

RALLY FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION SET FOR MAY 20

MTA Today

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A photograph of a male teacher with glasses and a blue and black striped sweater leaning over a desk, smiling as he looks at a computer monitor. A young male student in a grey hoodie is sitting at the desk, looking at the same monitor. The monitor displays some blurry text. In the background, there is a world map on the wall, a small American flag, and a projector screen. The text "a gentle... n shake... e world -Gandhi" is visible on the wall.

**MTA MEMBER IS NAMED
NATIONAL ESP OF THE YEAR**



An All-Star Educator

The MTA Red Sox Most Valuable Educator program is back in full swing this season. The first educator chosen to be a 2017 MVE was Liz Phipps Soeiro, a librarian at the Cambridgeport School in Cambridge. Phipps Soeiro is pictured near home plate at Fenway Park with Red Sox mascot Wally the Green Monster. To nominate a public school educator, another school worker or a volunteer to be a Most Valuable Educator, please send an essay of up to 400 words outlining his or her contribution to students to Most Valuable Educator, c/o Red Sox Community Relations, 4 Yawkey Way, Boston, MA 02215. Please include summer contact information for both the educator and the nominator. Nominations must be postmarked by June 30.

Photo courtesy of the Boston Red Sox

MTA Today

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This edition also includes the Spring issue of *The MTA Advantage*



The Massachusetts Teachers Association
2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor
Quincy, MA 02171-2119
800.392.6175 or 617.878.8000
FAX: 617.742.7046
www.massteacher.org



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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.

MTA President

Barbara Madeloni

MTA Vice President

Erik J. Champy

Executive Director-Treasurer

Ann Clarke

Publisher

Ann Clarke

Communications Director/Editor

James Sacks

Staff Assistant

Janice Morrissey

Graphic Designer

Joshua Degregorio

ON THE COVER

Saul Ramos, a paraeducator at Burncoat High School in Worcester who works with visually impaired students, has been named the national Education Support Professional of the Year by the National Education Association. Ramos recently paid a visit to sophomore Thien Nguyen, one of his former students, at the University Park Campus School in Worcester. Coverage begins on Page 6. Meanwhile, MTA member activism is in full swing. An article on the Rally for Public Education, which will be held on Boston Common on May 20, can be found on Page 3. A story on volunteer opportunities at the upcoming NEA Representative Assembly, which will take place in Boston, appears on Page 10. This edition of *MTA Today* also includes a section on the Annual Meeting of Delegates beginning on Page 23.



Cover photo by Chris Christo
Cover design by Joshua Degregorio

Quote-Unquote

"While some claim her to be an education advocate, what she's really done is use her wealth as a pay-to-play political donor."

— Steven Cook, president of the Michigan Education Association, speaking about Betsy DeVos, appointed by President Donald Trump to serve as U.S. secretary of education

Rally for Public Education on May 20

By Scott McLennan

A Rally for Public Education on May 20 will be, as one organizer put it, the “No on Question 2 celebration that we were robbed of by Donald Trump.”

Trump’s election to the presidency sharply stung the constituencies that united to defeat Question 2, which would have drastically expanded the number of charter schools in Massachusetts.

But as MTA President Barbara Madeloni pointed out, advocates who worked to beat back the well-financed ballot initiative learned over the course of the campaign just how deeply residents of the state value public education.

“Trump and his choice for U.S. secretary of education, Betsy DeVos, will continue an all-out attack on public education,” Madeloni said. “Massachusetts Education Secretary James Peyser, Governor Charlie Baker and Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester are already pushing much of this agenda — and they now have Trump and DeVos as their enthusiastic allies in Washington, D.C.”

But the Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance — a central part of the Save Our Public Schools campaign, which spearheaded the defeat of Question 2 — continues to grow and organize educators, students and communities. MEJA will promote and fight for the values voiced by the more than 2 million voters who turned out on Nov. 8 to assert that public schools must be democratically controlled and sufficiently funded.

“The charter school fight was one battle, but we have many more battles to win before we have the schools that all students deserve,” said Lisa Guisbond, executive director of Citizens for Public Schools, a MEJA member. “MEJA’s goals include making early education freely available to all, ensuring that educators and not standardized tests are the driving force in the classroom, and removing massive amounts of debt from the backs of public college and university students.”

MEJA picked up on calls from coalition partners and allies to have a demonstration against the destructive policies that are facing public education and to advocate for the funding necessary to provide all students with a high-quality education. The MTA and the American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts are members of MEJA, along with other labor organizations and parent, student and community groups.

A platform developed for the May 20 rally — which will begin at 2 p.m. on Boston Common at Beacon and Charles streets — recognizes the intersection of public education and social justice. The platform calls for fully funded public schools and colleges; passage of the Fair Share Amendment, which would generate close to \$2 billion a year for public education and transportation through a 4 percent tax on annual income over \$1 million; debt-free public higher education; upholding collective bargaining rights for educators; a moratorium on the



MTA members attending the Annual Meeting of Delegates will have the opportunity to march from the Hynes Convention Center to the rally, drawing further attention to the fight for public education.

use of high-stakes tests to assess students, schools or educators; support for living wages and paid family and medical leave; ending the school-to-prison pipeline by adopting restorative justice programs in schools; and measures to protect the rights of all Massachusetts students and their families.

MTA Vice President Erik J. Champy called on MTA members to make a strong showing at the rally.

“As an educator with experience from preschool through graduate school, I understand the challenges related to funding and equity at all levels in education,” he said. “This rally provides another opportunity for us to stand together for the public schools that our communities deserve.”

MTA members attending the Annual Meeting of Delegates will have the opportunity to march from the Hynes Convention Center to the rally, drawing further attention to the fight for public education. The schedule has yet to be finalized, but the crowd will hear from a variety of inspirational speakers.

Madeloni called public schools the bedrock of our communities, places where learning and nurturing are ongoing and where the foundations of democracy take root. She warned that current state and federal education officials do not treat public education with the care and respect it deserves.

“Trump, DeVos, Peyser, Chester and Baker are committed to undermining public education,” she said. “Their privatization schemes undo democracy, distance schools from their communities, and demand conformity to narrow standards. Schools should be revolutionary places, not incubators of conformity.”

She added, “The members of MEJA and its allies are championing a vision of public education that frees educators from rigid constraints and gives them the resources to meet the needs of every student. We want students of all ages to be able to explore their passions and interests and become conscientious critical thinkers.”

These times call for far-reaching demands

On the afternoon of May 20, MTA members will gather on Boston Common with our sisters and brothers in AFT Massachusetts and other unions — as well as students, parents and other community members — to demand the schools and colleges our communities deserve.

We need you to join us along with your family, friends, colleagues and neighbors. Our message: We will not allow U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, Massachusetts Secretary of Education James Peyser, Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester, President Donald Trump or Governor Charlie Baker to privatize our public schools, and we will not let them undermine our union. Indeed, we are ready not only to

resist their efforts but to envision, create and fight for great public schools — preK through higher education — for every student in Massachusetts.

Across the state — in locals, on campuses and in school buildings — rank-and-file MTA members are identifying issues, developing strategies and organizing to fight for workplace rights and the well-being of students and communities. Our strength begins in these local struggles and coalitions, but our ultimate power is realized when we knit together our community efforts into a statewide movement.

Right after the MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates ends on May 20, we will do just that.

For too long, we have been playing defense against a commissioner of education and a secretary of education who have little respect for educators. As I write today, our secretary of education has been fretting in a meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education that without the threat of lowered accountability levels, districts (i.e., schools

and educators) could have an incentive to have students do poorly on state tests.

This is the kind of distorted thinking that comes from too many policymakers in our current environment. It embodies a deep disrespect for the work of educators. And it leads to the punitive use of the evaluation system, stressed and anxious students and educators, and repeated attacks on collective bargaining.

No more defense. It is time to play offense. We — educators, students and our communities — deserve so much more. We deserve well-funded schools and colleges, respect and professional autonomy, job security and workplace democracy, safe schools where every student can flourish, and communities built on economic and racial justice.

We reject the DeVos/Trump/Chester/Peyser/Baker agenda: Privatization. Austerity budgets. More charter schools. Vouchers. Hyper-accountability. Weaponized evaluations. School and district takeovers. Union busting. Test-focused curricula. Silencing of educator voices. Attempts to divide educators, students and the community. Economic injustice and policymakers' denial of its impact on students. Racial injustice in the form of underfunding and high-stakes standardized tests.

We believe:

- That every student deserves access to a rich and varied curriculum, to well-resourced schools and colleges, and to educators whose work is respected and supported.

- That students' learning conditions are educators' working conditions and that strong unions make for strong schools.

- That the success of our schools, colleges and universities is tied to the well-being of our communities — and that when we join in collective action, we can win not only great public schools but a better world.

Therefore, we will be gathering on Boston Common on May 20 to demand:

- Fully funded public education.

- R.E.S.P.E.C.T: Guaranteed educator voice and workplace protections.

- Less testing and more learning.

- Equitable access to high-quality public education for every student.

- Equal pay for equal work.

- Debt-free public higher education.

- An end to the school-to-prison pipeline.

- That our legislators support the Fair Share Amendment, the Fight for \$15 and paid family and medical leave.

These are big goals to envision in complicated and often scary times. They might seem out of reach to some, but I think these times actually call for far-reaching demands.

Our victory on Question 2 taught us that the people of Massachusetts value public education and have deep respect for educators. We accessed something profound in people — a belief in the common good and a commitment to taking care of each other.

I think that these are the strongest elements of our communities and that our fellow Massachusetts residents just need our help to find their voice and their power. Let's gather on May 20 and use those voices to sing out loudly, clearly, fiercely and joyfully.

See you on May 20 on Boston Common.

*In solidarity,
Barbara*



Barbara Madeloni
MTA President

Letters policy

MTA Today welcomes letters to the editor from MTA members. Letters should be no longer than 200 words. Each letter submitted for publication must address a topic covered in *MTA Today*, must be signed and must include the writer's telephone number for confirmation purposes. Opinions must be clearly identified as belonging to the letter-writer. We reserve the right to edit for length, clarity and style. To submit a letter, mail it to *MTA Today*, 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.

Future educators gather for SEAM conference

UMass Boston students Lieu Chau, front left, and Victoria McKeen, front right, were among dozens of future educators who gathered at Worcester Technical High School on April 22 for the Student Education Association of Massachusetts' 2017 Pre-Service Teacher Conference. The conference provided the opportunity for those planning to enter the profession to learn from experienced educators. Conferees heard from members of the MTA New Member Committee and chose from several workshops, including "Understanding Students with Trauma," "Difficult Students: Stay Calm and Know What to Do," "Inclusion Strategies for New Teachers" and "Beginning Songwriting for Literacy and Learning."

Photo by Bob Duffy



Contract battle creates key alliances

By Scott McLennan

What grew over three years into a frustrating contract fight for Brookline educators has blossomed into a movement built on social justice.

By the time members of the Brookline Educators Union ratified a multi-year pact in March, the members had done more than succeed in improving pay and working conditions. They had built alliances across the community and initiated a public dialogue on the direction in which the highly regarded school district was heading.

“Racial equity will not be achieved through data collection,” BEU President Jessica Wender-Shubow declared at a March 15 forum packed with parents, students, educators, activists and other interested community members.

From there, Wender-Shubow went on to describe other concerns that needed to be addressed but wouldn’t be as long as the district emphasized standardized testing and bureaucratic reporting.

“We are beginning to build an ongoing democratic conversation about what should be happening in our schools and put an end to the data fetish that’s become the managerial prerogative,” she said.

The BEU began its campaign to reclaim public education during negotiations in May of 2014.

Unable to work through a number of proposals dealing with class sizes, staffing levels, protecting time strictly for teaching, and the ever-increasing assessment-related mandates dictated by the district, as well as pay and working conditions for paraprofessionals, the BEU and the Brookline School Committee negotiated a one-year “bridge agreement” on wages.

The union organized a contract action team to assist the bargaining team, and members from across the district met regularly to plan events that would both inform the public and engage the community in the effort to win a fair long-term agreement.

