services. If we had more money staying in the public school system, we could give all kids a really good start.”

Jensen-Olszewski captured why a growing number of parents, educators and other residents of communities across Massachusetts are pushing back against the latest attempts to greatly expand the number of privately run, publicly funded charter schools that are not accountable to the local taxpayers who are required to pay for them.

Seeking to lift the cap, the pro-charter forces have filed a lawsuit, are pushing legislation and have collected signatures for a ballot initiative. It is likely the issue will be resolved at the ballot box in November.

Charters are already draining more than \$400 million from public schools this year, and lifting the cap would cause that number to skyrocket.

The MTA has joined the Save Our Public Schools campaign, a coalition of education, parent and community groups fighting the ballot initiative. If passed, the measure could eventually lead to the loss of billions of dollars in public school funding to charters, along with thousands of public school educators’ jobs. The initiative would:

- Allow the state to approve 12 new charter schools, enrolling up to 1 percent of the school-age population, every year *forever*. If fully implemented, that would mean 9,500 students could move from public to charter schools each year, leading to the annual loss of an estimated 700 unionized public school jobs.

- Eliminate current limits on how much money any one school district could lose to charter schools. Entire districts could be turned over to charter operators in a single year.

Even Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, a charter school supporter, said of the ballot question, “It would wreak havoc on municipal finances, undermining our ability to support either new or existing schools in Boston.”

Walsh has good reason to be concerned. Moody’s Investors Service noted in 2013: “Charter schools can pull students and revenues away from districts faster than the districts can reduce their costs. As some of these districts trim costs to balance out declining revenues, cuts in programs and services will further



Photo by Eric Haynes

Franklin Education Association President Donna Grady spoke during the launch of the Save Our Public Schools campaign on March 16. Worcester City Councilor Khrystian E. King, center, and Marlena Rose, coordinator for the Boston Education Justice Alliance, at right in the front row, also addressed the crowd.

drive students to seek alternative institutions, including charter schools.”

It’s a downward spiral that the charter industry promotes by frequently referring to “failing” public schools. The Save Our Public Schools campaign is thus not only fighting the cap lift, but also the pernicious narrative that schools run by private, corporate-style boards and staffed by employees at will who don’t have to be licensed are better able to serve the interests of low-income children than are public schools.

Paid for by communities

The debate in Massachusetts centers on Commonwealth charter schools, the type of charters approved and overseen by the state but paid for by the communities whose students attend them. They operate free of many state and school district regulations, and their employees do not have rights and benefits under the district’s collective bargaining agreement.

In 1993, the first 25 Commonwealth charters were allowed under the omnibus Education Reform Act. Their primary purpose was to be laboratories of innovation. Four years later, the cap was raised to 37. Three years after that, it climbed to 72.

In 2010, the Legislature passed another expansion

bill: Charter schools opened in the lowest-performing districts don’t count against the cap of 72, and the amount of funding those districts can lose to charters was raised from 9 percent to 18 percent of district spending.

Just six years later, the charter industry is back again, demanding yet another “compromise” — essentially seeking no effective cap.

The members of the Save Our Public Schools campaign have said “enough.”

“Any cap lift portends the destabilization of public education in a profound way,” said MTA President Barbara Madeloni. “Charters are parallel school systems, using public funds for private interests. Public education is about every child — not a few. For the charter industry, ‘compromise’ means forcing us to agree to divert even more funds from our public schools by threatening to take the issue to the ballot. This year, we and our allies are saying, ‘We are done compromising. Let the voters decide.’ We think the voters, once educated, will be outraged by what charters are doing to public education in Massachusetts.”

Although charter schools currently enroll only about 4 percent of students statewide, their impact on cash-strapped districts can be substantial.

Continued on next page



Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association members were among those showing their solidarity with the Save Our Public Schools campaign at MTA's recent ESP Conference. In the top row, from left to right, are Janet Johnson, Marion Crouch and Diane Dixon. In the bottom row, from left to right, are Susan Jennings, Doreen Kelly and Barbara Fink. Signs and stickers promoting the campaign are beginning to circulate around the state.

Loss of funding and local control are key issues

Continued from previous page

"Our public schools are being starved of resources, and the expanding charter schools will leave us with less and less funding to improve education for all our students," said Donna Grady, a kindergarten teacher and president of the Franklin Education Association who spoke at the Save Our Public Schools campaign kickoff event on March 16. Franklin is losing \$4 million to charter schools this year.

In a letter to her state senator, Grady said that her district could use those funds to restore the librarians and paraprofessionals who have been cut and reduce class sizes, which exceed 30 students in some instances at the high school.

Even in communities not yet hit hard by charter schools, the threat is real.

"We can hardly afford to repair our own school buildings in Arlington," Maureen Crewe, the mother of four public school graduates, said during a community forum on March 23 that was organized by the MTA and Citizens for Public Schools. "Why should we lose money to charter schools?"

"It's very divisive to have two school systems going at once," Crewe added.

In a recent report, the Annenberg Institute for School Reform found that charter governance is modeled on private rather than public institutions, with 60 percent of the charter schools in Massachusetts lacking even a single parent on their boards of trustees.

In defending this practice, Dominic Slowey, spokesman for the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association, told *The Boston Globe* that some charters are concerned that parents may have "conflicts of interest" if their own children attend the schools. By contrast, having children in local public schools is seen as an asset — not a conflict of interest — for elected school committee members.

The loss of local control is particularly galling in Massachusetts, a state with a long and proud history

MTA legal brief calls claims of charter proponents "demonstrably false."

— See story on Page 20

of excellent public schools. The state often approves locating charter schools in communities over the objections of a majority of the local residents and elected officials.

Brockton is a case in point. Every School Committee member and city councilor, along with the entire legislative delegation, opposed a proposed charter school earlier this year. Hundreds of parents and educators came to a local public hearing, with opponents greatly outnumbering supporters. Nonetheless, the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted in February to approve the charter school, which means taxpayers in Brockton and nearby communities will have to foot the bill at the expense of their own public schools.

"This is an outrageous undermining of democracy," Madeloni said. "We have town meeting members who painstakingly debate and vote on every line item in their local budgets because they care deeply about the services their tax dollars are paying for. And yet the state can just come in and say, in effect, 'We don't care if this forces you to close one of your local schools. We are approving a charter school for your community whether you want it or not.'"

A related problem is that charters do not serve all students. Unlike public schools, they are allowed to use enrollment strategies that enable them to serve fewer high-need students than their sending districts. One common practice is to suspend challenging students repeatedly for minor infractions until frustrated parents transfer them to a district public school.

Any legislation that would raise the cap would "subject thousands more children, and their parents,

to a system that purposely shames, blames and pushes out children," said Marlena Rose, a Boston parent who spoke at the campaign kickoff event.

The result of all this? Public schools have fewer resources to educate a higher-need population. Those resources are already stretched thin. The bipartisan Foundation Budget Review Commission recently found that public schools are already underfunded by \$1 billion a year.

Grassroots campaign underway

MTA members are critical players in the grassroots campaign that is now underway — first to stop a cap lift in the Legislature and then to defeat the ballot question.

Informing the public is essential. While many voters are initially inclined to support expanding the number of charters, a large percentage change their minds when they learn that these schools take away millions of dollars from local public schools and are not accountable to the communities that pay for them.

Among other activities, MTA members may be asked to contact their legislators again, urge their school committees to pass resolutions, explain the issue to local parent and civic organizations, send letters to their local newspapers and promote the pro-public-schools message through face-to-face conversations and social media.

Juan Cofield, president of the New England Area Conference of the NAACP and chair of the Save Our Public Schools campaign, disagrees with those who think they should support charters to help low-income minority students in other communities. He believes the best way forward lies in supporting the public schools that serve all students.

Speaking at the campaign kickoff event in March, Cofield concluded, "Allowing additional charter school growth every year, without any end, will result in significant and irreparable harm to our public schools and the students who rely on them."

Higher ed members face similar issues

MTA conference focuses on 'Understanding Trends, Influencing Change'

By Scott McLennan

MTA's higher education associations — bargaining units with anywhere from a few dozen to a few thousand members and comprising faculty members, librarians, maintenance crews, campus support staff and administrators — are quite varied and diverse, but they face many of the same struggles and share many of the same concerns.

That quickly became evident during MTA's Higher Education Conference, "Understanding Trends, Influencing Change," on Friday and Saturday, April 15 and 16, at the Westin Waltham Boston Hotel.

The conference's opening session brought together leaders from numerous higher education locals representing faculty and staff at University of Massachusetts campuses, the nine state universities and 15 community colleges. Union leaders from UMass Dartmouth, where workers are affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts, were among the attendees.

The conversation centered on themes common to all public education campuses, such as diminishing respect for workers, the pressure to do more with less and the disturbing trend of turning educators' work into a flow of data points.

"The mentality at the top looks at students and workers as units," said Carl Ericson, co-chair of the Professional Staff Union at UMass Amherst.

Several association leaders at the session pointed out examples of the heavy hand that administrators are taking in campus governance. Massachusetts Community College Council President Joseph LeBlanc, whose statewide association recently ratified a contract marked by unusually contentious bargaining, told those who will be heading into contract renewals for the first time since Governor Charlie Baker took office: "Watch out. You're in for the fights of your lives."

Attacks on public higher education employees have taken many different forms, including tenure denials for faculty, privatization of services once provided by public employees, and increasing the amount that employees pay just to park at their workplaces.

Much attention at the conference centered on the problems of adjunct faculty members, who remain poorly paid and are often unable to receive benefits such as health care even as they teach an ever-increasing number of courses.

In her welcoming remarks, MTA President Barbara Madeloni said that diminished funding and an emphasis on gathering data are issues shared by higher education and public schools. She said the Every Student Succeeds Act, the federal education law passed last year, has a mechanism for the charter school model to enter public higher education via educator preparation programs.



Photos by Scott McLennan

In top photo, MTA higher education members listened intently during a workshop presented by Scott Jaschik, editor of *Inside Higher Ed*, that explored national policy trends facing colleges and universities. Above, from left to right, PSU Amherst Co-Chair Carl Ericson, MSP Amherst President Randall Phillis, CSU UMass Boston President Janelle Quarles and MTU UMass Lowell President Henry Cornu were among the participants in a leadership panel discussion.

MTA Vice President Janet Anderson also greeted the conference attendees. During her comments, Anderson thanked those in the audience for their service to students as well as to their fellow union members.

Henry Cornu, president of the Maintenance and Trades Union at UMass Lowell, succinctly expressed another shared view: "We have a lot of work ahead of us, but with solidarity among all the unions, we can win."

C.J. O'Donnell, president of the Massachusetts State College Association, pointed out successes by state university members in tempering managerial overreach.

Despite onerous proposals faced by the MCCC during bargaining, the final contract preserved many workers' rights and the academic freedoms that members were most concerned about, LeBlanc noted.

On Saturday, *Inside Higher Ed* Editor Scott Jaschik presented a workshop in which he offered an overview of what may be on the horizon for public colleges and universities, depending on who wins the upcoming presidential election, and he analyzed various "tuition-free" public college proposals being floated by the White House and some candidates.

While tuition-free community colleges have been successful in some places, such as Tennessee,

Jaschik said, the programs won't be successful without adequate funding from federal and state sources.

Other workshops examined trends in staffing and funding for public colleges and universities as well as the intersection of higher education policy and ESSA.

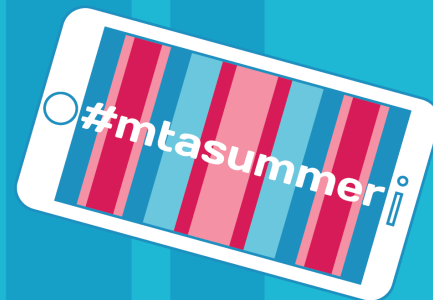
There were also sessions examining opportunities to learn about engaging in collective activity around political campaigns and mastering the art of Google Docs.

The conference ended with a question-and-answer session with Massachusetts Higher Education Commissioner Carlos Santiago and UMass Lowell Chancellor Jacquie Moloney. Incoming MCCC Vice President Jeff Seideman, an adjunct professor at Massachusetts Bay Community College, pressed Santiago to pledge his support for better pay and working conditions for adjunct faculty members.

Santiago stopped short of making promises but did say that public colleges and universities need to increase the number of full-time faculty members and improve conditions for adjuncts.

To see more photos of the conference, please visit <http://www.massteacher.org/higheredconf>.

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Agency fees exist to serve the common good

By Ira Fader

On March 29, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a 4-4 ruling in the closely watched *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, affirming the decision of the appeals court that heard the case.