BEU members became a presence at community events, where they handed out fliers. They distributed bumper stickers and lawn signs in support of educators. On several occasions, the BEU held rallies before School Committee meetings, after which union members would address the board with their concerns.

The BEU also organized actions within buildings, such as withholding voluntary services and refusing to speak at management-convened meetings.

The public actions caught the attention of a number of people in the community, and they formed the Brookline Parents Organization.

“Parents want their kids to be with teachers who are happy. I want to live in a town where teachers are valued, and we could see that Brookline teachers were demoralized,” Adam Weiner, a founder of the parents’ organization, said during the March 15 forum.



Photos by Scott McLennan

Rodolfo Machirica, a paraprofessional at Brookline’s Lincoln School, told the audience at a community forum on March 15 that education is a tool for raising consciousness.



BEU President Jessica Wender-Shubow addressed the audience packed into All Saints Parish for a wide-ranging discussion about the town’s public schools.

The organization itself grew frustrated with the treatment that parents received from members of the Brookline School Committee whenever they attended meetings and sought information.

The parents’ organization, the BEU and other community-based organizations ultimately formed the Alliance for Brookline Schools, which endorsed two of the four candidates running for three open seats on the School Committee this spring.

The BEU built its foundation for bargaining on social justice principles. Educators knew that standardized tests and other data-driven approaches were not the way to help students with various academic, social or emotional needs — and that the standard methods would not close the achievement gaps found among racial minorities and children from lower-income families.

The BEU also spoke out loudly against poor pay for paraprofessionals, calling it an affront to their professionalism and commitment to students. The

union publicized how much less paraprofessionals were being paid than their peers in similar districts.

“As out-of-district placements for students on education plans dropped over recent years, the paraprofessionals’ role grew,” said Wendy MacMillan, who headed up bargaining for paraprofessionals. “But it became demoralizing for the paras that with every proposal we made to improve working conditions and wages, we heard ‘no.’” She continued, “We’ve made a first step for the paras with this contract, but the fight is not over. It’s just beginning.”

The BEU did succeed in winning some wage hikes for paraprofessionals and plans to bargain for additional increases when negotiations begin next year for a successor contract. The current agreements expire in 2019.

The centerpiece of the agreement for classroom teachers was the establishment of a Workload Oversight Committee, which is intended to help protect time devoted to instruction and social and emotional learning.

“Our members felt that initiatives were coming from every direction, and as new ones were added, nothing was taken away, leaving less and less time for actual teaching,” Wender-Shubow said.

MTA President Barbara Madeloni applauded the tenacity of the BEU for resisting proposals and policies that educators knew were not in the best interest of students — and she emphasized that collective bargaining and the legal protections held by union members made it possible for BEU members to fight for working conditions that gave educators a stronger hand.

“There was a disconnect between what you had been told and how you felt, and there is a danger in that disconnect,” Madeloni said during the community forum. “But what you are doing here is both building a movement and creating a vision.”

MTA ESP receives national honor

Paraeducator Saul Ramos calls announcement *'the moment of my life'*

By Jean Conley

It wasn't until Saul Ramos heard the word "Braille" that he realized he was being named the National Education Association's Education Support Professional of the Year.

On March 11, the Burncoat High School paraeducator and member of the Educational Association of Worcester — who taught himself Braille to better help his students become independent — was in Dallas with a number of his MTA colleagues, attending a banquet that was a highlight of the 2017 national ESP Conference.

Ramos had been nominated for the NEA award after being chosen as MTA's ESP of the Year for 2016 — but he didn't actually expect to win.

"I saw who else was nominated — really good people from three dozen states — and I had met some of them before and heard about the incredible things they had done," Ramos said. "Honestly, to be among these people, I was just happy for whoever would win."

But he did win, and he found himself up on stage in front of 900 cheering fellow ESPs accepting a trophy, a bouquet of roses and a \$10,000 check from NEA President Lily Eskelsen García.

"I can't even think about it because even now I get teary-eyed," Ramos said. "Some would call this a moment in time," he added. "But I would say this was *the moment of my life*."

Eskelsen García praised Ramos' "commitment to helping students succeed in the classroom, in school and in the community." She added that Ramos "is a shining example of ESPs who work tirelessly to make great public schools for every student."

MTA President Barbara Madeloni nominated Ramos for the award.

"I admire Saul and am inspired by his dedication and thoughtfulness," she said. "He is looked up to as an educational leader for his commitment to his field, as well as his expertise. He is in fact the symbol of just how essential ESPs are to meeting the needs of the whole student."

Bringing home the NEA's highest ESP award was the last thing on Ramos' mind when he first walked into a classroom as an educator more than 18 years ago.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I think that I would be recognized for the work I am so passionate about," Ramos wrote in his application to the NEA ESP of the Year Selection Committee. "Having that first encounter with my first student, and seeing how much of a difference I made in his life, made me realize that I have a mission in life."

Ramos' first assignment was to work with a legally blind kindergarten student who needed assistance.

As the student learned Braille, Ramos spent hours after school conducting online searches and



Photo courtesy of NEA

Saul Ramos spoke after being named the NEA's 2017 ESP of the Year. With him on stage were NEA Secretary-Treasurer Princess R. Moss, left, and NEA President Lily Eskelsen García.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I think that I would be recognized for the work I am so passionate about," Ramos wrote in his application to the NEA ESP of the Year Selection Committee.

studying materials from Vision Teachers and the local library so that he could learn Braille himself.

Not only did that help Ramos help his student with lessons, but he developed ways to bring Braille into the classroom as a whole, sparking interest among the other students and giving them an introduction to how visually impaired students learn.

Ramos worked with his first student from 1999 until the student graduated from Worcester Technical High School in 2011. That experience fueled his commitment to all special education students.

Keefe Bangert, a teacher of visually impaired students who works throughout the school district, has gotten to know Ramos well over the years they have worked together.

"Visually impaired students need to be helped, but they also need to become self-determined and self-reliant," Bangert said. Knowing when to be helpful and when to back away in order to foster independence, he added, "is a very difficult line for a person to walk."

Ramos has a good understanding about when to remove himself from situations to make a student more independent, Bangert said. "That's something

you can't train for," he said. "That's instinct and empathy."

Thien Nguyen, a visually impaired student who now attends the University Park Campus School, worked with Ramos from fourth grade through eighth grade.

Ramos said that learning English — Nguyen's family is from Vietnam — was another challenge for his student. Born in San Germán, Puerto Rico, and raised between there and Worcester, Ramos knows what it feels like to try to fit into two cultures.

At first, Nguyen recalled, "I didn't really want to be independent."

"But by seventh grade, Saul pushed me to learn more and become independent," he continued. "He made me do my work."

Now a sophomore, he is looking forward to attending college, where he would like to study geometry.

During Ramos' tenure as NEA ESP of the Year, he will represent ESPs at national education conferences, as well as at NEA events surrounding National ESP Day in November and at the 2018 NEA ESP convention. He will also give a speech before about 8,000 delegates at the NEA Representative Assembly in Boston this summer.

In between, he'll travel around the country to tell his story — both as an ESP and as a union activist — and to advocate for all educators involved in public education.

Ramos has a reputation for being extremely successful with his students because of his natural empathy, but he has firsthand experience with poverty and loss.

Continued on next page



Photos by Chris Christo and courtesy of NEA

In photo at left, Ramos met with sophomore Thien Nguyen and Keefe Bangert, a teacher of visually impaired students, at the University Park Campus School in Worcester. At right, Ramos was surrounded by a contingent of fellow MTA members on the night the award was announced.

Ramos is determined to win respect for ESPs

Continued from previous page

Several years ago, his family lost everything in a house fire. That has caused him to reach out ever since to others who have suffered, he said.

He also knows homelessness — because it happened to him.

“Even though I was a full-time employee as an ESP some years ago, I was not able to make ends meet and I was homeless for two months,” he said. “Yet I made it to school on time every day. I did my job, I smiled, and made sure my students were taken care of.”

Ramos said he felt especially connected to his students that year, realizing that some of them might be going through something similar.

One of the issues he’ll speak about during his tenure is pay for ESPs, many of whom do not make a living wage. “Some even qualify for government assistance,” Ramos said. “This is a shameful situation.

“Many of us are just a paycheck away from being homeless ourselves,” he added.

Ramos describes ESPs as “some of the most hard-working people in a school — essential to fulfilling the needs of the whole student.”

“And yet we are limited in our pay and in the amount of respect we receive,” he said. “This all needs to change.”

He went on to reflect about the dedication that ESPs show in their work.

“Many times we are the eyes, ears, voice and even arms and legs of our students,” Ramos said. “We change diapers, take punches, get our hair pulled, put on bandages, line children up, feed them,

call students’ homes, make sure they get home safely, and sometimes even buy clothing for them. Many of us have college credits, certificates and degrees, even master’s degrees. Some have worked as ESPs for a year, some for 10, some for 30.”

It seems fitting, given Ramos’ determination that ESPs be given the respect they are due, that beginning this year, each NEA ESP of the year will be recognized by the Teachers Hall of Fame in Emporia, Kansas. The change was made as a way of honoring all educators.

For the most part, Ramos is taking all of his new commitments in stride. He was already busy. In addition to working at Burncoat, Ramos is first vice president of the EAW, vice chair of the MTA Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee, and a member of the ESP and Bylaws and Rules committees and the Equal Opportunity Council.

At the NEA, he is a member of the Paraeducator Institute Work Group and the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee, and he is the Northeast regional director of the Hispanic Caucus. He is also a graduate of the NEA Minority Leadership Training and ESP Leaders for Tomorrow programs.

Outside of work, Ramos does all he can to bring the arts to local communities.

As the founder of a nonprofit arts organization, Arte Latino of New England, Ramos was asked by the mayor of Providence, Rhode Island, to join his education and arts and culture transition teams to provide guidance on what was needed in the city.

Last summer, Ramos was asked to do a bilingual adaptation of “Romeo and Juliet” for

Trinity Repertory Company’s summer theater in Rhode Island. The adaptation was a huge success, bringing together Spanish- and English-speaking audiences of all ages.

Ramos describes himself as “a little bashful — not one to seek attention for myself.” So he finds the initial rush of acclaim he is receiving as National ESP of the Year more than a bit overwhelming.

As he walked off the stage after accepting the award, fellow educators crowded around him to congratulate him. The attention continued on the way home, he said, with people in the airport in Dallas recognizing him and “wanting to take a picture of me like I was some sort of celebrity!”

Even on the plane, he said, “the crew announced that they wanted to make sure they extended congratulations to the National ESP of the Year.”

He added: “Everybody’s clapping and people are saying, ‘That’s him, right there!’”

But true to his quiet nature and his desire for inclusiveness, Ramos said that he wants to stay in touch with the other NEA ESP of the Year nominees and see that their talents continue to be recognized while he is serving as ESP of the Year.

“I don’t want them to think that this is just it,” he said. “I want to form a coalition with them. Just because my name was selected doesn’t mean they are not a part of this.”

Ramos said he will depend on the others to tell him what is going on in their states.

“I’m really looking forward to connecting with more people and seeing what I can do as ESP of the Year,” he said. “I want to bring the right message.”

JOBS AT THE MTA

The Massachusetts Teachers Association is hiring. To view available job opportunities, please visit massteacher.org/jobs.

The MTA is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We value our diverse workforce and welcome applications from minorities, women and persons with disabilities.

Forums inspire conversations on race

By Jean Conley and Bob Duffy

What are the strategies educators can use to initiate conversations about race in their schools and communities?

How can MTA members make classrooms and school communities that are safe spaces for all students and their families?

What should the MTA do as an association to broaden understanding about race and ethnicity?

The MTA's Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee posed these questions to groups of educators at regional forums held throughout March as a way of focusing discussions about how educators should deal with issues of race and ethnicity in an increasingly polarized political climate.