Had the union lost, the impact on public-sector unions around the country would have been immediate and dire. The outcome of the *Friedrichs* case demonstrates one unassailable point: The Supreme Court has allowed itself to become a political arm of the federal government.

Friedrichs was an attack funded and litigated by a right-wing legal group on the NEA-affiliated CTA and, by extension, all public-sector unions. It sought to abolish “fair share fees,” the fees paid by those who object to and don’t want to be represented by unions. The legal issue concerned the First Amendment, but the political issue was the weakening of public-sector unions and the labor movement itself.

The MTA has very few “agency service fee payers” — those who pay fair share fees. Instead, educators sign up in overwhelming numbers because they are smart, politically sophisticated and recognize the power of joining a public-sector union.

Educators know the importance of professional collaboration, of working together to achieve better professional outcomes. The same principle applies in labor relations and politics: There is power in concerted activity and strength in numbers.

People join unions out of a mix of self-interest and group-interest. The rights and benefits your colleague has are the rights and benefits you have. Today you protect your colleague; tomorrow your colleague protects you.

Agency fee payers are not interested in group-interest. They represent themselves and no one else. Still, they reap the benefits of the group. Why? Because under the law, the union must provide often costly representation to them even though they pay only a percentage of dues — those covering the costs of collective representation.

It is not fair for agency fee payers to receive all the benefits of collective bargaining — such as

higher compensation, sick and other leave policies, job protection and all the privileges and protections found in bargaining agreements — without paying a penny toward the costs. Thus, they pay a fee for those services.

Take a look at your local contract. Those benefits and rights were not granted by state law or because of an employer’s generosity. They exist because MTA members negotiated

and perhaps fought for them.

The dues of all members pay for the MTA field representatives who assist locals in bargaining their contracts and in enforcing them through the grievance procedure. Dues pay for a staff of experienced lawyers who arbitrate disputes under those contracts or represent members in court and before state agencies. Dues pay for a staff of lobbyists and grassroots

organizers to represent members’ interests in the political arena. Dues pay for the MTA website and for *MTA Today*. And dues fund the activities of local associations and the NEA.

Like the California affiliate, the MTA is a powerful player on the state level. Many of the MTA’s preK-12 locals and higher education associations are powerful and engaged

Continued on next page

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DESE seeks to offer no-cost SEI courses

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has agreed — pending funding in the fiscal 2017 budget — to offer no-cost Sheltered English Immersion Endorsement courses to eligible core academic educators in the coming school year.

As many as 2,700 educators could be eligible for the no-cost courses in 2016-2017.

Under state regulations, the DESE required all core academic educators who taught at least one English language learner during their

district's cohort years to obtain the SEI Endorsement.

MTA President Barbara Madeloni and MTA staff members met with DESE officials last fall and again in early March about the fact that many educators, through no fault of their own, had not been able to enroll in the no-cost courses.

Some had signed up for courses that were subsequently canceled by the DESE.

Some were on waitlists but were not admitted to classes, some had been granted hardship extensions, and

some had an ELL student assigned to them for the first time after Jan. 15, when spring registration closed.

"At the meetings, we reminded DESE of its responsibility toward educators to provide these courses at no cost," Madeloni said. "We hope the department now sees offering these courses as its obligation."

The department will be contacting those eligible for the no-cost courses and providing registration instructions over the summer.

The MTA strongly advises educators to update their ELAR

profiles and include a physical home address and a valid e-mail address that they check frequently, rather than a district-based address.

In its meetings with the DESE, the MTA also focused on the need to make for-cost SEI courses available to those who are not eligible for the no-cost courses.

Currently, very few courses are being offered.

For SEI Endorsement updates and more information, please visit massteacher.org/ell.

Friedrichs case demonstrates why unions need to build their power

Continued from previous page
players in their own fields of political play.

But unions have political enemies that do not want them to be powerful. One of the most virulently anti-union legal outfits in the country — the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation — is litigating a *Friedrichs*-style case that is pending now in the Massachusetts appellate

The Supreme Court has become a branch of the government that too often rules in favor of the powerful political interests that appear before it.

courts. The foundation has openly acknowledged its intent to take the case to the Supreme Court. Now that *Friedrichs* is over, this case could be next.

This brings me back to where I started. The Supreme Court has become a branch of the government that too often rules in favor of the powerful political interests that appear

before it. In 2000, *Bush v. Gore* ended a democratic recount of ballots in one state and installed as president a candidate who had lost the popular vote.

In 2010, the *Citizens United* case unleashed corporate money into political campaigns. And *Friedrichs* was poised to end the ability of unions to protect the interests of millions of employees through participation in the political process.

No one — perhaps other than his colleagues on the Supreme Court — will ever really know how Justice Antonin Scalia would have voted in *Friedrichs*. His vote died with him. But there is no question that MTA members and public-sector workers were one vote away from having an aggressively conservative anti-union court diminish their economic and political strength.

If the Republicans in the Senate succeed in thwarting President Obama's nominee to replace Scalia, the next president will choose the ninth justice.

The MTA and other public-sector unions are now busy building their internal strength to make sure that the next president will appoint justices who will respect the people, unions and judicial precedent — and so that unions will be strong enough to withstand the threat that one judge, on one court, can present to the vitality and strength of public-sector unions.

Ira Fader is the general counsel of the Massachusetts Teachers Association. For information on MTA legal services, please visit massteacher.org/legal.

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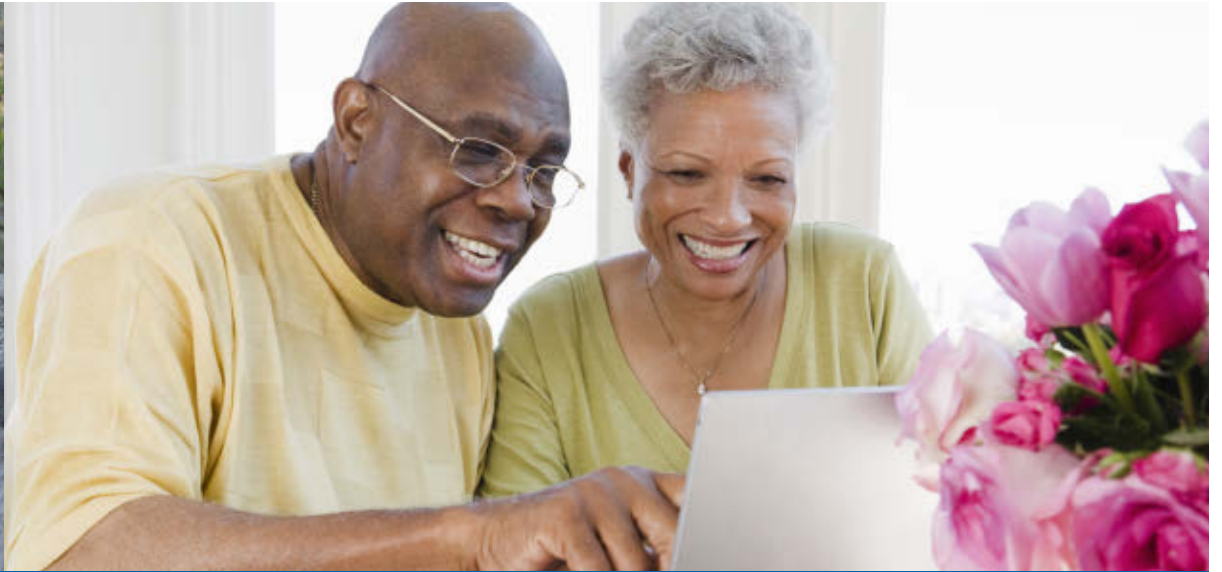
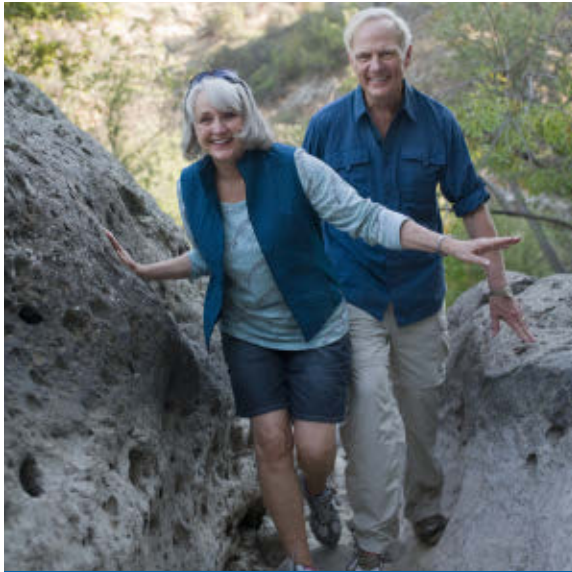
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Update effort helps locals strengthen communications

By Laura Barrett

MTA's locals are now engaged in a kind of spring cleaning, working to update member demographic and contact information as a necessary step in building stronger associations. The MTA asks locals twice each year to provide membership information. Somewhere along the line, some of the information can be lost or isn't updated. This year the MTA launched a membership

census drive, asking locals to make a concerted effort to collect accurate name, address, building, e-mail and phone information for each member. Locals are then entering that information directly into the shared union database or are sending it to the MTA for inputting so that the local, state and national associations all have the same accurate information. Good contact information for members is important at all levels. For example, local leaders need to keep members informed about contract

negotiations, upcoming events and local issues; MTA's Center for Education Policy and Practice sends out alerts about new policies, such as deadlines for signing up for RETELL courses; and MTA's elected leaders keep members informed about vital policy debates that require member input or action. Joseph Spremulli, president of the Norton Teachers Association, said his local took care of the request quickly.

Please turn to **Information**/Page 15



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To learn more about offering the plan to members in your local association, call Tom Colbert at 774.551.0013, ext. 101, or e-mail Thomas.colbert@voyafg.com.



Advocating for higher education

More than 300 students, faculty and staff members from public colleges and universities gathered on March 7 to meet with legislators at the State House to push for greater investment in public higher education. The annual Public Higher Education Advocacy Day touched on issues of quality and accessibility, as well as the problem of student debt.

Photo by Scott McLennan

Information update effort helps strengthen MTA locals

Continued from Page 13

"It was pretty simple," Spremulli said. Norton has a ratio of one building representative to every 15 to 17 members and has made an effort to pair members with the building reps they see most often.

"It worked well because we asked the building reps to talk to each of the members in person," Spremulli said. "Face-to-face contact gets a much better response than just sending out an e-mail. E-mails are too easy to delete."

In East Bridgewater, taking the census was a group effort. First, Treasurer Nick Davis cross-referenced town, district, local and MTA lists to come up with the cleanest list available. Members were asked to check their information against that list and

include any updates, such as new e-mail addresses. "It took a bit of coordination involving information from many places, but it got done," said East Bridgewater Education Association President Kathi Nickandros. "What made the difference was that we had a ratification meeting and almost everyone came to vote, so that's where we explained the process and got members to update their information."

"Good member information is the lifeblood of an organization such as ours," said MTA President Barbara Madeloni. "We felt a lot of urgency to get the best possible information about members this year when the *Friedrichs* agency fee case was looming. Even though that case has been resolved in our favor for the time being, the urgency remains.

"With good information we can communicate with members more effectively — both hearing from them and having them communicate with each other so they can develop shared understandings and plans of action," Madeloni added. "This is where it starts, but it grows from there."

Membership update forms can be found at massteacher.org/treasurers. The forms are available as printable PDFs and in an Excel format. They can be completed electronically and transmitted via e-mail to membership@massteacher.org. Members can also e-mail membership@massteacher.org or call 617.878.8118 to reach members of the MTA staff for assistance with membership and dues processing.

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ESPs urged to fight cap lift

Continued from Page 5

Christine Sheehan, who works at Braintree High School, said the \$200,000 lost to charters in her district this school year should have been spent upgrading technology and helping provide assistance to special needs students.

Donna Johnson is a member of the ESP Committee who lives in South Hadley, which is losing \$1 million this year.

She said that while she works in

public higher education, everyone involved in the profession at every level — and every person in the Commonwealth — should be involved in the fight against lifting the charter school cap.

“Students are our future,” Johnson said. “If we do not invest today, then what kind of a future do we all have?”

To see more photos from this year’s ESP Conference, visit massteacher.org/espconf.

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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.

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Obituaries

Caitlin M. Clavette, 35, of Arlington and Winchester. Was an art teacher in Milton elementary schools since 2011. Had previously taught at the Cushing Elementary School in Scituate. Feb. 12.

Eileen Rita Clifford, 84, of Worcester and Charlton. Was a reading and elementary classroom teacher in the Worcester Public Schools for 40 years. Feb. 4.

Marilyn A. Dowd, 61, of Ashland.

Taught for 30 years in the Dover-Sherborn Regional School District before retiring last spring. Dec. 15.

Nancy J. Finkelstein, 72, of Winthrop, formerly of Malden. Served as president of the MTA from 1984 to 1988. Was a French and English teacher at Lincoln Junior High School in Malden for 19 years and had served as president of the Malden Education Association. She later served as executive director of the Massachusetts

Cultural Alliance and worked as a science education specialist for the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. Feb. 29.

Carol A. Hennigan, 78, of Worcester. Was employed by the Educational Association of Worcester and then as a secretary for the MTA in the Auburn Regional Service Center for 13 years. Feb. 1.

Dr. Frank J. Hilferty, 95, of Medway. Taught science and

mathematics at Millis High School and Wilbraham Academy and at the University of Maine, Salem State University and Bridgewater State University, where he was a professor of botany and became head of his department and dean of the graduate school. Dec. 11.

Ann E. Kirk, 73, of Chelmsford. Taught in the Westford Public Schools for 39 years. Jan. 15.

Beverly A. Mahoney, 86, of Rockland. Was responsible for starting the cosmetology program at South Shore Vocational Technical High School in Hanover and taught there until her retirement. Feb. 10.

Mary J. Murphy, 69, of Worcester. Was an English teacher in the Worcester Public Schools for more than 35 years. March 21.

Shirley O'Donnell, 80, of Revere. Was an elementary teacher at the Lincoln School and the A.C. Whelan Elementary School in Revere for 38 years. Jan. 21.

Susan Offner, 71, of Sudbury. Was a high school biology teacher for 43 years in the Plymouth, Milton and Lexington school systems. Feb. 13.

Katherine Sakowicz, 71, of South Deerfield. Was a teacher in the Greenfield Public Schools for 23 years, retiring in 2001. Jan. 26.

Douglas H. Woodburn, 86, of Brewster. Taught in the Hopedale and Medfield Public Schools for 27 years. Was an active member of the Medfield Teachers Association and the Norfolk County Teachers Association. Jan. 12.

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Charter proponents' claims 'demonstrably false'

By Jean Conley

The MTA is filing an *amicus curiae* — or friend of the court — brief in a lawsuit that seeks to lift the cap on charter schools.

The lawsuit, brought by five unnamed Boston public school students identified only as “John and Jane Doe,” alleges that the students are being denied their constitutional right to a quality education because of the charter cap.

The MTA’s brief, which was being prepared for filing in Suffolk Superior Court as *MTA Today* went to press, underscores many of the arguments set out in a brief by Attorney General Maura Healey, who is representing the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in court. Those arguments strongly dispute the constitutional claim by the plaintiffs.

The attorney general has filed a motion to dismiss the suit.

The MTA brief expands on the arguments made by Healey’s office and debunks several assumptions made by the plaintiffs.

The brief states that the plaintiffs “neither consider nor address any alternative” to charter schools “despite widespread academic literature suggesting multiple strategies — such as recommending early childhood interventions, class-size reduction, and curricular and instructional interventions.”

It goes on to point out that several of the studies the plaintiffs use to “prove” charter success are in fact overstated. “They heavily rely on ‘independent research,’ most of which was financed by the Boston Foundation, an advocate for lifting the Commonwealth charter school cap,” the brief states.

The effect of draining money from district public schools where MTA members work is a central point in the MTA analysis.

“Each student who enrolls in a charter school removes public funds from the sending district’s public schools,” it states. “Allowing more students to enroll in such schools and/or increasing the number of charter schools will inevitably reduce the funds available for the district public

The brief concludes that not only are the limits on charter schools constitutional, but that lifting those limits is much more likely to create or exacerbate than solve problems in the public schools.

schools where MTA members teach, and have a negative effect on their ability to teach effectively, as well as worsen their working conditions.”

The brief concludes that not only

are the limits on charter schools constitutional, but that lifting those limits is much more likely to create or exacerbate than solve problems in the public schools.

“The claims made for the benefits of charter schools as a panacea for the trouble in our educational system are wildly exaggerated and in some cases demonstrably false,” the brief states, adding that granting the relief the plaintiffs seek “would not remedy the constitutional violation they claim to suffer from, but would have the consequence of depriving thousands of children in district public schools of their constitutionally guaranteed right to an education.”

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- Every 10 minutes, 700 Americans suffer an injury requiring medical attention.
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- Nearly 90% of disabilities aren’t work-related and therefore don’t qualify for workers’ compensation benefits.¹
- More than 10% of Americans between the ages of 18 and 64 have a disability.²
- Teachers in Massachusetts are not eligible to collect Social Security disability benefits.

¹ National Safety Council, Injury Facts, 2008 edition.

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

Agenda features elections and awards

By Jean Conley

The 171st MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates will be held May 13 and 14, featuring elections to leadership posts, debate on a wide range of issues and tributes to those who have proven their commitment to labor, public education and their communities.

Delegates will vote on proposed changes to the association's bylaws and resolutions, as well as new business items. There is also one proposal to revise a standing rule.

The two-day meeting will be called to order at noon on Friday, May 13, at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston.

MTA President Barbara Madeloni, MTA Vice President Janet Anderson and Executive Director-Treasurer Ann Clarke will deliver leadership reports on Friday afternoon.

Also on Friday, 23 public educators will be recognized for their work on the Teacher Leadership Initiative, a partnership involving the MTA, the NEA, the Center for Teaching Quality and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

On Saturday, delegates will vote for candidates for MTA President, Vice President, the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors. In addition, four Retired Members Committee seats will be filled.

The delegates will also see award presentations and act on a variety of other business, including the association's budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1.

The President's Award will honor three young people who embody the spirit of student activism: Italo Fini, Fania Joseph and Ruthie Page Weinbaum.

Fini, a junior at Worcester Technical High School, is originally from São Paulo, Brazil. He and his family moved to the United States in 2001, when he was 2.

Fini began his community organizing when he and other students in the Worcester Public Schools created a documentary telling his story and those of other immigrants. Last summer, Fini testified at a State House hearing in favor of expanding access to in-state college tuition rates and financial aid for undocumented students.

Joseph, a sophomore at Boston Community Leadership Academy, is a member of the Boston Student Advisory Council. She actively fights for student rights at her school and across the district, and she was among the thousands of students who walked out of Boston schools in March to protest threatened budget cuts.

Weinbaum has taken a leadership role this year in organizing an opt-out movement at Amherst-



Steven Tolman



Maura Healey



Fania Joseph



Italo Fini

The MTA Friend of Labor Award will be presented to Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey. The Friend of Education award will be presented to Steven Tolman, president of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO.

Pelham Regional Middle School, including organizing forums and leafleting.

The MTA Friend of Labor Award will be presented to Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey.

When she was sworn in to office in January 2015, Healey pledged to lead "the people's law firm" — an office guided by her core values and driven by the issues that matter to the people of the Commonwealth, from health care and energy costs to protecting consumers, ensuring equality for all and making communities safer.

Last year, Healey launched the Community Engagement Division, which brings the attorney general's office and its work into neighborhoods and communities across the state. Healey has also advocated for a more equal and inclusive workplace. She announced last May that her office would provide six weeks of paid family leave for all employees, making it the first state agency to offer paid parental leave. The office has also helped shape state legislation that would expand opportunities for women in the workplace, including bills to ensure pay equity and fairness for pregnant workers.

The Friend of Education award will be presented to Steven Tolman, president of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO.

As a young man, Tolman went to work for the railroad, rising through the ranks of the Transportation Communications International Union and ultimately becoming New England Division

chair. He was elected to the Massachusetts House in 1994 and eventually served seven terms in the Massachusetts Senate. In 2011, after 17 years in the Legislature, he resigned to become president of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO.

During his years in the Legislature, Tolman fought for working families to have a strong voice on Beacon Hill on issues such as health care, public education, environmental protection and consumer safeguards. During the time he has led the AFL-CIO, he has been a part of groundbreaking victories such as raising the minimum wage, passing a strong law governing earned sick time, and establishing a domestic workers' bill of rights. In September 2015, Tolman was elected to a second term as president.

Audrey Jackson, the Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, will also be recognized. Jackson is a fifth-grade inclusion teacher at the Joseph P. Manning Elementary School in Boston, which specializes in supporting students affected by trauma.

Jackson, a member of AFT Massachusetts, was a member of the Negotiated Rulemaking Committee that advised the U.S. Department of Education on regulations regarding implementation of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act at the state level.

The proposed MTA operating budget of \$45,776,576 for fiscal 2016-2017 will be presented and voted on. The Advisory Budget Committee, the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors have proposed annual dues of \$460 for full-time active members, a \$1 increase over the current year.

Under the proposed budget, dues for secretaries, clerks and custodians would remain at \$276; dues for aides, food service personnel and other education support professionals would remain at \$138.

In addition, the proposed Public Relations/Organizing Campaign budget will be considered. The recommended general dues assessment for the PR/Organizing budget is \$50. For secretaries, clerks and custodians, the assessment would be \$30; aides, food service personnel and other education support professionals would be assessed \$15.

To see the 2016 Annual Meeting schedule of events and business session agenda, please visit www.massteacher.org/am.

Candidate for MTA President: Barbara Madeloni

Two years ago, when the delegates to Annual Meeting elected me President of the MTA, they signaled their readiness to cast off fear and reignite collective power to demand the schools and colleges educators and students deserve. They voted for a union ready to fight for our values.

For the past 21 months, it has been my honor to work with you to build that union — a transparent, democratic organization, where we are gathering the power of our 110,000 educators in order to demand the public education our Commonwealth needs.

Here is what I've been doing with you to build a new MTA:

Organizing for Power. Through weekly e-mails, I keep you informed about issues and actions relevant to our work. We held 37 forums last year, tele-town halls, and testing and political forums this year, creating opportunities for members to speak with other members about the issues that matter to them and to develop plans to take action.

MTA held two collective bargaining summits and an organizing institute and recently kicked off a campaign to support locals in connecting with members to identify and develop actions in response to local concerns. We are building leadership through the Next Generation workshops and our Just for New Teachers conference, which had record participation. The opt-out movement is growing as locals hold MTA-supported forums on testing.

Amplifying Member Voices. In November of 2014, members shut down Commissioner Chester's attempts to connect licensure to evaluations. It was a resounding signal that the bold voice of the new MTA was on the scene. Our June 2015 Week of Action on high-stakes testing brought hundreds of members and allies to the State House with a united message: "less testing and more learning."

We carried the strength of our voices to the State House again for October's charter hearing.

At the same time, the UMass and MCCC unions spoke out, stood strong and won solid contracts in the face of proposed takebacks. Right now, all across the state, local political action teams are holding meetings with representatives and senators



to let them know that we demand attention to our priorities — keeping the cap, a moratorium on high-stakes testing, an end to workplace bullying, high-quality public higher education and support for the progressive tax amendment.

Changing the Narrative. In the past 21 months the MTA has become the author of a new narrative about public education. We have changed the conversation about high-stakes testing in Massachusetts. We are eroding the myths around charter schools. We are asserting that professional educators know what is best for students and their schools.

Building Coalitions. The MTA has become a leader in coalitions to protect public schools and fight for economic justice. With the Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance (MEJA) we are building capacity to take on the charter ballot initiative and #keepthecap. When I met with Senate President Rosenberg twice this fall and winter, I did so with members of MEJA — AFT, BTU, NAACP, Jobs With Justice, AFL-CIO and parents and students — by my side. These allies reinforce the message that our issues are community issues.

We are leaders in Raise Up Massachusetts (RUM), where we are standing in solidarity with labor, faith and community organizations in the effort to win the Fair Share Amendment and raise \$2 billion in new revenue for public education (K through college) and infrastructure through an increase in taxes on multimillionaires. MTA members gathered an incredible 29,000 signatures for this effort.

Moving Forward. I became an English teacher in order to share the pleasures of reading and the power of writing with young people and because public education is where we build a more just and democratic community. Like many of you, I found it more and more difficult to create a classroom where joy, creativity, imagination and critical thinking were central. We have started the work of building a union that can reclaim these ideals for educators and students from preK through higher education while asserting our rights for fair wages, benefits, pensions and workplace protections.

The transformation of our union comes at a critical time for unions and for public education. Corporate actors — the Koch brothers, Bill Gates, the Broad Foundation — are using high-stakes testing, charter campaigns and attacks on educators to undermine public education, defund pensions, weaken workplace and collective bargaining rights and privatize the public good. Governor Baker and his Secretary of Education, James Peyser, are members of this nationwide network whose intent is to use charter schools and high-stakes testing to privatize public education and undermine our unions.