EMAC Chair Yan Yii said the general idea for the forums developed over the last two years, but that the strain of racism and bigotry that ran through the 2016 presidential campaign — as well as the fears being expressed by immigrant students and their families — expedited the need for dialogue.

Janelle Quarles, an EMAC member and at-large ethnic minority director on the MTA Board, said that while discussion about race and ethnicity was important before the election, “frankly, it’s imperative now.”

“Beforehand,” she added, “people were somewhat afraid to dig into the topic. But now that we are in this climate, our survival depends on it. If we’re going to progress as a country, we have to talk.”

The forums continued discussions that began during the 2016 Summer Conference and deepened at the 2016 EMAC Conference, whose theme was “Race, Ethnicity and Public Education.”

Educators came to the forums — held in Quincy, Worcester and Auburn — with a raft of concerns. Several expressed relief at having a place to talk to others and share resources that could help.

“Educators want to know what to do when a student approaches them and says, ‘I’m worried about my parents’ or ‘I’m worried about being able to come to school,’” said Yii, a fifth-grade teacher in Canton.

“We need to make sure students feel safe in coming to school every day,” she added. “We’re looking at immigration bans, Immigration and



Photo by Jean Conley

Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee member Janelle Quarles, left, MTA Retired member Valerie Bonds, center, and EMAC Chair Yan Yii listened during the March 23 forum in Quincy.

Customs Enforcement officers coming into buildings, students’ fears of losing their parents overnight. So we want to learn how to create a safe space for everyone — for students, for families and for communities. Our job doesn’t end just with our students.”

The committee is preparing literature to hand out to educators at the MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates on a wide range of topics, from the rights of immigration officers on school grounds to diversity training opportunities and book lists for those who want to include diversity, race and ethnicity in their teaching, Yii said.

As *MTA Today* went to press, the committee was also proposing various offerings for this year’s Summer Conference.

“We’re hoping to help people find their voice on these issues,” said Yii. “People want to know how they can get involved.”

Retired member Valerie Bonds, who is working this year as a guest teacher in Wellesley, said after the March 23 forum that she is interested in brainstorming with others and coming up with ways to provide

diversity training for staff, students and parents.

“Cultural competency has always been important, and it’s more so now because there is a cultural divide in this country,” she said. She added that the presidential campaign “opened an awareness that we as a country need to be more concerned and more invested in our nation as a diverse nation.”

Faith Johnson, a teacher assistant in the Brockton Public Schools, said cultural competency training is “certainly pertinent to the work I do.”

“I work with a diverse range of students, and it’s always important for me to become more culturally sensitive and gain more skills that I can model to my students so that they can build these skills themselves.”

Johnson said it’s crucial that she not just see her students as people “who are here to learn math or science or how to write a good essay.”

“It’s important for me to know the essence of who they are so that they can be great members of their communities — and so there can be a ripple effect,” she said.

Members continue organizing against high-stakes testing

By Laura Barrett

It feels awful to give children a test that is not appropriate for them and then not be able to help them when they ask for help,” said Nancy Clougherty, an English as a Second Language teacher in Framingham.

That is a common sentiment among MTA members who have been organizing to resist high-stakes testing this year. Also widespread are continued concerns that testing is narrowing the curriculum, disrupting schools, increasing stress among students and staff and denying diplomas to

students who have worked hard but still can’t get over the MCAS bar.

With support from the National Education Association, Citizens for Public Schools and FairTest, a group of MTA members has been meeting this winter and spring about organizing locally against high-stakes testing.

“We are changing the conversation,” said MTA President Barbara Madeloni. “When educators, students and parents talk about creating the schools our communities deserve, one of their first demands is for less testing, more learning.”

One strategy has been for teachers to opt their

own children out of testing. Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester has sent conflicting messages about whether parents have a right to do that. In a March 6 memo, he wrote, “Every year, some families ask whether students are allowed to opt out of taking a statewide test. In brief, the answer is no.” As a result, many school leaders told parents they couldn’t opt their children out, generating confusion and concern.

The MTA pushed back. “Our compulsory education statutes require a student’s attendance at a local school, but not participation in state-mandated standardized tests,” Madeloni wrote to members.

Please turn to **Educators**/Page 15

A deceptive approach to school takeovers

By Laura Barrett

Three recent events are important for telling a story about a huge fissure over how to improve public schools in Massachusetts for students who need help the most.

Strategies backed by most educators in the state are in stark contrast to those supported by Governor Charlie Baker and others who backed passage of Question 2.

On Election Day, the public voted 62 percent to 38 percent to reject the ballot proposal backed by big-money interests to expand privatization of public education by greatly increasing the number of charter schools. The No on Question 2 campaign successfully made the case that public funds belong in public schools that are accountable to their local communities.

Despite that victory in November — or more likely because of it — Baker announced in his State of the Commonwealth address in January that he supports legislation to give the state more power to take over and, yes, privatize public schools in selected “zones.” This plan sounds suspiciously like creating new charter-like schools, even against the will of the affected communities.

Cynically, the specified schools would be part of “Innovation Partnership Zones,” though the proposal provides for neither creativity nor true collaboration. It simply gives the commissioner of education more power to appoint private boards to oversee certain schools, disempowering parents, teachers and local school committees in the process. In fact, the proposal Baker is supporting doesn’t require that a single educator or local official serve on any of these private boards.

About two weeks after the governor’s speech, on Feb. 8, state education officials acknowledged that the state takeover of the Dever Elementary School in Boston has been a failure. Commissioner Mitchell Chester had picked a private company, Blueprint, to manage the school. As reported in *The Boston Globe*, “Blueprint’s three-year oversight of the Dever has been marred by turmoil. ... The school has experienced high teacher turnover and has had six

Proposal would disempower educators and school committees

Senator Eric Lesser of Longmeadow has filed a bill for the 2017-2018 legislative session proposing to create so-called “Innovation Partnership Zones.” Representative Alice Peisch of Wellesley filed a similar bill that contains the IPZ provisions, along with other measures the MTA opposes.

The Lesser bill, supported by Governor Charlie Baker, would allow the commissioner of education to create charter-like “zones” of two or more schools, stripping democratically elected school committees of all authority over these schools and gutting local collective bargaining agreements. The MTA is calling these State Takeover Zones.

Under this plan, the commissioner of education could create a zone of an unlimited number of schools at any level as long as the zone includes at least one Level 4 or Level 5 school. The state could also pressure a district to create a zone as long as it includes at least one school in the bottom 20 percent. While euphemisms about “partnership,” “empowerment” and “innovation” are used, this is a state takeover bill, pure and simple.

■ **NO “PARTNERSHIP.”** Although school committees, parents, educators and unions have to be “engaged” in the process, they have absolutely no power over schools in these zones. Specifically, there is no requirement that a single educator, municipal employee or local elected or appointed official serve on a zone’s board of directors. In fact, those most involved in the local public schools may not constitute a majority on these boards, paving the way for charter-like entities dominated by business interests.

■ **NO “EMPOWERMENT.”** Some call these “empowerment” zones — although the only person empowered is the commissioner. For example, the commissioner could impose unilateral changes to the local contract, appoint the zone’s governing board, and approve or reject any plans developed by that board. Despite claims that this proposal calls for zones similar to the Springfield Empowerment Zone, they would bear little resemblance to that model.

■ **NO “INNOVATION.”** The proposal calls these zones “innovative,” but requires no “innovations” that can’t be approved under existing law. In fact, the mandates in this bill stifle true innovation. The zone’s plan must be judged based on “measurable student outcomes” — mainly standardized test scores. There is no reference to the kinds of innovations sought by many parents and educators, such as those addressing the social and emotional needs of students, fostering creativity and the arts, and replacing teaching to the test with authentic measures of teaching and learning.

The MTA is urging legislators to reject the bills filed by Lesser and Peisch. On March 3, Springfield Education Association President Tim Collins and about 10 other labor leaders met with Lesser to let him know they oppose his bill and are deeply concerned that he failed to confer with the SEA prior to filing it.

“This bill is nothing but tinkering around the edges of an already broken accountability system that is about shame, blame and punish instead of study, learn and support,” Collins said. “I’ve been watching education ‘reform’ for 40 years now and it’s always top-down mandates written by the bureaucrats, just like this bill. We need to be the architects of reform, not the objects of it.”

temporary or permanent principals during that time, creating difficulties in executing a turnaround plan.”

The Boston superintendent will take over as the school’s receiver in June.

The Dever fiasco looks a whole lot like the takeovers that would be allowed under the new proposal.

The Baker-backed plan, contained in bills filed by Senator Eric Lesser and Representative Alice Peisch, goes in exactly the wrong direction.

It provides no new funding for struggling schools and it disempowers teachers and local communities in the hope that educators who don’t flee the system can be browbeaten

into somehow raising test scores.

There are no magic bullets in education, but the MTA believes there are some fundamental principles that should undergird any effort to support quality education for all students. These are embodied in an omnibus bill supported by the association titled “An act strengthening and investing in our educators, students and communities.”

Among its goals:

Provide adequate funding. There are many on the right who dismiss the importance of funding in education. Quite a few of these people send their own children to private schools that can cost more than \$40,000 a year because, well, for their kids, having small class sizes, well-equipped science labs and excellent foreign language instruction clearly does make a difference.

News flash: Money matters. Adequate funding is especially important for low-income children who don’t have access to enriching activities outside of school. The nonpartisan Foundation Budget Review Commission concluded that Massachusetts public schools are underfunded by about \$1 billion a year. The MTA-supported bill requires funding to address the main problems identified in that report.

Stop the misuse of high-stakes testing. If you ask a group of public school teachers and parents to raise their hands if they believe there is too little testing in our schools, none will go up. Ask them if there is too much and hands will shoot up across the room. The vast majority of teachers polled consistently identify the excessive focus on standardized tests as an impediment to good teaching and learning.

Prepping for tests in two subjects is crowding out other subjects and emphasizes rote learning over creative problem-solving. And that’s even before addressing the time, money and energy that are going to the next great boondoggle: Next Generation MCAS tests. Those tests are being rolled out, causing significant confusion among educators trying to help their students navigate frequent changes in testing protocols and content.

Please turn to **A school**/ Page 21

BOSTON IS PROUD TO HOST THE 2017 RA



Members gear up for huge event

By Jean Conley

More than 8,000 National Education Association delegates from across the United States will converge on Boston for the 96th NEA Annual Meeting and Representative Assembly.

Because this is the first time that the event has been held in Massachusetts, there are many unknowns, said Julia Monteiro Johnson, chair of the 2017 Host Committee. “Our goal is to be the best we can be,” she added. “This is our all-out push to showcase everything that we are!”

Her enthusiasm was echoed by Ron Colbert, chair of the Host Committee’s information and registration team.

“There is no better place than Boston to hold the biggest meeting of educators in the world,” Colbert said. “The MTA is so proud to be this year’s host.”

Some meetings and conferences, along with some training sessions for volunteers, will take place at various sites in and around Boston before the official opening of the Annual Meeting, which is on June 30 at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center.

The RA, which takes place over the last four days of the Annual Meeting, begins July 2.

Members of the Host Committee, aside from Monteiro Johnson and Colbert, are Treasury Chair Richard Liston and Vice Chair Jackie Gorrie, Delegate Services Chair Sherley Phillips, NEA Fund for Children and Public Education Chair Maureen Carlos, Event Services Chair Lois Jacobs, and Telephone Network Chairs Sheila Hanley and Kathi Rogers. All are members of MTA Retired.

The committee has been working for months to make sure everything

How You Can Volunteer

■ **RA Telephone Network:** Staffs and operates the microphone/telephone system used by delegates to communicate with the presiding officer and the assembly. Volunteers will monitor microphones, answer phones, oversee communication operations and assist with TV operations.

■ **Delegate Services:** Provides services for delegates with physical challenges.

■ **Event Services:** Assigns ushers and room monitors to various events.

■ **Information and Registration:** Provides volunteers for information booth and registration area.

■ **NEA Fund for Children and Public Education:** Helps with setup and staffing of the NEA Fund booth. The fund encourages delegates to participate in the effort to raise money to help elect friends of public education.

To volunteer for any position, please visit massteacher.org/ra and fill out the form.

runs efficiently and smoothly — and that the delegates have such a wonderful experience in Massachusetts they will be eager to return.

The convention center site in Boston’s Seaport District will treat visitors to views of the city and breezes from Boston Harbor as they go about the business of setting policy and priorities for the 3-million-member NEA.

When delegates and guests have some free time, they will be encouraged to enjoy all that the city has to offer. Delegates and guests will be within walking distance — or a short bus or taxi ride — of many historic landmarks.

At least 200 volunteers will be needed each day — and those who are not delegates are invited to join their fellow MTA members as volunteers.

The payback is not only in watching how debate and decision-making happen at such a large and complex democratically run event. Volunteers also gain the satisfaction of knowing that they have contributed to the RA’s success, and they enjoy the fun of meeting educators from all over the United States.

NEA stipends of \$40 per day are available for MTA member volunteers. The NEA will also cover the cost of parking or commuting by bus or train, but mileage costs are not included. Snacks and meals will be available while volunteers are working.

The Host Committee is also working with the NEA on the possibility of providing low-cost parking and housing in the area.

Another attraction of volunteering is the chance to make the event a family

affair. Delegates often bring their teenage children or grandchildren, 14 or older, along as volunteers to help with mobility-impaired delegates.

Operation of the telephone network on the floor of the RA offers a glimpse into why so many volunteers — and such intricate planning — are needed.

Hanley, who with Rogers is in charge of volunteers for the Telephone Network, said at least 85 people need to be in place each day to help delegates contact the presiding officer on the stage during the business session so they can speak about an issue from the floor.

With so many delegates at the business session, the efficient relay of communications and having one’s concerns heard amid the din can prove challenging.

Typically, 40 to 45 telephones and microphones are placed around the floor, Hanley said, and it’s optimal to have two people at each phone. Volunteers take forms filled out by delegates lining up to speak about an issue. Each form indicates whether the delegate agrees, disagrees, has a question or wants to offer information.

Telephone volunteers relay the delegate’s message on the form by phone through the communication network so that the delegate can be recognized to speak at a microphone on the floor.

Hanley said the telephone network is “at the heart and soul” of communication during the business session. But finding 85 people who are available all day and every day that the RA is in session is not realistic, Hanley said. Flexibility is the key, she said, so telephone volunteers may be allowed to work only some days, for example, or possibly half-days.

To read more about the 2017 NEA RA, visit ra.nea.org.

The power of standing together

ESPs gather to learn, network and honor Haverhill paraprofessional Nancy Burke

By Jean Conley

Standing together and working toward common goals were among the dominant themes of the 2017 MTA Education Support Professionals Conference.

Hundreds of ESPs from across Massachusetts gathered for the annual event, which was held April 7 and 8 at the Sea Crest Beach Hotel in Falmouth. They attended workshops with titles ranging from “Collective Bargaining” and “How to Organize for Power” to “Helping Traumatized Children Learn” and “Difficult Conversations.”

ESP Committee Chair Leslie Marsland welcomed the attendees during a dinner on Friday night, April 7. She called ESPs the “first responders” of public education and said they need to “continue to be the voice of our students, our schools, our union and our communities.”

Those sentiments were similar to the reflections offered by others.

MTA President Barbara Madeloni noted just how central ESPs’ work is “to the education and the well-being and the quality of community that we create in our public schools.”

It is crucial that educators gather not just to celebrate their work and extend their knowledge, she said, “but to get to know each other, to build relationships so that we can build power.” That matters, she added, when it is time to demand respect, decent benefits and livable wages.

The 2016 ballot fight against the expansion of charter schools in the Commonwealth was won by a coalition of labor, faith, parent and community groups, Madeloni reminded the audience. “We need to lock arms, share our values and work together.”

MTA Vice President Erik J. Champy said that more than 20 years ago, when he was new to the MTA Board and attended the Summer Conference for the first time, it was ESPs who took him under their wing and showed him the value of activism.

He lauded the “many incredible leaders” among ESPs throughout the MTA and noted their commitment to their students and their fellow union members.

During the No on Question 2 campaign, Champy was invited to the University of Massachusetts Amherst to meet with the University Staff Association. The ESP leadership stressed that everyone needed to be involved in the effort to defeat the ballot initiative, he said.

“We need to win Question 2 together,” he recalled the leaders saying.

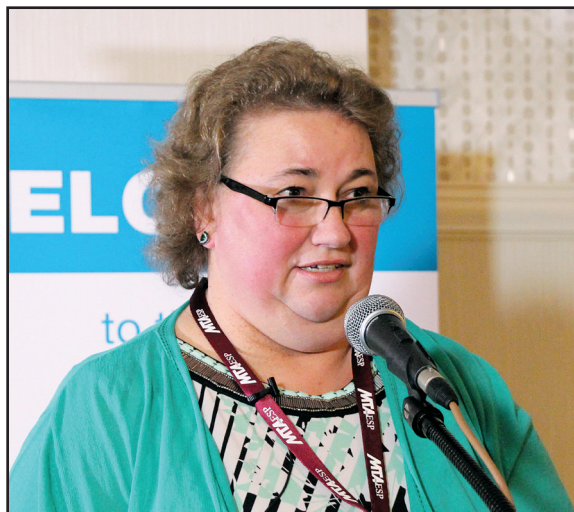
A perennial highlight of the weekend is the recognition of the MTA ESP of the Year, and participants enthusiastically applauded this year’s winner, Nancy Burke, when the award was announced during Friday’s dinner.

Burke, a special education paraprofessional in the Haverhill Public Schools for 18 years, works



On Friday night, hundreds of ESPs gave an enthusiastic reception to Nancy Burke, pictured below, when she was named the 2017 MTA ESP of the Year. At right, participants created a variety of dishes in a “Cooking with Children” workshop on Saturday.

Photos by Jean Conley



‘Get inspired. Be inspired. And don’t take ‘no’ for an answer!’

**— Nancy Burke
MTA ESP of the Year**

with the most challenged special needs students at Haverhill High School.

Over the last several years, Burke has led the transformation of an overgrown courtyard at the school into a garden that serves as an outdoor learning lab for the nearly three dozen students in the life-skills program.

Burke is a building representative for the Haverhill Education Association and a member of the ESP Committee. She also served as chair of the ESP Task Force.

Burke said she uses the school garden to encourage her students to be creative, to collaborate and to apply critical-thinking skills. But beyond that, she said, the process of building the garden required



recruiting help from others in the community, including members of the school’s football and wrestling teams, the Boy Scouts and the Junior ROTC.

She said that working on the project became a communitywide effort, inspiring all types of students to be compassionate and to “give back to their peers.”

Burke expressed gratitude that the MTA and the NEA opened her eyes to the possibilities created by union involvement.

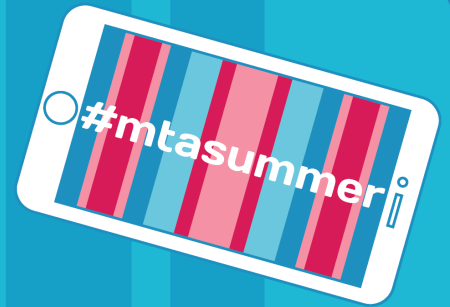
“Being an ESP, you can do anything you want — from writing a grant for a special project to serving on committees and being elected to leadership positions,” she said.

“You are here for your community,” she added. “Get inspired. Be inspired. And don’t take ‘no’ for an answer!”

On Saturday, participants heard from Doreen McGuire Grigg, the outgoing national ESP of the Year, and Saul Ramos, an MTA member who was named the new NEA ESP of the Year on March 11.

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Power in numbers will trump loss of agency fee

By Ira Fader

Life sure looked different before Election Day, Nov. 8, 2016. From a legal perspective, one big difference was the prospect of a U.S. Supreme Court whose majority would finally move toward the political center and away from the consistently hard-right positions taken by Justices Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito, and, slightly less often, Chief Justice John Roberts. When this bloc was joined by Justice Anthony Kennedy, we found ourselves enduring free speech for corporate money in elections, the dismantling of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and several cases eroding the rights of public-sector unions.

The death of Justice Scalia meant the death of the well-known *Friedrichs* case. *Friedrichs*, as many will recall, was a case financed by an anti-union right-wing group that sought to end the right of public-sector unions such as the MTA to collect a fair-share fee — or “agency service fee” — from non-members whom we are obligated to represent. And so while it would have been unseemly to welcome the death of the judge, it was not at all unseemly to welcome the end of the case.

Moreover, had Scalia been replaced by Judge Merrick Garland, who was President Barack Obama’s choice for the court, even the subsequent election of Donald Trump would not have been able to revive the principle of *Friedrichs*. Forty years of stable court decisions affirming fair-share fees as a necessary component of public-sector unionism would have been safe from right-wing attack.

But like a zombie from “Night of the Living Dead,” the *Friedrichs* argument is once again lurching toward us. Neil Gorsuch has now been sworn in as the ninth justice, and he is as firmly rooted in the legal right wing as Scalia was. And while the *Friedrichs* case itself remains interred, there is no shortage of look-alikes in the federal court system slouching toward Washington, D.C., and the Supreme Court’s now-full bench.

Everyone is trying to understand what Gorsuch’s ascension to our highest court foretells for our country, our government, our schools, our colleges and universities, our unions and our rights. Can we

hope that his very human reaction upon learning of Scalia’s death — he publicly admitted that he cried — perhaps hints at a man of deep feeling for others? For students? For educators? For workers?

Don’t hope too much. Gorsuch’s track record as a judge on the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals reflects a mindset that favors corporations and employers and disregards working people, students, unions, consumers, the environment, and the role of government in protecting them all.

As the National Education Association has noted, Gorsuch has ruled against special needs students in every Individuals with Disabilities Education Act case he has decided. One student, for example, was denied any recovery under the IDEA after he left a school out of frustration with the school’s repeated violations of that law. A developmentally disabled student fared no better in Judge Gorsuch’s court despite having been placed at least 30 times in a small “timeout room,” even though the student lacked the mental capacity to understand the purpose of the punishment.

We learn from the NEA that his dissents have delineated a far-right viewpoint that is repeatedly against employees. They include one in a case where the company’s failure to train an employee caused his death and one in a case in which a company fired a whistleblower. There was another in which a company discriminated and retaliated against a female truck driver — and let’s not forget his position in what has been called the “frozen truck driver case.” Just Google “truck driver case Gorsuch.” Read it and weep.

Gorsuch is not great on discrimination rights, either. He issued the majority opinion in 14 published cases and ruled for the employer three times more than for employees. He ruled in favor of a corporation’s right to exclude contraceptive coverage from employee health plans over the rights of women not to be discriminated against. And he is highly antagonistic to the power of federal agencies to regulate workplace discrimination, worker safety, health care and other rights.

The Million Dollar Question for public-sector unions is this: Where will Justice Gorsuch land in the

next case that echoes *Friedrichs*? There are several pending around the country, but one in particular has already crawled out of its crypt: *Janus v. AFSCME*. It is an Illinois case that was, predictably, dismissed by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit and will soon be the subject of a “writ of certiorari” — a petition to the top court asking for judicial review.

Like *Friedrichs*, it is funded by a well-financed anti-union outfit. Like *Friedrichs*, it was litigated on a fast track to the Supreme Court. And like *Friedrichs*, it is designed to debilitate public-sector unions by attacking the unions’ right to collect fair-share fees from non-members to cover their share of collective bargaining costs.

Of course, one can never be certain how a judge will rule in any given case. But the expectations here are about as low as they can go. We must proceed on the assumption that Justice Gorsuch will deliver exactly what President Trump appointed him to send forth: a Janus-faced ruling that speaks of First Amendment rights but is more honestly about knocking the financial legs out from under the public-sector labor movement.

Lest we forget: In *Citizens United*, the Supreme Court held that our federal elections are better served by the free speech of corporations and unions that choose to speak with money in campaigns. Diminish the union coffers and corporate money will speak even louder than it already does.