Massachusetts has for two centuries been a leader in public education. That's why, across the country, unionists and educators are looking to us, to our union, to lead the work of preserving and strengthening our public schools.

This is a critical election. We have come far. We have further to go. We don't want to go back.

Let's keep the MTA moving forward.



Candidate for MTA President: Tim Sullivan

These are not ordinary times at the MTA. Who can remember a time when the current President, current Vice President and former Vice President all ran for the same office? I don't believe this has ever happened. I am in this race because I see the organization that I care deeply about being fractured. This split has fostered mistrust, rancor and division on all levels. The only way to combat such a situation is to elect a President who has the leadership skills and experience to unite all constituencies within MTA. **I am that President!**

My 25 years of union leadership and 35 years as an educator distinguish me from my opponents. I am the person who can deliver the change needed to move our organization as a united front and halt the divide making the MTA a less effective union.

Our MTA must move beyond the current philosophy of "no, no, no" to one that embraces dialogue with all stakeholders, including high-ranking elected officials and policymakers. Let me be clear — dialogue does not mean capitulation. There will be times when we will need to draw the line in the sand and take action. Much can be accomplished by holding our elected officials accountable for their actions. There should be a greater focus on what officials have done for public education when recommending candidates for public office. Many in the political establishment take us for granted and that needs to change. The battles we face are immense:

- Keep the charter school cap
- Moratorium on high-stakes testing
- Increase funding and positions in higher education
- Support Level 5 schools
- Living wage for ESPs
- COLA and health insurance for all our retirees
- Increase benefits and salary for adjunct and non-tenure-track employees

Such battles can only be won if our members are fully engaged and mobilized. Organizing around common interests is critical to success but must be done in concert with, not contrary to, the delivery of the service our members have come to know and expect. At the moment, the organization seems to be caught midstream in a debate over whether the focus of our energies should be on organizing, service or social justice. These need not be mutually exclusive of one another as there is room in the MTA for all to express viewpoints, come to consensus and move forward in the best interest of all members.

The road ahead will not be an easy one, given the political climate in Massachusetts. We currently face a governor and secretary of education who are champions of the charter school movement. Funding is already inadequate, and the situation is exacerbated by many inferior Commonwealth



charter schools. Uniting to defeat this threat to public schools must be a priority. MTA must educate community members that charter schools are not an alternative but, in many cases, a corporate sham.

Together, we can create the change that will make us a better organization. Massachusetts is #1 in the United States in education. We must continue to do our part to ensure we stay #1. Education is a great profession and MTA is a great organization. We — teacher, ESP, higher education faculty and staff, administrator, retiree and more — all of us must work diligently to keep our union strong and relevant.

Some believe the union's focus should be solely on the traditional "bread and butter" issues of wages, hours and working conditions. Others believe the focus should be on our "craft" and how we can better ourselves as professionals. Still others believe in a social justice unionism that focuses on what is good for all, not just members but all workers and their families in general. We need to be a blend of these varied philosophies as it will enable us to improve the lives of our members. At the same time, it will make the union more relevant in the eyes of the public. This in turn will help the union grow its power.

After four years as MTA Vice President, I returned to the classroom as an elementary teacher of technology at the Mary E. Baker Elementary School in Brockton, Massachusetts. This return to the classroom has reminded me of the daily struggles we all face. I have spent hours preparing to test, testing and analyzing data — all in the name of progress. What's missing in this equation? The time needed to get to know our students. The gathering of data, data and more data has siphoned the lifeblood out of what should be the important work we do — meeting the individual needs of the students placed in our care.

During my tenure as President of the Brockton Education Association, and as Vice President of the MTA, I never shied away from making tough decisions, working collaboratively with management where appropriate, supporting and leading job actions — including a strike — when necessary, and talking with both friend and foe when it was in the best interest of members. My pledge to you is that I will give it my all each and every day to ensure that we are a strong and vibrant union.

Please vote Tim Sullivan for MTA President!
www.timformta.com

Candidate for MTA President: Janet Anderson

For more than two decades, hundreds of children passed through my Taunton classrooms. It was one step in their life's journey and a chance for me to make a positive difference — a chance to inspire and give hope to a child, a community, a society.

But in truth, it's been my hundreds of students who have inspired me.

In my 25 years in the classroom, I've seen time and again that public educators in Massachusetts bring hope — hope to our students, to their families, and to our communities. And hope for a better future.

But in order for us to continue doing our important work for the children of this Commonwealth, we need a **more unified and effective Massachusetts Teachers Association**. As our statewide association, MTA can be our strongest advocate in helping us create better public education policy as well as protect and improve our salaries, benefits, and teaching and learning conditions.

Why I'm Running

My decision to run for President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association and to challenge a mid-term President was not made lightly.

Last summer I began campaigning for re-election as MTA Vice President. In October, I was dismayed to learn the current President had hand-picked a candidate for Vice President, as well as a slate of others for Board of Directors and Executive Committee races. I decided to run instead for MTA President because I believe MTA leadership should work to build solidarity, not tear it down.

I'm running because I am deeply concerned about the future of MTA, especially in these times of multi-pronged attacks on public education and unions. MTA's future requires a decisive leader with classroom experience, deep understanding of the issues, solid relationships with statewide stakeholders, and a willingness to build real solidarity among members.

MTA members deserve to have, and I can deliver:

- Input into sensible statewide education policy and practice
- Strong, effective advocacy at all levels
- Leadership that is unafraid to build solidarity
- Leadership that is unafraid to meet our opponents face to face
- Leadership that is unafraid to bring our professional knowledge, expertise, and 110,000-member-strong collective power into any discussion, with any stakeholder

Challenges

Since 1988, the education landscape has undergone significant changes. We've experienced changes to our licensure system and now need to be fingerprinted. We are well-versed in the language of high-stakes testing, and we are left shaking our heads



at the emerging new field of educational data mining.

Many of these changes are making our jobs more difficult. Many leave us feeling unappreciated and disrespected. Many are leading to classroom practices that ignore the whole child and focus instead on scores, data, and accountability.

In recent years, our ability to deliver the promise of public education has been tested more than ever:

- Increased demands, but with less funding
- Increased emphasis on data-driven classrooms
- The expansion of charter schools draining public funds
- Relentless attacks on collective bargaining
- Supreme Court cases that threaten unions

My Plan

In order to create positive change, we need to be laser-focused, organized, committed, and, most important, we need to work together, using the combined expertise of MTA leadership, Executive Committee, Board of Directors, local leaders, all of our members, and MTA staff.

Under my Presidency, we will take advantage of the Every Student Succeeds Act and work together with policy makers, legislators and other stakeholders, including parent groups, school committees, and superintendents, to:

- Eliminate test scores and DDMs as part of educator evaluations
- Eliminate the test and punish elements of the accountability system
- Ensure that student assessment is used judiciously and appropriately
- Stop the expansion of charter schools
- Push for increases in public education funding
- Plan for the loss of agency fee
- Work with higher education leaders to address adjunct faculty concerns

What I Bring

In order to accomplish our goals and meet our challenges head-on, we need a leader with strong negotiation skills, the ability to develop relationships and work with all stakeholders, and a leader who understands the issues because she has lived the issues.

I am that leader.

I have a long and proven record of taking strong stands on important issues. But I also have a long history of making things happen.

As the President of the Taunton Education Association, I negotiated many important improvements, including:

- Increased prep time for elementary teachers
- Inclusion language guaranteeing a minimum of five special education teachers in every elementary school
- A middle school schedule that kept our arts programs intact

I was one of the few urban Presidents who did not sign on to Race to the Top.

Experience matters. I have it.

And all the while, I've maintained positive relationships with administration, School Committee, parents, and other key stakeholders in my community.

But the most important experience I bring is 25 years of classroom teaching in an urban district. I know what we need to do our jobs because I have done that job since 1988. I know the issues because I've lived the issues. I administered the first MCAS. I taught in a Level 3 district.

At a Crossroads

We are at a crossroads as an effective, statewide union. Time is of the essence. I am offering a clear choice for MTA President.

I commit to rebuilding trust and unity within our organization, building and maintaining constructive relationships at the State House, DESE, MASS, MASC, parent organizations and with all other stakeholders, and becoming:

- **The** voice for public education across this state
- **The advocate for educators in the Commonwealth**
- The recognized statewide authority on educational policy
- A resource for professional development and licensure issues
- A powerhouse of solidarity to bring decisive and powerful messages to those who attack public education

Please join me in building the statewide power, respect, and solidarity of the Massachusetts Teachers Association by voting for me for MTA President at Annual Meeting on May 13-14.

In Solidarity,
Janet Anderson,
Candidate for MTA President

Candidate for MTA Vice President: Erik Champy

The Massachusetts Teachers Association is at a critical juncture. Despite the extraordinary record of accomplishment among our preK-12 schools and higher education institutions, our profession and union are under tremendous scrutiny. We need a Vice President committed to working with ALL members in order to rebuild relationships, strengthen capacity and identify solutions that will benefit our association and the many students we serve. We need to elect a Vice President committed to unifying members and moving MTA forward. My experience, voice and vision have prepared me to lead as our next Vice President of the MTA.

As an Educator and Advocate, I offer rich experience to complement the position that I am seeking. I have worked with educators and support professionals from preschool through graduate school. I have served as a teacher, counselor, adjunct professor and student teacher supervisor. I have committed two decades to representing MTA members at the local, state and national levels. I have led the premier Parent Teacher Association in Massachusetts. I have volunteered with my alumni association for more than 20 years in various leadership roles. I am ready and eager to share my skills at a more influential level of leadership.

As a Leader, I am well-known for exercising



my voice to ensure fairness and achieve results. I am a passionate advocate who is committed to speaking up for ALL MTA members. I have lobbied for our interests from Beacon Hill to Capitol Hill. Within our association, we need to work together, value voices that may be different from ours, rebuild morale and tackle the many challenges that face us. This election is not about what MTA was or what MTA is; it is about what MTA can be!

As our next Vice President, I pledge to ALL members:

- I will build upon and expand relationships with lawmakers by visiting Beacon Hill during week one in office.
- I will be prudent as I work with members

to assess and recommend the finances of our association.

- I will assist leaders as we ensure fair contracts for all of our units within the Massachusetts Teachers Association.

- I will voice support for state transportation funding to our regional school districts across the Commonwealth.

- I will encourage the creation of an early retirement incentive for educators and support professionals.

- I will work with our retirees to create opportunities for veteran members to mentor our new members.

- I will consult with MTA staff to provide more professional development opportunities for our members.

- I will advocate for parity among all educators and support professionals throughout our state.

- I will strengthen and increase relationships with pro-public-education and child advocacy groups.

- I will continue our practice of organizing members to realize greater change within the MTA.

I welcome an invitation to speak with you and our members regarding the issues and solutions as we move forward. Mostly, though, **I thank you for all that you do for our profession!**

Candidate for MTA Vice President: Merrie Najimy

Twenty-six years ago, I was, like you, drawn to education out of my passion for learning. For so many of us, being an educator defines who we are.

Over the past quarter-century, I have taught each grade, kindergarten through third grade. For the past decade, I've been leading the Concord Teachers Association, and for the past five years I've been organizing MTA members and leaders across the state to fight the corporate education agenda.

We all share a vision in which:

- Education is meaningful, composed of joyful schools filled with creativity, spontaneity and community.

- Educators are esteemed as education experts.

- We thrive in democratic workplaces, anchored by a strong union.

- Retirees, ESPs and adjuncts have job and economic security.

- Our children can get a college education without being saddled with debt.

- Rank-and-file members understand that power lies in us, not in our relationship with power brokers.

The corporate agenda works against every element of our shared vision. The Common Core, tied to high-stakes testing and a narrow teacher evaluation, robs the joy from the classroom, narrows



the purpose of education, reduces our students to test scores, undermines our professionalism and threatens our unions. It's all over K-12 now, but it is trickling up to public higher ed as well, in the form of performance-based compensation, austerity measures, reliance on adjunct faculty with fewer protections and benefits, and privatization of services. On a daily basis, all of us in the MTA can feel overwhelmed and powerless to stop the "reform" machine.

But we don't have to feel this way. When we build strong local unions, where members see themselves as "the union," we can organize to stop the local and statewide attacks and reclaim our vision for our own schools and public education. I know

this because I have been successful in leading the Concord Teachers Association from fear to collective power.

We endured a three-year union-busting scheme in which our superintendent tried to privatize the unionized bus drivers and hired a principal who silenced the staff. The district used the evaluation tool to try to fire me. The unions, in coalition with parents and the wider community, stopped the privatization effort and the attempt to fire me. The principal resigned. The parents went on to win four out of five seats on the School Committee. Building on that momentum, we developed a platform that we are bargaining over, based on these principles: *Time for Teaching and Learning, Professional Dignity and Equity*. Our members and the broader community sit in negotiation sessions. Our members feel their power because they have become central to the process.