So are we left only with the option of agonizing over our fate? No. As a union, we control our own fate. Unions that have 100 percent membership do not worry about *Friedrichs* zombie cases. They do not collect fair-share fees because they do not need to.

Everyone joins. Every member knows why he or she is in a union. Every union member understands the most basic workplace idea: There is power in numbers.

Ben Franklin’s often-quoted words come to mind: “We must, indeed, all hang together or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately.” Or as the old union slogan says: “Don’t mourn — organize!”

Ira Fader is the general counsel of the MTA.

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BESE approves new DDM-style regs

By Laura Barrett

Goodbye to District-Determined Measures. Hello to Common Assessments.

Goodbye to Student Impact Ratings. Hello to Student Learning Indicators.

Goodbye to rating educators' impact on student learning as low, moderate or high. Hello to assessing whether educators demonstrate "expected impact" on student learning — or not.

Commissioner Mitchell Chester's new regulations governing the use of student test scores in the educator evaluation system are similar in many ways to the old regulations, but they differ in several key respects. Efforts to make sure they don't unfairly label and sanction educators now move to the local level.

"This is mostly just old wine in new bottles," said MTA President Barbara Madeloni. "The new regulations are as flawed as the old ones and will be just as impossible to implement in a way that is fair, valid, reliable and helpful. Local leaders who are approached about bargaining should contact their MTA field representatives."

In a March memo announcing that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education had approved the new regulations on Feb. 28, Chester included a sentence that was probably not necessary: "In light of the amendments, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will not require districts to report Student Impact Ratings for the 2016-2017 school year," he wrote.

No one had been racing to develop those ratings. In fact, 40 districts had been scheduled to issue ratings this past fall, but none did so. Thus far, no district has figured out how to fairly and accurately ascribe student learning outcomes to a specific teacher in a way that is meaningful and helpful. The DESE hasn't been able to explain to them how to do it, either.

The commissioner's memo goes on to say, "By the start of the 2017-18 school year, districts should incorporate the regulatory changes into their local evaluation systems."

Whether that can and will happen remains to be seen. While the DESE has promised to provide guidance,

none was available as of mid-April. The department has indicated it will not be developing a model rubric for districts and local associations.

The requirement that student test scores be a "significant" part of the educator evaluation system first arose in the state's Race to the Top grant and was extended in the state's No Child Left Behind waiver. Other states that received RTTT grants or federal waivers from NCLB faced the same

mandate. There was a nationwide backlash against the requirement, leading Congress to abolish it when NCLB was replaced by the Every Student Succeeds Act in December 2015.

By then, however, the DESE had already incorporated Student Impact Ratings into the evaluation system regulations.

The former system included the following features:

- Trends and patterns in achievement and growth measures had to be calculated for all licensed educators. These were to be based on at least two District-Determined Measures, leading to a Student Impact Rating.

- At least one of those measures had to be based on MCAS growth scores, if available.

- The Student Impact Rating was to inform an educator's growth or

Please turn to **New**/Page 37

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Educators and parents fight high-stakes testing

Continued from Page 8

Eventually, the commissioner backtracked a little, sending out a second memo advising that “students should not be forced to take the test against their will.” By then, however, many school leaders had told parents they had no opt-out rights.

Maureen (only her first name is used to protect the privacy of her children) lives and works in southeastern Massachusetts. She and her husband would like to opt out their children, a 10th-grader and an eighth-grader. The parents are caught in a bind because students are required to pass the grade 10 test to graduate. Both children have learning disabilities and are on Individualized Education Programs — IEPs.

“They are both good kids,” Maureen said. “They get good progress reports. They hardly ever miss a day of school. We’ve gotten tutoring for them. I feel like they’ve done the best they could. They deserve to get those diplomas. They have earned them.

“Why can’t there be other considerations for children on IEPs,

such as attendance and meeting the goals on their IEPs?” she asked. “For example, school and homework are the first priority for our children,” she continued. “Their homework is always completed on time.”

Massachusetts is now one of a shrinking number of states that require students to pass an exit exam. At the peak of the trend, 27 states had such exams. Today, the number is 13. A bill backed by the MTA calls for a three-year moratorium on all high-stakes uses of standardized tests, including the exit exam, to give educators time to develop and implement alternatives.

The impact of high-stakes tests on English language learners is also a major issue. Clougherty has taught ELL students in both the second and third grades.

“It’s nonsensical to me that we expect a child who has been in the country for one, two or three years to perform as well as native English speakers when research shows it typically takes five to seven years to catch up,” she said. “It doesn’t make any sense to give them the test in the



Photo by Laura Barrett

Joseph Spemulli, right, president of the Norton Teachers Association, shared strategies with others at his table during a meeting on Feb. 5 at MTA headquarters about resisting the misuse of high-stakes tests.

first place, and it makes no sense to punish schools and teachers for kids not doing well on a test that is not appropriate for them.”

Clougherty joined a parents’ group in Somerville that is pushing back. Although her sixth-grade daughter

does well on standardized tests, Clougherty opted her out in solidarity with children who struggle and to protest what standardized tests are doing to education.

Joseph Spemulli, president of the Norton Teachers Association and an eighth-grade English teacher, said he is concerned that the system exerts pressure on teachers to give short shrift to knowledge and skills that aren’t on the test. Even though his administration is sympathetic to educators’ concerns and the Norton School Committee passed a resolution last spring in support of the three-year moratorium, teachers still feel the pressure.

“A lot of things that get cut are the 21st-century learning skills that everyone says are so important, such as media literacy and creating digital products,” Spemulli said.

Clougherty echoed that concern. “The testing setting is unnatural,” she said. “In our classrooms we focus on learning through dialogue and cooperation. How do you go from a cooperative setting to one where a student can’t even ask questions for clarification?”

Madeloni said that the misuse of tests is one of the biggest concerns she hears from members.

“We know firsthand how destructive these tests are to good teaching and learning,” she said. “We have an obligation to let the public know that the goal of school should be to create good thinkers and good, caring community members, not good test takers.”

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Coalition fights to preserve UMass Boston's mission

By Scott McLennan

A coalition of UMass Boston students, staff and faculty is fighting drastic budget cuts proposed for the campus and demanding that the UMass Board of Trustees take financial responsibility for massive but necessary construction projects.

UMass Boston administrators have maintained that the school needs to contend with a deficit estimated in the millions by cutting courses from this fall's offerings, laying off janitors, prohibiting faculty members from making photocopies or ordering resources — and, in all likelihood, increasing tuition and fees.

On April 12, campus activists wearing bright yellow #SaveUMB stickers and carrying posters decrying the effects of budget cuts packed a UMass Trustees' meeting.

Though UMass Boston Chancellor J. Keith Motley tendered his resignation to the board a few days prior to the meeting, the coalition made clear that the trustees and state officials still bear responsibility for supporting Boston's only public research university.

Tom Goodkind, president of the Professional Staff Union, spoke during the public comment period, saying the board is "complicit in our predicament," having adopted a strategic plan that included investment in infrastructure.

If the board cannot find the strength to publicly defend the unique mission of the campus and worry more about students, staff and faculty than bondholders, he said, "then I don't understand what it is you do."

Classified Staff Union President Janelle Quarles and Faculty Staff Union President Marlene Kim also addressed the board.

Quarles drew enthusiastic cheers when she demanded that the board respect UMass Boston's workers, students and mission by being more transparent in its dealings with the school.

Kim outlined the impact that cuts to courses and resources are having on students.

"There is less education and research on this campus," she said. "We cannot perform our jobs. We cannot educate our students."

An active #SaveUMB coalition took shape last year when UMass Boston made moves to potentially eliminate scores of adjunct faculty members.

Over the course of the current academic year, the UMass Boston community was told that the campus had to close a \$30 million budget deficit. The trustees have recently reduced that figure substantially, but a large deficit still looms for next year.

Please turn to **UMB**/Page 36



Students, staff and faculty at UMass Boston protested the UMass Board of Trustees' handling of an ongoing budget crisis during a meeting held April 12 on the Dorchester campus.

Photo by Scott McLennan

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Restorative justice program helps resolve conflicts

By Scott McLennan

It seemed that the more punishments were doled out at Fuller Middle School in Framingham, the worse the climate became.

Local media were reporting on student fights, as well as two incidents in which students brought weapons into the school. Educators knew something had to be done.

"The teachers at Fuller knew that traditional discipline protocols were not working and that the emotional and social needs of the students were not being met," said Christine Mulroney, co-president of the Framingham Teachers Association.

So last year, the FTA and the MTA put together a proposal to launch a restorative justice program at Fuller and applied for an NEA Great Public Schools Grant to fund the necessary training. In November, the Framingham School Committee gave the go-ahead for the program.

The \$145,000 grant allows faculty and staff to work with Engaging Schools, a nonprofit organization that collaborates with middle schools and high schools on social and emotional development, to implement the program over three years.

"Our goal is to create a restorative justice curriculum that can grow and change as the needs of the students change from year to year," explained Sarah McKeon, Mulroney's FTA co-president.



Photo by Scott McLennan

With help from the Framingham Teachers Association, the MTA and the NEA, Fuller Middle School is developing a restorative justice program to handle conflict resolution. Educators and students met with community members and the press in March to discuss the program.

Students at Fuller are learning the practice of "circles"—that is, problem resolution through guided discussion. Students involved in a dispute—whether verbal or physical—discuss why a problem occurred and what the impact of the behavior has been.

The students then have a hand in deciding how to address the situation. Traditional sanctions such as detentions and suspensions are not completely off the table, but they are also not automatic fallback positions for problem behavior.

One young man who was on hand for an event launching the program on March 22 recalled tussling twice with a fellow student. But after the second occasion, rather than automatically face detention or suspension, the seventh-grader met face to face with his adversary. "The circles are good. We talked. We're friends now," the student told a roomful of educators and others who gathered at Fuller.

Engaging Schools and Fuller educators will conduct ongoing trainings and assessments of

Please turn to **School**/Page 36



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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.

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Rev: 2/13/17

Charter expansion defeated in Pioneer Valley

By Laura Barrett

After hearing strong opposition from educators in the Pioneer Valley, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education took the rare step in February of voting to reject a charter school expansion proposal supported by Commissioner of Education Mitchell Chester.

The BESE voted 7 to 2 on Feb. 27 against adding 452 seats to the Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School in Hadley. Although the school could resubmit its expansion request in the future, educators from the region were elated by the vote.

MTA President Barbara Madeloni, flanked by MTA members who held up Save Our Public Schools signs at the meeting, joined education leaders from the region in testifying against the expansion, arguing that it was unjustified and would be harmful to local public schools.

At the same meeting, the BESE approved three new charter schools and allowed increased enrollment at several others.

The arguments against expansion mirrored those against Question 2, the ballot initiative defeated in November that would have lifted the state's cap on charter schools.

Opponents described how expanding PVCICS would hurt already stressed local school budgets and provided data demonstrating that the charter school fails to serve nearly as many high-need students as the sending districts do. For example, Madeloni noted that 20 percent of the students in the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District have special needs, compared to just 6 percent in the charter school.

"Rather than rewarding this school with an expansion," she said, "this board should launch an investigation into whether it is violating the civil and educational rights of its students."

Dr. Michael Morris, interim superintendent of schools for Amherst, Pelham and the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District, provided additional data on differences in demographics between his district and the charter school, concluding, "Any increase in enrollment would



Malden teacher Laura Vago, left, and her parents, Diane Mohney and John Vago, were among those protesting against the expansion of the Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School at a meeting in February. The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted 7 to 2 against the expansion proposal.

Photo by Sarah Nathan

be transferring funds from more underserved students to more privileged ones, which is antithetical to all notions of equity that we hold sacred in the Commonwealth."

Pelham School Committee Chair Cara Castenson testified that doubling the size of PVCICS could force the closure of the only elementary school serving her small town, which is one of the highest-performing elementary schools in the state.