Local by local, with our members and community allies, we will connect local struggles with statewide battles and reclaim public education by fighting for the schools our children deserve. Under Barbara Madeloni's leadership, we have started on that journey.

I am asking for your vote so that we can continue to move forward on building the New MTA.

Candidate for MTA Vice President: Mike Shannon

I believe public education is a promise that each generation makes to the next. It is the essence of a democratic society, and we, the educators of Massachusetts — from professors in higher education to early childhood specialists, and all of us in between, the teachers, the paras, the support personnel — have always been in the forefront of the fight to create opportunity for all. If we don't advocate for our students and for public education, who will?

As a candidate for MTA Vice President, I believe we must:

- Continue to organize against efforts by the state and federal government, as well as private interests, that are undermining public education
- Keep the cap on charter schools
- End high-stakes testing and the accountability system tied to it
- Continue to be advocates for the children we teach and the communities we serve

I was born and raised in Everett, where I have taught for the last 20 years. My union experience is extensive and includes serving as Vice President and Grievance Chair of the Everett Teachers Association for the last eight years, as well as on the MTA Board of Directors for the last six years. I have negotiated several contracts and defended our members when



their rights were violated. On both the local and state level, I have worked to broaden our labor coalitions. I have worked with Jobs With Justice and community groups in Everett to organize parents and the larger community in support of public education. In the past year, I have been working closely with the North Shore chapter of the Mass Education Justice Alliance, coordinating the fight against the charter referendum.

While we organize to protect students, families and educators from bad education policies, let's

remember that the MTA is a professional association as well as a union fighting for our rights. In order for us to excel in our work to educate every child, the MTA must make greater strides in helping our members in the classroom and at the bargaining table. The MTA must provide educators with the tools they need at the local level to negotiate fair contracts, handle grievances and advocate for the teaching supports that allow us to work.

The MTA must be devoted to supporting locals with legal, bargaining and grievance assistance, and to providing additional time and resources from MTA field reps in order to support the work of managing and enforcing contracts. As MTA Vice President, I will work to ensure that these areas receive high priority.

I pledge to work together with all of our members and our locals, putting our voices and our professional expertise to work creating smarter education policy across the state and strengthening the power of local associations.

I am asking for your vote at MTA Annual Meeting on May 14. Together, we can ensure that the promise of public education is fulfilled for the children and communities we serve, and for the democratic society in which we live.

Alternative nomination process is available under MTA Bylaws

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

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

Committee prior to the close of the first business session.

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

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

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

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

As the last item of business prior to the close of the first business session,

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

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



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Candidates vie for seats on Board and Executive Committee

In addition to contests for the statewide offices of MTA President and Vice President, the Annual Meeting of Delegates will feature contests for seats on the Executive Committee and Board of Directors.

In the Executive Committee contests, Heidi Lahey of the Wachusett Regional Education Association and Bernadette Marso of the Leominster Education Association are vying for the Region B seat; Timothy J. Dwyer of the Dedham Education Association and Maryann Ziemba of the Millis Teachers Association are vying for the Region D seat; and Candace Shivers of the Massachusetts Community College Council-Mount Wachusett and Dan Clawson of the Massachusetts Society of Professors-Amherst are vying for the Region H seat.

MTA Retired members Lani Gerson, Anne Wass, Phyllis Neufeld and Jacqueline Gorrie are vying for two Statewide Retired District seats on the Board of Directors. Other Board contests are: Sue Doherty of the Brockton Education Association and Andrea Pires of the Stoughton Teachers Association in District 36C; Renee Vieira of the Dartmouth Educators Association and Lori Silveira of the New Bedford Educators Association in District 40E; Bill Miskinis of the Littleton Educators' Association and Mary Foyle of the Lunenburg Education Association in District 13F; Kristine Barker of the Waltham Educators Association and Jim Murphy of the Weston Education Association in District 17G; Lea Benson and Peter Lahey, both of the Everett Teachers Association, in District 20G; and Sovann-Malis Loeung and Leslie Marsland, both of the University Staff Association-Amherst, in District 48H.

All other candidates for the Executive Committee and the Board have been declared elected under the election waiver in the MTA Bylaws. The provision states that if there is only one candidate for an open position, the election will be waived and the candidate is declared elected.

Terms on the Board and Executive Committee begin July 1 and last for three years. The candidates declared elected because of the election waiver are:

Executive Committee

Region E: Rebecca Cusick, Fall River Educators' Association

Board of Directors

District 33C: Deborah McCarthy, Hull Teachers Association

District 41C: Dale Forest, Barnstable Teachers' Association

District 39E: Lorraine Gagne, Fall River Educators' Association

District 12F: Ruth Allen, Dracut Teachers Association

District 16G: Raymond Albright, Reading Teachers Association

District 49H: Carl Ericson, Professional Staff Union, Amherst-Boston

Candidates who supplied photos are pictured with this article. In contested races, biographical statements of Executive Committee candidates are on Page 28; statements of Board candidates who submitted them appear on Pages 29 and 30.



Heidi Lahey



Bernadette Marso



Timothy J. Dwyer



Maryann Ziemba



Candace Shivers



Dan Clawson



Lani Gerson



Anne Wass



Phyllis Neufeld



Jacqueline Gorrie



Sue Doherty



Andrea Pires



Renee Vieira



Lori Silveira



Bill Miskinis



Mary Foyle



Kristine Barker



Jim Murphy



Lea Benson



Sovann-Malis Loeung



Leslie Marsland

Biographical statements of candidates for Executive Committee

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REGION B

Heidi Lahey, Wachusett

I am a special education teacher and president of the Wachusett Regional Education Association. Our leadership team listens to member concerns, shares information and develops actions on district and state issues. I am excited about the direction of the MTA as our membership is organizing and realizing its strength and power. As an Executive Committee member, I will communicate with local leaders and members, both bringing your issues to and sharing information from the committee and Board. I support roll-call votes on contested issues. In a strong union, members take leadership and action on important issues. That's my MTA.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REGION B

Bernadette Marso, Leominster

My longtime appreciation of unions has led me to become a three-term President of the LEA, two-term member of the Board of Directors, local Executive Board member and member of many committees and negotiation teams. As an advocate, I believe in speaking out for what is right, just and fair. It would be an honor to serve as the voice of Region B on the Executive Committee. With open minds and honest, informed conversation, we will reunite our MTA toward our core value, solidarity. With this goal in mind, I would appreciate your vote.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REGION D

Timothy J. Dwyer, Dedham

I am a 16-year veteran teacher and President of the Dedham Education Association. I want to fight against the corporate-funded attacks on public education and public unions, such as the lifting of the charter cap. We should never return to the days when our union was satisfied to have a "seat at the table" and gave away our rights before we had the chance to organize and fight. We should be serving our members' interests in a transparent and open manner, recognizing that our members are our greatest strength.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REGION D

Maryann Ziemba, Millis

With excessive testing, the threat of charter schools and the uncertainty of the detrimental *Friedrichs* case, our union activism is vital now more than ever. I'm the candidate who reaches out to all locals, big and small, to re-establish a balance among servicing our members, organizing and advocating for social justice. My local and state-level involvement includes serving as president of my local, a member on the Board, a mentor to new educators and a representative on the Candidate Recommendation Committee. As your voice, I'll continue to ensure quality education for all students and equal representation for all our members.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REGION H

Candace Shivers, MCCC-Mount Wachusett

My name is Candace Shivers. I am asking for your vote for Executive Committee member for Region H at the Annual Meeting. My leadership within the MTA and NEA has prepared me to assume the role of Executive Committee member for Region H. I have learned that as much as we have in common as a region, one solution does not fit all. I have worked with all higher education locals on MTA committees. We have differences, yet we're still similar. I have learned not to assume, I ask. I plan to include before I act. Vote for Candace!

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REGION H

Dan Clawson, MSP-Amherst

I have been involved in the MTA as a local president, Board member, member of the Strategic Action Committee, and now co-chair of the Education Policy and Practice Committee. I am running for Executive Committee so that I can represent all higher education members across our 27 campuses. These are challenging times: Public-sector unions are under attack, Massachusetts is underfunding higher education, employers are making unreasonable contract demands and many of our members, especially adjuncts and clerical workers, are disrespected and grossly underpaid. Addressing these issues requires us to work together in solidarity, in higher ed and with K-12 educators.

Biographical statements of candidates for Board of Directors

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

STATEWIDE RETIRED

Lani Gerson, MTA Retired

Upon retirement I gave colleagues buttons: “Those who can, TEACH. Those who cannot, pass laws about teaching.” Most wore them but some were timid. We cannot be timid as we speak to needs of children. Teachers must reclaim their profession and I wish to be a part of this effort!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

STATEWIDE RETIRED

Anne Wass, MTA Retired

As MTA President, I strongly advocated for members. I wish to continue on the MTA Board as your representative, fighting for the rights and benefits of retired members on important issues such as COLAs and health insurance. Thank you for your past support. I would appreciate your vote once again.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

STATEWIDE RETIRED

Phyllis Neufeld, MTA Retired

I am a newly retired activist: President of Lexington Education Association eight years, teacher 40 years, past member MTA Board of Directors and MTA Executive Committee for 11 years. I want to continue supporting retirees and educators by serving as MTA Board Retired District Director. I welcome your support.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

STATEWIDE RETIRED

Jacqueline Gorrie, MTA Retired

Representing you as your Retired Director on the MTA Board, I have worked to make COLA increases a legislative priority. Representing you on the Massachusetts Teachers’ Retirement Board, I have worked to protect our defined-benefit pensions. I ask for your vote to continue advocating on your behalf. Thank you.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 36C

Sue Doherty, Brockton

Austerity budgets. Charter schools. Micromanagement, data and tests. Increasing workloads and decreasing job security. These are difficult times for educators. As the 36C Board member, I will communicate with you and continue to support efforts to grow our collective power so that we can act together to reclaim public education.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 36C

Andrea Pires, Stoughton

I’m a fifth-grade teacher in Stoughton, local vice president and MTA New Member Committee member. I have served the union as building representative, delegate to Annual Meeting and NEA RA, negotiation team member and local president. I welcome the opportunity to serve on the Board. Thank you for your vote.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 40E

Renee Vieira, Dartmouth

I’m Renee Vieira and currently representing District 40E on the Board. I have learned a lot and take my position seriously. I have striven to make decisions that best serve the members of this district. I would be honored and humbled to continue to do so for the next term.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 40E

Lori Silveira, New Bedford

We are the experts in our classrooms. Policies that harm teachers distort learning for the students in front of them. Through our union we can uplift our profession and end worker exploitation. As District 40E Director, I will support organizing locally and statewide to reclaim our schools and professional dignity.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 13F

Bill Miskinis, Littleton

I have always looked to labor’s past to help frame labor’s future. Though we face new challenges, our answer rests in what has always made us strong — building bonds and sharing struggles with each other. I’d like to continue to represent 13F to help preserve public schools for future generations.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 13F

Mary Foyle, Lunenburg

As MTA members our job is to provide, promote and protect quality public education. Finding balance with fight and compromise is critical in this mission. I look forward to engaging in dialogue, even when difficult, to help ensure positive change and growth for students, teachers and the profession.

MTA 2016 ANNUAL MEETING OF DELEGATES

Biographical statements of candidates for Board of Directors

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 17G

Kristine Barker, Waltham

I am currently a building representative in Waltham. I have served on the New Member Committee. I have been an educator for 19 years. I feel I can best represent the diverse needs of 17G in changing policy while serving all of our members! Thanks for your time.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 17G

Jim Murphy, Weston

Attending policy meetings is only part of being an MTA Director. Now more than ever, we must articulate a democratic vision for public education and demand it for our students. We have that knowledge. We can create that vision. What we need is to organize. Vote Member Action!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 20G

Lea Benson, Everett

Benson has been a certified SPED teacher since 1998. Benson is a member of the Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance North Shore, MTA Education Policy and Practice Committee and Strategic Action Plan Task Force. Benson earned a B.S. in broadcasting from Suffolk University and M.Ed. in SPED from Salem State University.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 48H

Sovann-Malis Loeung, USA-Amherst

As a woman of color, I would like the opportunity to be part of a forward-thinking team in providing a voice from an often marginalized group. We need advanced professional development, antidiscrimination practices and safety from workplace bullying. I ask for your vote for MTA Board of Directors.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 48H

Leslie Marsland, USA-Amherst

Currently an accountant at UMass Amherst; USA VP; Graduate MTA's Emerging Leaders Program and NEA's Leaders for Tomorrow; Vice Chair MTA's ESP Committee. I ask for your vote so I may continue on improving public education. I bring passion, dedication and enthusiasm to the MTA.



2016 HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE
ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET
JUNE 17 – WESTIN WALTHAM HOTEL

ONLINE REGISTRATION www.massteacher.org/hcr

Deadline for event registration is Friday, June 10.
Telephone reservations will NOT be accepted.

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

Amendments to bylaws are proposed

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #1: Article VII — Nominations, Elections and Terms of Office. It would revise Section 2C of Article VII. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

C. Election (1) The only candidates for election shall be those nominated in accordance with Sections 2B(1) or 2B(2) above.

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

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

C. Election (1) The only candidates for election shall be those nominated in accordance with Sections 2B(1) or 2B(2) above.

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

(2) The President and the Vice President shall be elected by mail ballot to all members of the MTA. A plurality of ballots cast shall determine the winner of the election.

Submitted by:

Gerald E. Conefrey, MTA Retired
Robert Lavery, MTA Retired

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:

Recommends Rejection (6-0)

MTA Board of Directors:

Recommends Rejection (54-3)

Impact statement:

Election of President and Vice President would be removed from the Annual Meeting and be done by an all-member mail ballot. The winners would be elected by a plurality rather than by a majority vote.

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #2: MTA-R Lifetime Dues. It would revise Section 2C of Article IV. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

(3) All MTA-R Lifetime dues shall be deposited in a special purpose fund and the income generated from this fund shall be used to offset the operating expenses of MTA-R activities and programs.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

~~(3) All MTA-R Lifetime dues shall be deposited in a special purpose fund and the income generated from this fund shall be used to offset the operating expenses of MTA-R activities and programs.~~

Submitted by:

Todd Ostrowski, Ludlow Education Association

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:

Recommends Adoption (6-0)

MTA Board of Directors:

Recommends Adoption (56-0)

Impact statement:

The elimination of this language reduces the redundancy of paperwork and processing in the Finance and Accounting Division. The removal of this language does not impact the retired members' activities and programs.

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #3: Dues (1). It would revise Section 2 of Article IV. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Full-time dues and part-time dues percentages are based upon membership category.
A. Active Members

(1) Full-Time Dues
Except as provided herein, the annual dues of active members shall be the amount approved by the Annual Meeting of Delegates.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Full-time dues and part-time dues percentages are based upon membership category.
A. Active Members

(1) Full-Time Dues
Except as provided herein, the annual dues of active members shall be the amount approved by the Annual Meeting of Delegates.

Continued in following columns

Proposed Bylaw Amendment #3 — continued from previous columns

(2) Part-Time Dues

a. The annual dues of an active member, who presents evidence of part-time employment, which is at one-half (1/2) or less than one-half (1/2) of a full-time position in a given school system, shall be 50% of the annual dues of full-time active members.

(2) Part-Time Dues

a. The annual dues of an active member, who presents evidence of part-time employment, which is at one-half (1/2) or less than one-half (1/2) of a full-time position in a given school system, shall be ~~50%~~ **26.5%** of the annual dues of full-time active members.

Submitted by:

Ursula Tafe, Faculty Staff Union-UMass Boston
Gertrude (Trudy) Tynan, Massachusetts Community College Council
Anneta Argyres, Professional Staff Union-UMass Boston

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:

Recommends Rejection (5-0, 1 abstention)

MTA Board of Directors:

Recommends Rejection (55-2)

Impact statement:

Bylaw change would lower the dues of half-time or less members to 26.5%.

This would be an income reduction for MTA of approximately \$279,000.

A financial analysis using the 2015-16 MTA dues rates and based on the MTA membership count data as of 3/7/2016 indicates that approval of this proposal would lead to a decrease of approximately \$279,000 in revenue. The majority of the impact falls within the K-12 membership, although the intention was to reduce dues for higher education adjunct professors. In order to recover the lost active dues revenue, nearly 1,800 K-12 agency fee payers would have to convert to active membership. As of 3/7/2016, there are fewer than 500 K-12 agency fee payers on record.

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #4: Dues (2). It would revise Section 2 of Article IV. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Full-time dues and part-time dues percentages are based upon membership category.
A. Active Members

(1) Full-Time Dues
Except as provided herein, the annual dues of active members shall be the amount approved by the Annual Meeting of Delegates.

(2) Part-Time Dues

b. The annual dues of an active member who is employed by the University of Massachusetts Trustees or Board of Higher Education who presents evidence of part-time employment which is less than one-half (1/2) of a full-time position, shall be an amount equal to 30% of the annual dues of full-time active members, except that the dues for part-time active members who teach less than three (3) credits per semester shall be 15% of the annual dues of full-time active members.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Full-time dues and part-time dues percentages are based upon membership category.
A. Active Members

(1) Full-Time Dues
Except as provided herein, the annual dues of active members shall be the amount approved by the Annual Meeting of Delegates.

(2) Part-Time Dues

b. The annual dues of an active member who is employed by the University of Massachusetts Trustees or Board of Higher Education who presents evidence of part-time employment which is less than one-half (1/2) of a full-time position, shall be an amount equal to ~~30%~~ **20.4%** of the annual dues of full-time active members, except that the dues for part-time active members who teach less than three (3) credits per semester shall be ~~15%~~ **10.2%** of the annual dues of full-time active members.

Submitted by:

Ursula Tafe, Faculty Staff Union-UMass Boston
Gertrude (Trudy) Tynan, Massachusetts Community College Council
Anneta Argyres, Professional Staff Union-UMass Boston

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:

Recommends Adoption (6-0)

Continued on Page 32

Amendments to bylaws are proposed

Proposed Bylaw Amendment #4 — continued from Page 31

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (51-6)

Impact statement:

This bylaw would lower the dues of active higher ed members whose employment is less than half-time to 20.4% of MTA annual dues. This would be an income reduction for MTA in the range of zero to a maximum of approximately \$138,300, or an average of approximately \$69,100.

It would also reduce the dues of active higher ed members who teach less than 3 credits per semester to 10.2% of the MTA annual dues. This would be an income reduction for MTA in the range of zero to a maximum of approximately \$58,200, or an average of approximately \$29,100.

Consideration of this proposal must occur in conjunction with Proposed Amendment #5 as the membership type codes currently used to capture these are identical. MTA cannot accurately separate them in the membership system. This leads to overlap in the monetary impact analysis; hence the range disclosed above. The maximum listed above assumes that 100% of the members in this category are affected by this bylaw change. The average listed assumes that 50% are affected by this bylaw change.

In order to recover the maximum lost active dues revenue, over 1,700 agency fee payers would have to convert to active membership.

Approval of this bylaw change would require expanding membership type categories to capture the new dues level percentage categories. The local associations would be required to redistribute their existing members in these categories across the new membership codes.

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #5: Dues (3). It would revise Section 2 of Article IV. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Full-time dues and part-time dues percentages are based upon membership category.

A. Active Members

(1) Full-Time Dues

Except as provided herein, the annual dues of active members shall be the amount approved by the Annual Meeting of Delegates.

(3) Members Earning Minimal Base Salary or Minimal Annual Income

a. An MTA active member whose base salary for the employment that qualifies him or her for MTA active membership is less than eighteen thousand dollars (\$18,000) or an active MTA member whose annual income from the employment that qualifies him or her for active membership is less than eighteen thousand dollars (\$18,000) due to an unpaid leave of absence, shall pay thirty (30%) percent of the annual dues of a full-time active member.

b. An MTA active member whose base salary for the employment that qualifies him or her for MTA active membership is less than nine thousand dollars (\$9,000) or an active MTA member whose annual income from the employment that qualifies him or her for active membership is less than nine thousand dollars (\$9,000) due to an unpaid leave of absence shall pay fifteen (15%) percent of the annual dues of a full-time active member.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Full-time dues and part-time dues percentages are based upon membership category.

A. Active Members

(1) Full-Time Dues

Except as provided herein, the annual dues of active members shall be the amount approved by the Annual Meeting of Delegates.

(3) Members Earning Minimal Base Salary or Minimal Annual Income

a. An MTA active member whose base salary for the employment that qualifies him or her for MTA active membership is less than eighteen thousand dollars (\$18,000) or an active MTA member whose annual income from the employment that qualifies him or her for active membership is less than eighteen thousand dollars (\$18,000) due to an unpaid leave of absence, shall pay ~~thirty (30%) percent~~ **20.4%** of the annual dues of a full-time active member.

b. An MTA active member whose base salary for the employment that qualifies him or her for MTA active membership is less than nine thousand dollars (\$9,000) or an active MTA member whose annual income from the employment that qualifies him or her for active membership is less than nine thousand dollars (\$9,000) due to an unpaid leave of absence shall pay ~~fifteen (15%) percent~~ **10.2%** of the annual dues of a full-time active member.

Continued in following columns

Proposed Bylaw Amendment #5 — continued from previous columns

Submitted by:
Ursula Tafe, Faculty Staff Union-UMass Boston
Gertrude (Trudy) Tynan, Massachusetts Community College Council
Anneta Argyres, Professional Staff Union-UMass Boston

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:
Recommends Adoption (4-2)

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (51-6)

Impact statement:

This bylaw would lower the dues for active members whose base salary or annual income for membership purposes is less than eighteen thousand dollars (\$18,000) from the current assessment rate of 30% to a 20.4% assessment rate AND active members whose base salary or annual income for membership purposes is less than nine thousand dollars (\$9,000) from the current assessment rate of 15% to a 10.2% assessment rate. These changes would result in an income reduction for MTA in the range of zero to a maximum of approximately \$217,000, or an average of approximately \$108,500.

Consideration of this proposal must occur in conjunction with Proposed Amendment #4 as the membership type codes currently used to capture these are identical. MTA cannot accurately separate them in the membership system. This leads to overlap in the monetary impact analysis; hence the range disclosed above. The maximum listed above assumes that 100% of the members in this category are affected by this bylaw change. The average listed assumes that 50% are affected by this bylaw change.

In order to recover the maximum lost active dues revenue, over 1,900 agency fee payers would have to convert to active membership.

Approval of this bylaw change would require expanding membership type categories to capture the new dues level percentage categories. The local associations would be required to redistribute their existing members in these categories across the new membership codes.

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #6: Electoral Districts and Regions. It would revise Sections 1 and 3 of Article VIII. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Section 1. Representation

A. Each electoral district shall have one District Director on the Board, with the exception of the Statewide Retired District and the Massachusetts Community College Council District.

Section 3. Criteria

A. Electoral districts and regions shall be drawn and based on mathematical compliance with the one-person, one-vote principle, with the exception of the Dukes-Nantucket District, the Massachusetts Community College Council District, and the Statewide Retired District.

B. A ratio of 1:1900 or major fraction thereof shall be used in drawing up districts with the exception of the Dukes-Nantucket District, the Massachusetts

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Section 1. Representation

A. Each electoral district shall have one District Director on the Board, with the exception of the Statewide Retired District, the Massachusetts Community College Council District, and **the Massachusetts State College Association District.**

Section 3. Criteria

A. Electoral districts and regions shall be drawn and based on mathematical compliance with the one-person, one-vote principle, with the exception of the Dukes-Nantucket District, the Massachusetts Community College Council District, **the Massachusetts State College Association District,** and the Statewide Retired District.

B. A ratio of 1:1900 or major fraction thereof shall be used in drawing up districts with the exception of the Dukes-Nantucket District, the Massachusetts

Continued on Page 33

Amendments to bylaws are proposed

Proposed Bylaw Amendment #6 — continued from Page 32

Community College Council District, and the Statewide Retired District.

H. Members represented by the Massachusetts Community College Council District shall constitute a statewide electoral district.

The number of directors to which the district shall be entitled shall be determined by using the ratio of 1:1900 or major fraction thereof.

Community College Council District, **the Massachusetts State College Association District**, and the Statewide Retired District.

H. Members represented by the Massachusetts Community College Council District **and the Massachusetts State College Association District** shall constitute a statewide electoral districts.

The number of directors to which **each of** the districts shall be entitled shall be determined by using the ratio of 1:1900 or major fraction thereof.

Submitted by:
James Kierstead, MTA Retired, Chair, Electoral Review Committee

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:
Recommends Adoption (6-0)

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (57-0)

Impact statement:
Amendment would allow for multiple district directors for the Massachusetts State College Association, as is currently in place for MCCC, based on membership.