"Were the school to be forced to close, it would be a tremendous loss to its students," she said. "Our school serves as the center of our small semirural town. The school is my children's neighborhood. Many of our town's families moved to Pelham specifically because of the school's small size and excellent reputation."

Peter Gunn, an Easthampton School Committee member, disputed the claim that there is no harm to students in the district public schools because the money just follows the students to the charter school. After testifying that his district is losing \$313,000 to PVCICS this year, he said, "I don't know what we can save when we only have one, two, four or five students leaving from a grade. Other than cutting hot water and toilet paper, I don't know where we can save."

Normally, BESE members go out of their way to say that it isn't their job to consider the impact of a charter school on the local public schools. In fact, BESE member Michael Moriarty — who joined Secretary of Education James Peyser in voting for the expansion — said just that, contending, "Charter schools should be judged on their merits." But in this case, testimony about the impact on the local public schools clearly seemed to make a difference.

Gunn and Madeloni reminded the BESE members of the overwhelming opposition to Question 2 among districts affected by the charter school, with 78 percent of Amherst and Northampton voters opposing the ballot question and 76 percent of Easthampton voters doing so.

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A school takeover mechanism by another name

Continued from Page 9

Teaching and assessment go hand in hand, and the classroom teacher is best equipped to know his or her students' strengths and challenges. Education takes place within relationships. We need to honor and support these relationships — not undermine them through standardization and defining learning by a test score.

The MTA-supported bill calls for a three-year moratorium on the

high-stakes use of standardized tests to give educators, parents and students a chance to reflect on their best, most profound experiences in school in order to help shape what they want their own community's schools to value.

Promote child development.

Some schools have cut back on recess to make more time for test prep. Students need time to play and socialize to support their development as human beings. This bill would mandate that recess be part of the

school day through grade 5. It also returns to school districts the authority to decide how best to educate English language learners, a growing segment of the school population. Top-down mandates governing ELL instruction are hampering the ability of districts to innovate and make decisions based on the needs of their students.

Community-centered support.

While the Baker-backed bill makes no reference to social and emotional support for students, the legislation

that the MTA supports includes those crucial components. Before a school can be designated “chronically underperforming,” the state would have to identify student and family needs and provide resources to address them in a manner similar to the “community schools” model, in which wraparound services are offered.

There would be many options to choose among, including summer programs, internships, GED programs, mental health services, English language instruction for parents, and homelessness-prevention programs.

Massachusetts has many excellent public schools, wonderful educators and successful students. We want more. Educators need to be leaders in figuring out how to meet the needs of their students. Our aim is to build on strategies that work and demolish the growing mountain of mandates, sanctions and privatization plans that are stifling true innovation and meaningful collaboration in our schools.

To find out more about the MTA's legislative priorities, please visit www.massteacher.org/legislation.

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BESE votes to reject expansion of charter

Continued from Page 19

schools vote so overwhelmingly against their expansion?” Gunn asked. “How can we justify overruling the wishes of the majority when the effect of doing so would simply be for the children in these communities to attend terrific public school systems?”

Gunn added, “The question before you is whether to allow expanded language study for the few to come at the expense of greater access to quality language instruction for the many.”

After the meeting, Madeloni said: “It was a wonderful victory to see the board members vote overwhelmingly against the expansion. It would be even more wonderful if they recognized they have an obligation to consider the impact on the local public schools every single time a charter school proposal is before them. They are supposed to be the board overseeing public education for all students, not just for the 4 percent of students attending privately managed charter schools.”



Educators work to ensure LGBTQ students feel safe

By Scott McLennan

Walking the halls of Framingham High school, you might not even notice the changes made to certain signs. But eliminating gender identification from staff bathrooms and having a “student locker room” in addition to a boys’ and a girls’ locker room are actually big steps toward creating an atmosphere in which transgender students feel safe, secure and on equal footing with their peers.

“We look at a lot of student data, and kids most at risk for mental health crisis are the kids who identify as trans,” explained Julie Williams-Tinkham, head of the school’s Health and Physical Education Department. So Williams-Tinkham and the district’s adolescent health nurse, Mynette Shifman, sought and received a grant from the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to bring trainings and programs to the district



Photo by Scott McLennan

Julie Williams-Tinkham, left, and Christine Mulroney, members of the MTA LGBTQ Issues Committee, said that adding a gender-neutral locker room at Framingham High School is part of a strategy to address the needs of students.

in support of transgender, lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer students. The Promoting Adolescent Health and School Success grant has gone toward improving sports and athletic participation by LGBTQ students, setting up a way for students to self-report as “non-binary” when filling out reporting forms, and overhauling curricula to make sure they better

connect with LGBTQ students. “Working to support trans students ends up helping all students,” Williams-Tinkham said. Supporting students is also central to the mission of the MTA Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Issues Committee. “What’s happening in Framingham is exactly the kind of

Supporting students is also central to the mission of the MTA Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Issues Committee.

work the committee wants to be engaged in and be able to promote and share with all MTA members,” said committee Chair Erik Fearing. Fearing said the committee reassessed its role and saw both a need and an opportunity to advocate for students and educators. The committee, which has openings for additional members and for more representatives from higher education, is active in legislative initiatives and school policy discussions that affect LGBTQ students. “We’ll have more workshops at the Summer Conference and work on sharing information throughout the year,” he said.

Williams-Tinkham and Framingham Teachers Association Co-President Christine Mulroney are members of the committee. They agreed that much needs to be done to better assist educators in supporting LGBTQ students. “In education, it’s very easy to end up in a silo and lose sight of the big picture,” said Williams-Tinkham. But the Framingham experience is also proving that silos can be broken down. Not only is the district’s physical education and health leader working with other academic departments, but other districts are reaching out to Framingham for ideas on how to better support their LGBTQ students.

“When it comes to the spectrum of gender, kids for the most part get it. It’s in the media and more normalized for this generation,” Williams-Tinkham said. “But we have to recognize there is a train coming in terms of being able to meet the needs of trans students. We need to set goals and be ready.”

To learn more about the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Issues Committee and other MTA committees, please visit www.massteacher.org/committees.

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Agenda features elections and awards

By Jean Conley

The 172nd MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates will be held May 19 and 20 at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston.

This year's meeting will feature elections to the association's Board of Directors, Executive Committee and Retired Members Committee, debate on a wide range of issues, and celebration of those who have shown their commitment to social justice, labor and public education.

Delegates will also discuss and vote on proposed changes to bylaws, resolutions, standing rules and new business items.

The meeting will be called to order at noon on Friday, May 19. That afternoon, MTA President Barbara Madeloni, MTA Vice President Erik J. Champy and Executive Director-Treasurer Ann Clarke will deliver leadership reports.

Also on Friday, 22 public educators will be recognized for their participation in the Teacher Leadership Initiative. The initiative, which this year has been renamed the Teacher Leadership Institute, is a partnership involving the MTA, the NEA, the Center for Teaching Quality and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

On Saturday, the delegates will elect members of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee. In addition, Statewide Retired District delegates will fill four seats on the Retired Members Committee.

Over the course of the two-day event, the delegates will also see award presentations and act on other business, including the association's budget for the next fiscal year.

A Rally for Public Education will immediately follow the business session on Saturday. For more information about the rally, see the related article on Page 3.

The President's Award will honor Donna Bivens, a consultant, trainer and coach with 25 years of experience in leading the implementation and development of diversity and inclusion strategies, anti-oppression systemic change, interculturalism and leadership development.

Madeloni said Bivens was her choice for the award because "as president, a person needs a touchstone to steady and focus."

"In ways that have surprised, challenged and moved me, Donna has provided critical guidance and held me to commitments to counter white supremacy and reach toward true racial and economic justice," Madeloni said.

Most recently, Bivens worked at the Union of Minority Neighborhoods as director of the Boston Busing/Desegregation Project. The project used film, interviews, civic engagement, theater, and story circles to explore the tumultuous history of desegregation in Boston.



Tito Jackson



Juan Cofield



Donna Bivens

This year's MTA Friend of Labor Award will be presented to Juan Cofield, president of the New England Area Conference of the NAACP and chair of the Save Our Public Schools coalition. The coalition — in which the MTA played a key role — led the grassroots effort to defeat Question 2, the charter school expansion initiative on the 2016 ballot.

Previously, Bivens was co-director of the Women's Theological Center in Boston, where her work included Study/Action, an international alternative theological education program for women. She holds an honorary doctorate from Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge.

She has received numerous social justice and community-building awards, including recognition from the Irish International Immigrant Center, the Boston Women's Fund and Community Change, Inc.

This year's MTA Friend of Labor Award will be presented to Juan Cofield, president of the New England Area Conference of the NAACP and chair of the Save Our Public Schools coalition. The coalition — in which the MTA played a key role — led the grassroots effort to defeat Question 2, the charter school expansion initiative on the 2016 ballot. Question 2 was defeated in a landslide on Nov. 8.

As chair of Save Our Public Schools, Cofield was a tireless advocate for public education. He argued that allowing additional charter school growth every year without end would result in significant and irreparable harm to Massachusetts public schools and the students who rely on them.

Cofield is serving his seventh term as president of the NAACP's New England Area Conference.

During his tenure, he has focused on providing resources and helping branches become more effective advocates for social and economic justice.

The Friend of Education award will be presented to Boston City Councilor Tito Jackson.

Jackson, the son of two community activists, is a lifelong resident of Boston's Grove Hall neighborhood.

Elected to the Boston City Council for the first time in 2011, Jackson is chair of the council's Education Committee and the Special Committee on the Status of Black and Latino Men and Boys. He also serves on a number of other committees.

He worked in the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development during the administration of Governor Deval Patrick, and he was political director of Patrick's successful 2010 re-election campaign. In January, he announced his candidacy for mayor of Boston.

The proposed MTA operating budget of \$47,486,674 for fiscal 2017-2018 will be presented and voted on. The budget was reviewed by the Advisory Budget Committee, the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors. The Board has proposed annual dues of \$474 for full-time active members, a \$10 increase over the current year.

Under the proposed budget, dues for secretaries, clerks and custodians would increase \$6, to \$285; dues for aides, food service personnel and other education support professionals would increase \$3, to \$143.

In addition, the proposed Public Relations/Organizing Campaign budget will be considered.

The recommended general dues assessment for the PR/Organizing budget is \$20, a reduction from \$30 approved last year. For secretaries, clerks and custodians, the assessment would be reduced to \$12, from \$18 last year; aides, food service personnel and other education support professionals would be assessed \$6, a reduction from \$9 last year.

The two proposed budgets combined reflect no increase or decrease from last year in total dues per member.

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

Candidates vie for seats on Board and Executive Committee

The Annual Meeting of Delegates will feature contests for seats on the Executive Committee and Board of Directors.

Executive Committee contests are as follows: Wendy MacMillan of the Brookline Educators Union and Robert (Bobby) Travers Jr. of the Cambridge Education Association are vying for the At-Large Education Support Professionals seat; Charles Clark of the Chicopee Education Association and Jean Fay of the Amherst-Pelham Education Association are vying in Region A; Dale Forest of the Barnstable Teachers Association, Robert Erlandsen of the Cohasset Teachers Association and Katuska (Katie) Lecaro-McGrath of the Education Association of Plymouth and Carver are vying in Region C; Matthew J. Bach and Kathleen Meltsakos, both of the Andover Education Association, are vying in Region F; and MTA Retired members Andrei Joseph and Gerard (Gerry) Ruane are vying for the Statewide Retired Region seat.

Contests for seats on the Board of Directors are as follows: Leslie Marsland of the University Staff Association-Amherst and Deborah Young of the Educational Association of Worcester are vying for the At-Large ESP seat; Mary Cowhey and Julie Spencer-Robinson, both of the Northampton Association of School Employees, are vying in District 3A; Douglas Johnson of the Mendon-Upton Regional Teachers Association and Elaine Valk of the Sutton Education Support Professionals Association are vying in District 11B; Bruce Mallory of the Brookline Educators Union and Nicole Prevost of the Quincy Education Association are vying in District 27D; Fred Hopkins and Suzanne Vazquez, both of the Andover Education Association, are

Candidates who supplied photos are pictured on this page and Page 25. In contested races, biographical statements of Executive Committee candidates are on Pages 26 and 27; statements of Board candidates appear on Pages 28 and 29.

vying in District 22F; and Diana Yohe and Catherine Boudreau, both of the Massachusetts Community College Council, are vying in District 44H.

The at-large seats are voted on by all delegates at the 2017 Annual Meeting. Regional seats are voted on by delegates representing that region and district seats by delegates from that district.

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 G: Michael Zilles, Newton Teachers Association

Board of Directors

District 1A: Brendan Sheran, United Educators of Pittsfield

District 2A: Pamela Cavanaugh, Agawam Education Association

District 4A: Chris Herland, Amherst-Pelham Education Association

District 5A: A. Murph-Brown, Springfield Education Association

District 6A: Todd Ostrowski, Ludlow Education Association

District 26A: Benjamin Eisen, Chicopee Education Association

District 8B: Karen Ballway, Auburn Teachers Association

District 34C: Tammy Johnson, Education Association of Plymouth and Carver

District 43C: Cheri Cluff, Martha's Vineyard Regional Teachers and Educators

District 15D: Kristen Tracy, Bedford Education Association

District 37E: Nancy Everidge, Taunton Education Association

District 38E: Adeline Bee, Attleboro Education Association

District 18G: Kelly Henderson, Newton Teachers Association

District 21G: Laura Vago, Malden Education Association

District 45H: Christopher J. O'Donnell, Massachusetts State College Association

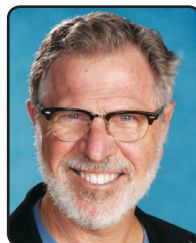
Candidates on the ballot or declared elected



Wendy MacMillan



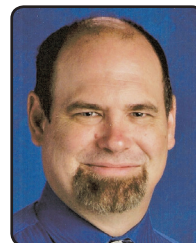
Robert (Bobby) Travers Jr.



Charles Clark



Jean Fay



Dale Forest



Robert Erlandsen



Katuska (Katie) Lecaro-McGrath



Matthew J. Bach



Kathleen Meltsakos



Michael Zilles



Andrei Joseph



Gerard (Gerry) Ruane



Leslie Marsland



Deborah Young

Candidates on the ballot or declared elected



Brendan Sheran



Pamela Cavanaugh



Mary Cowhey



Julie
Spencer-Robinson



A. Murph-Brown



Todd Ostrowski



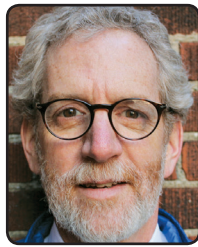
Douglas Johnson



Elaine Valk



Kristen Tracy



Bruce Mallory



Nicole Prevost



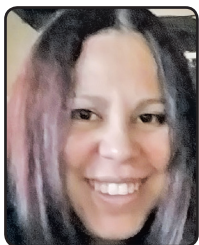
Nancy Everidge



Adeline Bee



Fred Hopkins



Suzanne Vazquez



Kelly Henderson



Laura Vago



Diana Yohe



Catherine Boudreau



Christopher J.
O'Donnell



2017 HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE
ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET
JUNE 16 – FOUR POINTS BY SHERATON NORWOOD

ONLINE REGISTRATION www.massteacher.org/hcr

Deadline for event registration is Friday, June 9.

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.

Biographical statements of candidates for Executive Committee

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

AT-LARGE ESP

Wendy MacMillan, Brookline

I bring to the table 16 years of working as a paraprofessional in Brookline, Massachusetts, where I have been a strong advocate for our lowest-paid, most disrespected, and overburdened educators. I worked amongst fellow educators, in all units, to settle a contract for teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals. Our strength as a union comes from our ability to stand together, have a unified voice and to be prepared to do the right thing for public education, our students and our members. I ask you for your vote so I can represent ESPs at the state level.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

AT-LARGE ESP

Robert (Bobby) Travers Jr., Cambridge

I am a candidate running for re-election as your MTA ESP Executive Committee representative. In this role, I have demonstrated the knowledge, skills and leadership to:

- Increase awareness and support for ESP issues.
- Encourage ESP involvement at the local, statewide and national levels.
- Advocate for active and retired MTA members.

MTA's greatest asset is our collective power. Together, we must use it to unify and strengthen our association. I am committed to our goal of being the strongest advocate for public education. I ask for your vote on May 20. Thank you.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REGION A

Charles Clark, Chicopee

Western Massachusetts needs a flag-bearer who will bring our concerns to the front of the line. I am running to advocate for MTA members working in endangered communities, facing DESE intervention due to a discriminatory evaluation system and inadequate funding. I stand with the new MTA and will actively champion a moratorium on high-stakes testing and support the Fair Share Amendment. I ask for your support to be that advocate. Region A needs a voice that will join progressives working to create the schools our students deserve and NEED. I ask for your support to be that voice.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REGION A

Jean Fay, Amherst-Pelham

As an educator I understand the importance of community partnerships, political engagement and advocacy for the rights of students and members. I am passionate, dedicated and tireless in my fight for fully funding public education and for creating safe, nurturing learning environments in our schools. While serving as president of my local, I successfully fought back against Teaching Strategies GOLD in my district and for reinstatement of the library para positions in our elementary schools. I've served as president of the Amherst-Pelham Education Association; on the MTA Human Relations Committee; and was MTA ESP of the Year 2011.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REGION C

Dale Forest, Barnstable

Our unions are under attack locally, statewide and nationally. I currently serve on the MTA Board of Directors, as chair of the Board Negotiating Team, and Barnstable membership chair. As co-chair of the MTA Human Relations Committee, I uphold our rights and those of our students. I believe MTA must assist presidents on local issues while building on the strength we exhibited when defeating Question #2. Like you, I participated in weekly phone banking, canvassing and standouts. I hope to continue my strong advocacy and proven leadership for you within the MTA! I appreciate your consideration when voting this May.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REGION C

Robert Erlandsen, Cohasset

Through all our efforts we beat back the charter industry. In thousands of conversations across Massachusetts we reasserted our position with the people as the experts in education. But our profession is still threatened by an out-of-touch state Department of Education and outright hostility from the federal level. I bring to the Executive Committee a commitment to public education as recognized by my NEA Foundation Award for Excellence in Teaching, knowledge of the political landscape as my local's political action leader, and experience in grassroots organizing to continue to take our profession back. Thank you for your vote!

Biographical statements of candidates for Executive Committee

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REGION C

Katuska (Katie) Lecaro-McGrath, Plymouth and Carver

I am running for Region C Executive Committee member, and I am asking for your vote. I am an elementary special education teacher in Plymouth. As an active union member, I have been involved at the local and state levels. At the local level, I served on the Professional Rights and Responsibility, Teachers' Evaluation, Budget and Finance, and Bylaw committees. At the state level, I am a member of the Task Force on Race. I have had the privilege of serving as a delegate at the MTA Annual Meeting and at the NEA Representative Assembly. Thank you.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REGION F

Matthew J. Bach, Andover

Our Region F locals deserve new transparency and two-way communication from their representatives. Region F should know what happens at Executive Committee meetings, and more importantly should have a representative who is responsive to the issues members are facing. I am a classroom teacher and an experienced union activist, but my recent canvassing against Q2 in many locals from Revere to Andover has convinced me that our MTA is progressing toward a stronger organization of active members. Please let me help inform you, engage you and hear from you to continue that progress.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REGION F

Kathleen Meltsakos, Andover

I am Kathleen Meltsakos, and I want you to re-elect me as your representative on the Executive Committee for Region F. As your representative, I attend all the president meetings to hear all your concerns and issues. I also meet with your district directors and listen to the issues you face as educators. At MTA meetings I am your voice. I take this responsibility seriously! If you re-elect me, I will continue to represent you and the issues at hand, as well as the fiduciary health of our organization. Please cast your vote for me. Thank you for your VOTE!

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

STATEWIDE RETIRED

Andrei Joseph, MTA Retired

Our union needs its retirees and the wisdom we gained from our activism. It needs our memories of the quality of education when teachers had autonomy and respect. It needs our freedom to act without fear of retaliation. While continuing to push for health care and pension protections, we must contribute our public testimony, our attendance at hearings and our courage as we develop new leadership and strengthen our union. I taught for 35 years, was elected local president nine times and served on the MTA Board and numerous MTA committees. May our work continue for years to come!

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

STATEWIDE RETIRED

Gerard (Gerry) Ruane, MTA Retired

My name is Gerry Ruane, and I am a candidate for re-election to the MTA Executive Committee representing Retired members. As the retired member of the Executive Committee:

- I worked tirelessly to promote retired issues to the leadership of MTA.
- I fought to have retired issues included in the MTA legislative package.
- I fought to increase stipends for Retired delegates to Annual Meeting.
- I am continually working to ensure that leadership includes Retired members in all programs, committees and initiatives of MTA.

I ask for your vote on May 20 so I may continue the fight.



Biographical statements of candidates for Board of Directors

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AT-LARGE ESP

Leslie Marsland, University Staff Association-Amherst

I'm running for the ESP at-large seat so I can advocate for all ESPs in Massachusetts. I'm an 18-year employee at UMass Amherst; VP of my local; ESP Committee chair and BOD, 48H. I ask for your vote so I can continue to be a voice on the BOD.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AT-LARGE ESP

Deborah Young, Worcester

I am active in the EAW, MTA and NEA. Having attended trainings/conferences through all three, my advocacy in dealing with pertinent issues that affect our profession is unyielding! As a Worcester Public School ESP for 18 years, preK-12, I promise relentless advocacy for you in the Massachusetts Teachers Association.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 3A

Mary Cowhey, Northampton

I have taught at Jackson Street School in Northampton since 1997. I support Barbara Madeloni's agenda for the MTA and am eager to help build progressive power through increasing member activism. I hope to represent the many locals in 3A by listening and giving voice to their concerns.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 3A

Julie Spencer-Robinson, Northampton

I am in my second term as president of the Northampton Association of School Employees and my 25th year in the district. I am eager to lead a team of local presidents to bring the voices of members in District 3A to the MTA and MTA resources to our members.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 11B

Douglas Johnson, Mendon-Upton

Douglas Johnson is a special education teacher and vice president of the Mendon-Upton Regional Teachers Association. Doug's goal as MTA BOD member is to collaborate with all members, creating effective schools. As a Board director, Doug plans to keep open two-way communication between local presidents, members and MTA.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 11B

Elaine Valk, Sutton Education Support Professionals

Vote experience, activism, passion: 10 years, president, Sutton ESPs; 24 years, districtwide SLP-A; current BOD; nine years, MTA delegate; graduate, MTA-ESP Leadership Action Program, NEA ESP Leaders for Tomorrow; member, ESP and ESSA committees, municipality IAC and Wellness Committee; outspoken on substance abuse disorders; honored to be YOUR Board voice.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 27D

Bruce Mallory, Brookline

I am a father of three, a math and science teacher for three decades, and a coach. As the 27D Board member, I will bring experience, progressive values, a belief that our power increases with involvement, and a commitment to communicate with you about our union's ongoing decisions and work.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 27D

Nicole Prevost, Quincy

My name is Nicole Prevost. I'm seeking re-election as your district director, and I am respectfully asking for your vote. It's been exciting to see our collective power leading us to victory on No on #2! Let's continue working together to build the schools our children deserve.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 22F

Fred Hopkins, Andover

I have been a social studies teacher for 23 years, serving as a building representative and as a bargaining team member. I support the new MTA and its focus on what we love about working with students. I promise to work to make our union more responsive and democratic.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 22F

Suzanne Vazquez, Andover

I have served on the AEA Board as membership chairperson and currently serve as treasurer. I have a passion for the political process and public education. I am excited about the opportunity to serve on the MTA Board as your voice. I respectfully ask for your vote.