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #7: Nominations, Elections and Terms of Office. It would revise Section 1 (General Stipulations) of Article VII. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

A. No person may be a candidate for more than one office.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

A. No person may be a candidate for more than one office.

B. All MTA Election Policies and Campaign Guidelines shall apply only to an individual

Continued in following columns

Proposed Bylaw Amendment #7 — continued from previous columns

member who has been certified as a candidate. A slate or committee formed to promote a group of candidates shall not be recognized as having the rights of a candidate.

B. A local affiliate shall not be represented on the Board by more than one officer. If more than one officer is elected from the same local, the officer elected to the higher office shall prevail.

C. All elections shall be held by Australian or machine ballot.

D. When there is a contested election, each candidate may appoint a designee to observe the counting of the ballots.

E. Elected candidates shall not be seated until they have filed a report with the Credentials and Ballot Committee giving a complete account of campaign expenditures. The Credentials and Ballot Committee shall certify the receipt of these reports.

B: C. A local affiliate shall not be represented on the Board by more than one officer. If more than one officer is elected from the same local, the officer elected to the higher office shall prevail.

C: D. All elections shall be held by Australian or machine ballot.

D: E. When there is a contested election, each candidate may appoint a designee to observe the counting of the ballots.

E: F. Elected candidates shall not be seated until they have filed a report with the Credentials and Ballot Committee giving a complete account of campaign expenditures. The Credentials and Ballot Committee shall certify the receipt of these reports.

Submitted by:
Kerry Costello, Andover Education Association
Kathy Meltsakos, Andover Education Association

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:
Recommends Rejection (5-0, 1 abstention)

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Rejection (45-10)

Impact statement:
This bylaw would prohibit a slate or committee formed to promote a group of candidates from having the rights of a candidate.

Standing rule amendment is proposed

The following is Proposed Standing Rule Amendment #1: Distribution of Campaign Materials. It would revise Sections 1 and 2 of Standing Rule 10, Distribution of Campaign Materials. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

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

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

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

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

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

Submitted by:
Kerry Costello, Andover Education Association
Kathy Meltsakos, Andover Education Association

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:
Recommends Rejection (6-0)

MTA Board of Directors:
Recommends Rejection (55-0)

Impact statement:
This Standing Rule would treat clothing in the same way that it treats other campaign materials.

Candidates for MTA Retired Members Committee

Four vacancies for two-year terms commencing July 1

Candidates are listed in ballot order. Their biographical statements will be printed in the April edition of the *MTA Reporter*.

Richard L. Liston

Mary J. Gilmore

William S. Coleman III

Kathleen Harrigan

Kathleen J. Skinner

Paul V. McLaughlin

Eileen Cleary

Kathleen Comer

Amendments to resolutions are recommended

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

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

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

The revisions printed in this edition of *MTA Today* were recommended by the Resolutions Committee. The Board voted on March 18 to recommend passage by the delegates.

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

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

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

Current B-11

The Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change

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

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

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

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

Proposed Amended B-11

The Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change

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

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

The MTA believes that global climate change causes significant measurable damage to the Earth and its inhabitants. The MTA further believes that students should be taught about the impact of human behavior on global climate change and about environmentally sound practices that lessen that impact.

Additionally, the MTA, recognizing that alternative energy use will reduce dependence on fossil fuels, strongly urges the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its cities and towns to actively pursue the use of alternative energy resources. (70, 79, 80, 85, 88, 89, 91, 99, 02, 15, 16)

Proposed New B-37

Education of Immigrants (at the end of Section B)

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that, regardless of the immigration status of students or their parents, every student has the right to a free public education in an environment free from harassment.

The association also believes that all parents should have equal access to all services provided by the school system regardless of their immigration status. The association opposes Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operations on school property.

The association supports access to higher education for undocumented students and access to financial aid and in-state tuition to state colleges and universities in the states where they reside. The association also believes that neither educational

systems nor their employees are responsible for the determination and enforcement of legal residency status. (16)

Current D-16

Teacher Licensure

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or any independent standards board governed by members of the profession, if one is established, is the only entity that should have the authority to award or deny teacher licenses in Massachusetts. (00, 09)

Proposed Amended D-16

Educator Teacher Licensure

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or any independent standards board governed by members of the profession, if one is established, is the only entity that should have the authority to award or deny teacher educator licenses in Massachusetts.

Professional development required to maintain an educator license should be relevant, practicable and respectful of educators' professionalism and time. (00, 09, 16)

Proposed New F-28

Equitable Support for Collective Bargaining (and renumber the rest of Section F)

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that solidarity among all members of a bargaining unit is integral to supporting and defending public educators through collective bargaining. The MTA supports requiring all members of a bargaining unit to become dues-paying members of that unit or to pay a fair share fee to sustain the benefits that all members receive under the collective bargaining agreement. (16)

Annual Report of the Executive Director-Treasurer

As we prepare for our 2016 Annual Meeting, the threats against public education and unions remain broad and deep. More and more, they are focused on Massachusetts — and on the MTA and our members.

Charter schools, which are draining more than \$400 million a year from our local districts, are at the center of the storm. As the Legislature considers lifting the cap on the number of Commonwealth charters and allowing an even greater diversion of public funds to private interests, proponents are

mounting legal action and threatening to spend untold sums on a ballot initiative this November.

Governor Charlie Baker has made charter school expansion his top priority this year, mirroring his privatization efforts involving public transportation and other services. Baker vows to hold the line on taxes despite the unmet needs that persist

year after year for our public schools, colleges and universities, as well as in early childhood education. Make no mistake: The governor remains faithful to a hard-line conservative ideology even as he puts forth a moderate front.

Meanwhile, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adheres to a program of high-stakes testing and narrow accountability based on it, largely disregarding need and poverty and steadily taking over districts — most recently Holyoke and Southbridge — rather than actually engaging educators, parents and communities to ensure that all students can attend the schools they deserve.

Baker and his allies are supported in these efforts by a web of donors giving big money to foundations and other organizations that see opportunities to profit from public resources.

Indeed, the situation is dire — and no MTA member should believe for a minute that it can be shrugged off or ignored. Winning in Massachusetts is part of a broader right-wing playbook and is serious business to the forces that are out to destroy public education and educators' unions. The *Friedrichs* case, which sought to end agency fees and allow free riders to benefit from unions' collective bargaining activities, was an example of this nationwide strategy. It came very close to achieving its aim.

But the answer to winning this all-out fight is no great mystery — and MTA members, along with parents, students, allied organizations and many others — are at the heart of it. The key challenge we face is to recognize the urgency of taking many steps

at once, all of them involving the kind of relentless organizing that created power for educators and other working people in the first place.

Thanks to many of you, this intentional and strategic effort is not something that we are looking ahead to and talking about. It is something we are deeply engaged in.

The results have shown in successes such as the MTA's collection of more than 29,000 signatures for the Raise Up Massachusetts campaign, which seeks to place an additional tax on annual income of more than \$1 million to raise billions of dollars over the years ahead for public education and transportation.

They've been evident in our determination to reduce our legislative agenda to manageable proportions so that we can focus our energies on fighting the expansion of charter schools, reducing high-stakes testing, and advocating strongly on Beacon Hill for other vital measures.

They've been apparent in our growing use of social media to expand our reach within the organization and in communities throughout the state, and they've been at the fore in the ramped-up activities of our Legislative and Political Action Teams, our ability to fend off ill-advised attempts to tie evaluation to licensure, and countless local actions in towns and cities and on public higher education campuses.

Most recently, they have shown with clarity in our work with fellow members of the Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance, a coalition of community groups, parents and unions formed to take on the many issues challenging our public schools: lack of funding, high-stakes testing, the state's rigid accountability regime, and Commonwealth charter school expansion. MEJA has organized a ballot committee called Save Our Public Schools to fight the charter question, and the MTA is a leader in that effort.

Each of these steps is contributing in its own way to an overarching goal of the MTA Strategic Action Plan: to make our members the collective voice of public education in our communities and throughout the Commonwealth.

As we turn to the year ahead, we must maintain the focus and determination that are serving us today. To successfully engage in the larger projects and efforts that are imperatives for our union, we must also pay close attention to the details — to maintaining and tuning up the systems we have built and innovating to meet changing demands.

One piece of the puzzle is being put in place right now at the local level, where we are using both our membership structure and our best technology to make sure we have the basic contact information we need to facilitate two-way communication with every MTA educator about critical issues. That's a complex way of saying that we need to be able to hear from every member about what's important so we are able to respond rapidly and forcefully. Our rejuvenated

system will help us all in local organizing efforts involving bargaining, funding and priorities specific to individual buildings, campuses and communities — and it will be invaluable as we take on the proponents of the charter initiative and other efforts to undermine public education.

Another promising program we will carry into 2016-2017 is our MTA Campaign School, which addresses the need to prepare members who choose to run for political office for the obstacles and opponents they will face.

In addition, we will be working to press for the fair enactment at the state level of provisions of the new Every Student Succeeds Act, exploring avenues for professional development that are truly member-led, working to carefully evaluate candidates in the 2016 legislative contests, and continuing to articulate MTA positions in the media and in the difficult policy debates that will surround "MCAS 2.0," the fate of the Raise Up Massachusetts amendment, the rights of parents to opt their children out of standardized tests, and other crucial issues.

The U.S. Supreme Court's 4-4 decision in the *Friedrichs* case, handed down on March 29, clearly came as a relief to all public-sector unions. In leaving agency fee provisions intact, it delivered a measure of fairness not only to organized labor, but also to the governmental and political processes.

One significant takeaway is that the importance of who appoints Supreme Court justices over the next few years — a question to be determined in the upcoming presidential election — cannot be overstated.

Another vital message — given that many other anti-union cases are already wending their way through the judicial system — is that there will always be countless threats directed at those who have the capacity to speak out forcefully for students, public education and social justice.

We will face each of these head-on, as we are doing today by concentrating our resources and our energies on the success of the Save Our Public Schools campaign.

The only solution is to stay on the road we are now taking — to organize for power and then use it wisely and well. Together, we must do all we can to make our union a place where *all* members come to make a difference, which is what they set out to do when they chose their noble profession. Achieving that goal will make us unstoppable.

A longer version of the Annual Report of the Executive Director-Treasurer, including sections on the work of each MTA division and department, will be in the Delegate Handbook for the 2016 Annual Meeting. The full report is also posted in the members' area of the MTA website.



Ann Clarke

Open house at new MTA headquarters



Julia Norman of the Waltham Educators Association, in photo at left, was among the steady stream of MTA members who stopped by on April 10 to see the MTA's new headquarters in Quincy. MTA staff members were on hand for the open house, which featured tours of the association's new meeting spaces, printing facilities and offices. Above, members from around the state enjoyed refreshments during a break. MTA divisions formerly housed in Boston have all moved to the eighth and ninth floors of the building at 2 Heritage Drive except for Government Relations, which remains on Beacon Hill. The headquarters also includes the Metro Regional Service Center.

Photos by Jair Mendes



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MTAToday

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Educators work to ensure students' needs are met

By Scott McLennan

Educators in Holyoke and Southbridge — whose districts are now under state control — are contending with changing work environments as they assert their collective voices in turnaround plans being developed by the receivers placed in charge of their communities' public schools.

The state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted last April to put the Holyoke Public Schools into receivership. Local associations representing educators subsequently filed unfair labor practice charges with the state Department of Labor Relations over the lack of bargaining as the district changed working conditions.

The DLR has issued a consolidated complaint in response to some of the charges; a hearing is scheduled for June.

The Holyoke Teachers Association and Receiver Stephen Zrike have held two bargaining sessions over a new compensation schedule. While the union has won some concessions, it remains opposed to a plan to link pay increases to performance evaluations.

HTA President Ed Meyer said the local has also been working with the MTA to provide assistance to educators placed on a "receiver's list" that targets teachers for termination. Meyer expressed concerns that the state's turnaround plan hasn't adequately addressed students' social needs thus far or taken aim at the root causes of underachievement, such as poverty.

In January, the BESE voted to place the Southbridge Public Schools into receivership. Five members of the Southbridge Education Association were appointed to a local stakeholders' group charged with making recommendations to a receiver, who was eventually named in March by Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester.

Jessica Huizenga, most recently an assistant superintendent in Cambridge, officially assumes her duties as receiver in May.

While a lack of consistent leadership in the district triggered the decision to place the



Photo by Scott McLennan

SEA member Anna Kiritsy-Tsitsilianos and Vice President David Williams listened to proposals during a local stakeholders' group meeting after the Southbridge Public Schools were placed in receivership. Receiver Jessica Huizenga officially assumes her duties in May.

schools under state control, the SEA identified specific educational, emotional and social needs that students in the district face.

SEA members in the local stakeholders' group reached out to all of the association's members to find out what the schools needed to do to best meet students' needs. Many of their ideas were among the recommendations sent to the receiver.

Among the proposals adopted by the stakeholders' group were hiring more instructors skilled at working with English language learners, as well as an ELL director; hiring outreach workers to serve as liaisons between homes and schools; and improving the alignment of curriculum and professional development.

SEA President Joan Sullivan said educators are already seeing changes to their working conditions, and she said that those in the middle school were

disappointed that Huizenga did not seek any educator input before naming a new middle school principal.

In 2011, Lawrence became the first school district placed into state receivership. The move removed all authority from the locally elected school committee and gave broad powers to a receiver.

The so-called "Lawrence model" — longer school days and pay scales tied to performance criteria, all rolled out with minimal amounts of bargaining — appears to be the model being used in Holyoke and Southbridge.

Meyer pointed out that in Holyoke, the state had been involved for many years but its initiatives did little to help struggling students.

Now he worries that if the current state turnaround plan simply mirrors what is being done in Lawrence, the needs of Holyoke students will not be met.

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MAGNIFICENT SOUTH AFRICA

Dramatic vistas, historic sites and adventure await you

Located at the southernmost point of the African continent, South Africa is a dramatically diverse country with attractions such as **Cape Town**, one of the world's top 10 travel destinations*; the **Cape of Good Hope**, where the Atlantic and Indian oceans converge; **Robben Island**, one of the sites of Nelson Mandela's incarceration; **Kruger National Park**, the world's oldest and largest wildlife sanctuary and a popular spot for safaris; and the centuries-old town of **Stellenbosch**, the home of several first-class wineries.

If you'd like to visit one of the world's most exciting, most hospitable and least expensive countries, make South Africa your destination.

The following itineraries are just a few possibilities for a 12-day stay in South Africa. Given the highly favorable exchange rate between the South African rand and the U.S. dollar**, you can experience significant savings during your trip.

When is the best time to go? Because it is in the Southern Hemisphere, South Africa's seasons are the flip side of ours; North America's winter is South Africa's summer. But South Africa has a temperate climate year-round, giving you a wide range of choices for when to plan your trip.



Cape Town, wineries and Cape of Good Hope (five days)

Cape Town's breathtaking setting between the mountains and the sea rivals that of Rio de Janeiro. A short aerial tramway ride takes you from downtown up to Table Mountain. The trip offers panoramic views of the city, miles of beaches and the sea.



Among Cape Town's most important sites are the **Company's Garden**, created by the Dutch East India Company in the 1600s; **museums** displaying African art and culture; the city's infamous **slave quarters**; **St. George's Mall**, with local art, clothing and souvenirs; and the **Victoria and Alfred Waterfront District**, bustling with trendy shops, celebrated culinary fare and nightspots.

From the **Nelson Mandela Gateway** at the waterfront, you can take a 30-minute boat ride to **Robben Island** and the notorious prison where **Mandela** was incarcerated for close to two decades.

Take one day for the **Cape of Good Hope**. The drive takes you past cloud-capped mountains and seaside villages. You might see small baboons by the side of the road, penguins at Boulders Beach and hundreds of fur seals at Seal Island. The **Two Oceans** restaurant provides a sweeping view of the turbulent waters where cold Atlantic and warm Indian ocean currents converge.

Near Cape Town are the celebrated **South African wineries** and Dutch colonial towns of Stellenbosch and Franschhoek, both dating back to the 1600s.

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Don't be handcuffed by rising legal costs

According to a recent article in *The Wall Street Journal*, "Legal fees cross new mark: \$1,500 an hour."

According to the American Bar Association:

- Seventy-one percent of consumers surveyed had a legal issue within the past year.
- Forty-five percent of those consumers actually hired an attorney.
- The expense of hiring a lawyer was seen as the biggest barrier to securing legal help.

It shouldn't be this way. But how can members still obtain quality personal legal representation in an environment of skyrocketing fees?

LegalShield Legal and Identity Theft Services

LegalShield, a prepaid legal plan offered through MTA Benefits, provides affordable legal protection along with a comprehensive consumer identity theft plan known as IDT. LegalShield negotiates with law firms throughout North America to provide representation for a fraction of what they traditionally charge.



MTA members receive special pricing on monthly fees:

- Legal plan: \$15.95, no enrollment fee.
- Standard IDT plan: \$14.95 stand-alone, no enrollment fee; or \$9.95 if combined with legal plan.
- Premium IDT: \$29.95 stand-alone, no enrollment fee; or \$19.95 if combined with legal plan.

Members who are enrolled in the legal plan have access to an attorney hotline 24 hours a day every day of the year in case of a covered emergency situation, and they can receive advice on an unlimited number of personal

(non-employment-related) legal matters from a qualified law firm. LegalShield has not raised rates for members in more than 40 years.

There are some events that you can't anticipate, such as a car accident, a merchant's refusal to honor a guarantee or an audit by the IRS. But there are others that you can be ready for, such as preparing a will, planning for elder care or buying a house. LegalShield can cover all of these life events and more for less than \$200 per year.

To learn more about how LegalShield can provide you with peace of mind when you are facing legal matters, visit www.mtabenefits.com.

End the school year with giveaways



May 2-6 Apple Watch

In May, you could be the lucky winner of an Apple Watch. Wearing the Apple Watch enables you to respond to notifications without having to reach for your phone. A gentle tap on the wrist shows you that a new notification has arrived, and you can decide whether you want to respond right away or wait. If you're looking to stay active and healthy, the Apple Watch can keep track of your heart rate, daily activity and workouts.

A new season calls for new shoes. You can purchase a new pair or two from DSW if you are one of the winners of our June giveaway. Three lucky members will each win a \$100 DSW gift card. A new pair of sneakers would be perfect for warm-weather hiking, running or sightseeing. Summer calls for sandals, so you'll want to grab a pair of those as well!



June 13-20 \$100 DSW gift card

To enter, visit www.mtabenefits.com during the giveaway periods. If you're not currently registered on our website, please register now and we'll send you a giveaway reminder e-mail.



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Tip Sheet

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

A sun-filled getaway offers the perfect respite

With more than 40 years in the business, TNT Vacations Powered by Funjet Vacations is the authority on fun-in-the-sun travel. Whether you want to book an all-inclusive vacation a year in advance or plan a last-minute getaway, Funjet Vacations will ensure your home away from home is everything you've imagined.

Saint Lucia boasts a spectacular natural landscape — breathtaking beaches, the Piton Mountains and a stunning rain forest, all on an island just 27 miles long. Drive right through Soufrière Volcano, known as Sulphur Springs, and be sure to stop at the hot springs and mud baths along the way. Plan your visit for early May and experience the creative sounds of the international Saint Lucia Jazz & Arts Festival.

The **Puerto Vallarta-Nayarit** stretch of Mexico's Pacific Coast is a unique cultural destination, populated by both nationals and foreigners who have made this beautiful area their permanent home.

Downtown Puerto Vallarta is the best-known location in the region. The iconic Malecón



Travel Tip

“At **La Bodeguita del Medio** in Puerto Vallarta, you can treat your taste buds to some of the best Cuban food outside of Cuba, with live salsa music every night to accompany your mojitos and shrimp empanadas with cilantro sauce.”

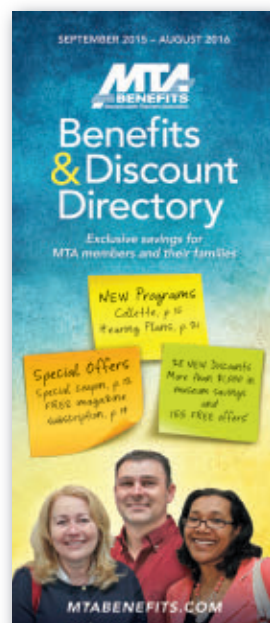
— Funjet Vacations

boardwalk along Banderas Bay is the ultimate spot for shopping, visiting art galleries and dining. Head north along the coast to Riviera Nayarit for a golf vacation unlike any other and challenge

yourself at El Nayar, recently renovated by Jack Nicklaus and Nicklaus Design. The magnificent views of the bay and the Pacific Ocean, combined with the Sierra Madre backdrop, are unparalleled.

Visit mtavacations.com to plan your ideal getaway, whether it's to Hawaii, Europe or somewhere in between.

Outdoor fun for the entire family



Warm weather and the great outdoors go hand in hand, and as spring turns to summer, you'll find that the **MTA Benefits & Discount Directory** offers plenty of ways to save on outdoor activities. The **Lowell Spinners** baseball team offers \$2 off per ticket when you purchase online and the **Portland Sea Dogs** offer a \$1 discount. At the **New Hampshire Motor Speedway**, members save 15 percent on standard stadium pricing.

If being out on open water is your cup of tea, **Cape Ann Whale Watch** provides an \$18 discount for members and one family member. At **Susie J. Sport Fishing Charters**, a member-owned business, you'll enjoy fishing at some of the best spots on Cape Cod. The discount ranges from \$10 to \$20 depending on the length of the fishing trip. If you'd prefer to be in control of your vessel, rent a kayak and cruise up and down the Charles River at **Charles River Canoe & Kayak**, where you'll save 15 percent on one boat.



Golf is a favorite pastime for many people, and with the beauty of Mount Washington right beside you, playing nine or 18 holes at the **Omni Mount Washington Resort** is a must. Members and immediate family save \$10. If you're feeling adventurous, add zip-lining to your "to-do" list this summer. Enjoy the exhilarating feeling of the wind in your face as you zip from tree to tree. Discounts ranging from \$5 to \$10 are available at **Deerfield Valley Canopy Tours**, **Berskhire East Canopy Tours** and **Bretton Woods Canopy Tour** at the **Omni Mount Washington Resort**.

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

TOP FIVE REASONS TO CONSIDER THE MTA Specified Critical Illness Plan

Did you know that every 26 seconds, an American has a coronary event such as a heart attack or stroke?¹ Did you also know that the risk of developing cancer during your lifetime is nearly one in two for men and one in three for women?² Life can change in a heartbeat — and you're not always going to be prepared for the financial toll of such unfortunate events. The MTA Critical Illness Plan is designed to help ease some of that financial burden. The plan can provide a lump-sum payment upon the first occurrence or diagnosis of heart attack, stroke, cancer, permanent paralysis or kidney failure, or the need for a major organ transplant or coronary artery bypass.



There are many reasons to consider the MTA Critical Illness Plan, but here are the **top five**.

1. If a family member has been diagnosed with cancer, you could be at increased risk.
2. The younger you are when you enroll, the lower the cost. Premiums don't increase as you grow older.
3. Coverage is available in a lump sum of \$10,000 to \$50,000.
4. The plan allows you to pay medical expenses that health insurance doesn't cover: e.g., deductibles, experimental treatments, prescription co-pays and transportation to health facilities.
5. Your spouse and children are eligible for coverage.

Whatever your No. 1 reason may be, the MTA plan could make a big difference in your security and recovery. You can't predict whether you will ever suffer one of these illnesses or conditions, but you can be prepared. The critical illness plan can help to reduce the financial burden that accompanies a life-threatening illness. To find out more, call 888.646.1972, ext. 104.

¹American Heart Association, "Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics — 2008 Update," Jan. 29, 2008.

²American Cancer Society, "Cancer Facts & Figures 2010."

MAGNIFICENT SOUTH AFRICA

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Safari (four days)

For many travelers, the point of a safari is seeing the "big five" — lions, leopards, buffalo, elephants and rhinoceroses. Many wildlife preserves are home to these magnificent creatures, including **Kruger National Park**, which offers a variety of safari trips in different price ranges. You can also select an exclusive private game reserve such as **Phinda Forest**, where guests stay in stylish "Zulu Zen" suites with glass walls that create an indoor-outdoor living space.

Pietermaritzburg and the battlefields (three days)

Pietermaritzburg is known for its British Colonial and Victorian architecture. The most emotionally charged moment for visitors may come at the old Pietermaritzburg Railway Station. It was here in 1893 that **Mohandas "Mahatma" Gandhi** was ordered to leave the train because he was traveling in a whites-only compartment. That humiliation helped him decide his destiny. Gandhi left his law practice and became the leading champion for Indian rights in South Africa.

Within driving distance of Pietermaritzburg are famous battlefields: the site of the **Anglo-Boer War**, which **Winston Churchill** covered as a newspaper correspondent, and the **Anglo-Zulu** battlefield where the British experienced one of the worst losses in their colonial history.



For more information on adventures in exciting South Africa and help planning your trip, visit mtavacations.com.

Editor's note: The travel suggestions above are based on a trip that Mary Ellen Evans, the writer of this article, took in November 2014.

* TripAdvisor, 2015 Travelers' Choice Award for Top 25 Destinations in the World.

**See banks for the latest exchange rates.