Biographical statements of candidates for Board of Directors

BOARD OF DIRECTORS	DISTRICT 44H	BOARD OF DIRECTORS	DISTRICT 44H
Diana Yohe, Mass. Community College Council Impending loss of agency fee. Attempts to privatize public education. Lack of adequate funding to support faculty, staff and students. We face tough times. If elected, I will seek member input, support an open and transparent process, and always let you know how I voted on the issues.		Catherine Boudreau, Mass. Community College Council I am running for re-election to the MTA Board. Difficult times call for difficult action, and to weather the attacks — on our budget, declining enrollments, potential loss of agency fee — we need to work our way to unity, bumpy as that road might be. I ask for your vote.	

Amendments to bylaws are proposed

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #1. It would revise Article IX, Delegate Meetings, Section 2, Delegates, B, Allocation. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:	PROPOSED AMENDMENT:
	B. <u>Allocation</u>
	Add after existing text:
	(7) SUPER DELEGATES — All past Presidents and Vice Presidents shall automatically be delegates to the Annual Meeting, with full rights and privileges.
	Submitted by: Bill Forster, MTA Retired
	MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee: Recommends Rejection (9-0)
	MTA Board of Directors: Recommends Rejection (57-0)
	Impact statement: MTA's former Presidents and Vice Presidents would automatically be included as Annual Meeting delegates, with full voting rights and floor privileges, without having been elected as delegates.

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #2. It would revise Article VII, Nominations, Elections & Terms of Office, Section 3, Regional, Statewide Retired and At-Large Executive Committee Members. The changes would involve part D, Election (4); and G, At-Large ESP Executive Committee Member (3) Election, b. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:	PROPOSED AMENDMENT:
D. <u>Election</u> (4) One At-Large ESP Executive Committee member shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates by all delegates. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. In the event that a majority is lacking on the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held between the two highest vote-getters.	D. <u>Election</u> (4) One At-Large ESP Executive Committee member shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates by a Education Support Professional delegates. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. In the event that a majority is lacking on the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held between the two highest vote-getters.
G. <u>At-Large ESP Executive Committee Member</u> (3) Election b. The At-Large ESP Executive Committee member shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates by all delegates.	G. <u>At-Large ESP Executive Committee Member</u> (3) Election b. The At-Large ESP Executive Committee member shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates by a Education Support Professional delegates.
	Submitted by: MTA ESP Committee Elaine Valk, Sutton Education Support Professionals Leslie Marsland, USA

Proposed Bylaw Amendment #2 — continued from previous columns

Wende O'Brien, Nauset Shaleah Rather, CSU Saul Ramos, Worcester Nancy Burke, Haverhill Donna Johnson, USA Ashley Alafberg, Worcester Robert Travers Jr., Cambridge	
MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee: Recommends Adoption (8-1)	
MTA Board of Directors: No Position (48-5)	
Impact statement: This change would limit voting for At-Large ESP Executive Committee member to only ESP delegates.	

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

PRESENT TEXT:	PROPOSED AMENDMENT:
C. <u>Election</u> (2) The At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals shall be elected by majority vote of the delegates at the Annual Meeting of Delegates. In the event that a majority is lacking on the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held between the two highest vote-getters.	C. <u>Election</u> (2) The At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals shall be elected by majority vote of the Education Support Professional 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.
	Submitted by: MTA ESP Committee Elaine Valk, Sutton Education Support Professionals Leslie Marsland, USA Wende O'Brien, Nauset Shaleah Rather, CSU Saul Ramos, Worcester Nancy Burke, Haverhill Donna Johnson, USA Ashley Alafberg, Worcester Robert Travers Jr., Cambridge
	MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee: Recommends Adoption (8-1)
	MTA Board of Directors: No Position (45-13)
	Impact statement: This change would limit voting for At-Large Director for ESPs to only ESP delegates.

Continued in following columns

Amendments to bylaws are proposed

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #4. It would revise Article VI, Governance: Executive Committee & Board of Directors, Section 1, Executive Committee, part C, Meetings (3) Rules of Order. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:	PROPOSED AMENDMENT:
	Add after existing text:
	Any motion for the Executive Committee to hold an executive session must be decided by a roll-call vote; the names of those voting for and against entering executive session shall be available to any member of the MTA.
	Submitted by: Dan Clawson, MSP, UMass Amherst
	MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee: Recommends Rejection (7-0)
	MTA Board of Directors: Recommends Rejection (44-18)
	Impact statement: This change would require the Executive Committee to hold a roll-call vote on any motion to go into executive session.

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #5. It would revise Article VI, Governance: Executive Committee & Board of Directors, Section 1, Executive Committee, part C, Meetings (3) Rules of Order. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:	PROPOSED AMENDMENT:
	Add after existing text:
	Executive session can only be held to discuss the appointment of staff, personnel matters, employee contract relations, finance, and internal (organizational) security.
	Submitted by: Dan Clawson, MSP, UMass Amherst
	MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee: Recommends Rejection (7-0)
	MTA Board of Directors: Recommends Rejection (48-14)
	Impact statement: This bylaw would limit the use of executive session in Executive Committee meetings to the listed purposes.

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #6. It would revise Article VI, Governance: Executive Committee & Board of Directors, Section 2, Board of Directors, part C, Meetings (3) Rules of Order. The present text is in the left column. Originally proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column. Note: Before voting to recommend rejection of this amendment, the Board voted to amend the proposed text. The amendment proposed by the Board is in bold italic type in the text of the proposed amendment.

PRESENT TEXT:	PROPOSED AMENDMENT:
	Add after existing text:
	Any motion for the Board of Directors to hold an executive session, other than to those agenda items listed as requiring executive session, must be decided by a roll-call vote; the names of those voting for and against entering executive session shall be available to any member of the MTA.
	Submitted by: Dan Clawson, MSP, UMass Amherst

Continued in following columns

Proposed Bylaw Amendment #6 — continued from previous columns

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee: Recommends Rejection of Original Amendment (7-1)
MTA Board of Directors: Recommends Rejection of Amended Amendment (35-29)
Impact statement: This change would require the Board of Directors to hold a roll-call vote on any motion to go into executive session.

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #7. It would revise Article VI, Governance: Executive Committee & Board of Directors, Section 2, Board of Directors, part C, Meetings (3) Rules of Order. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:	PROPOSED AMENDMENT:
	Add after existing text:
	Executive session can only be held to discuss the appointment of staff, personnel matters, employee contract relations, finance, and internal (organizational) security.
	Submitted by: Dan Clawson, MSP, UMass Amherst
	MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee: Recommends Rejection (7-1)
	MTA Board of Directors: Recommends Rejection (46-15)
	Impact statement: This bylaw would limit the use of executive session in Board meetings to the listed purposes.

Candidates for MTA Retired Members Committee

Four vacancies for two-year terms commencing July 1

The election will be held at the 2017 Annual Meeting of Delegates. The delegates representing the Statewide Retired District will vote in the Retired Members Committee election. Candidates are listed in ballot order. Their biographical statements were printed in the March/April edition of the *MTA Reporter*.

Paul Mazut

Cheryl Ann Welch

Julia Monteiro Johnson

Lois Powers

John DeCicco

Beverly Saccocia

Amendments to bylaws are proposed

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #8. It would revise Article XI, Discipline, Disaffiliation and Recall, Section 1, Discipline/Disaffiliation by Executive Committee, part A, Cause (1). The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

A. Cause
(1) Members and/or affiliates that fail to comply with standards and procedures as set forth in these Bylaws shall be subject to admonishment, censure, suspension, expulsion or disaffiliation as prescribed in these Bylaws.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

A. Cause
(1) Members and/or affiliates that fail to comply with standards and procedures as set forth in these Bylaws **or MTA Policies** shall be subject to admonishment, censure, suspension, expulsion or disaffiliation as prescribed in these Bylaws.

Submitted by:

Kerry Costello, Andover

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:

Recommends Adoption (8-1)

MTA Board of Directors:

Recommends Adoption (41-17)

Impact statement:

This change would provide due process to members when a question related to compliance with MTA Policies is raised.

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #9. It would revise Article VII, Nominations, Elections & Terms of Office, Section 1, General Stipulations, part E. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

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.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

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. **Said expenditures shall include the pro-rated portion of funds received from a group solicitation as a separate line item.** The Credentials and Ballot Committee shall certify the receipt of these reports.

Submitted by:

Kerry Costello, Andover

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:

Recommends Rejection (6-1)

MTA Board of Directors:

Recommends Rejection (51-1)

Impact statement:

This change would add a line to the Candidates' Expenditure Report Form to report expenditures by a group on behalf of the campaign.

Amendments to standing rules are proposed

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

PRESENT TEXT:

Rule 10
Section 1. All campaign materials shall be properly identified by source and sponsorship.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Rule 10
Section 1. All campaign materials **including clothing** shall be properly identified by source and sponsorship. **Materials sponsored by a group must adhere to MTA policy. A list of the MTA members in the group and a contact person will be filed with the Credentials and Ballot Committee.**

Submitted by:

Kerry Costello, Andover

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:

Recommends Rejection (7-1)

MTA Board of Directors:

Recommends Rejection (56-1)

Impact statement:

This change would require any self-identified group sponsoring MTA campaign materials to identify itself and provide a contact person and a list of all MTA members in the group to the Credentials and Ballot Committee.

The following is Proposed Standing Rule Amendment #2. It would revise Section 15 of Standing Rule 6: Order of Business and Debate. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Rule 6
Section 15. Multicolored sets of cards shall be available at each microphone. Each card shall have the microphone number on it. These cards shall be used by the delegates to gain recognition from the Presiding Officer to speak from the floor. Speakers for and against shall be alternated.

Instructions for the use of the cards shall be printed on the reverse side of the colored cards.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Rule 6
Section 15. Multicolored sets of cards shall be available at each microphone. Each card shall have the microphone number on it. These cards shall be used by the delegates to gain recognition from the Presiding Officer to speak from the floor. Speakers for and against shall be alternated **using green and red cards only. Yellow cards may not be used to make motions.**

Instructions for the use of the cards shall be printed on the reverse side of the colored cards.

Submitted by:

Kerry Costello, Andover

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:

Recommends Adoption (9-0)

MTA Board of Directors:

Recommends Adoption (44-9)

Impact statement:

This rule would reinforce the longstanding practice at Annual Meeting of confining motions to green and red cards only.

MTA 2017 CALL TO ANNUAL MEETING OF DELEGATES

Amendments to standing rules are proposed

The following is Proposed Standing Rule Amendment #3. It would revise Section 6 of Standing Rule 6: Order of Business and Debate. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Rule 6
Section 6. No member shall speak in debate more than twice to the same question during the same meeting, nor longer than three (3) minutes at one time, unless permission is granted by majority vote of the meeting(s).

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Rule 6
Section 6. No member shall speak in debate more than twice to the same question during the same meeting, nor longer than three (3) minutes at one time, unless permission is granted by majority vote of the meeting(s). **No delegate shall speak using a yellow card for more than one (1) minute at one time unless permission is granted by majority vote of the meeting(s).**

Submitted by:

Peter Schoonmaker, Sharon

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:

Recommends Adoption (8-0)

MTA Board of Directors:

Recommends Adoption (58-0)

Impact statement:

This change would limit to one minute the time one speaker can have when speaking on a yellow card.

The following is Proposed Standing Rule Amendment #4. It would revise Section 7 of Standing Rule 6: Order of Business and Debate. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Rule 6
Section 7. A member may yield the microphone or speaking time to another delegate only for the unused portion of his allotted time.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Rule 6
Section 7. A member may yield the microphone or speaking time to another delegate only for the unused portion of his allotted time **except when using a yellow card. A member speaking on a yellow card may not yield the microphone or speaking time to another delegate.**

Submitted by:

Peter Schoonmaker, Sharon

MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee:

Recommends Adoption (8-0)

MTA Board of Directors:

Recommends Adoption (57-0)

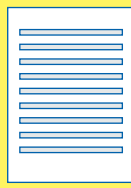
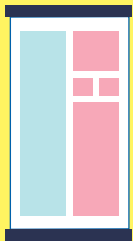
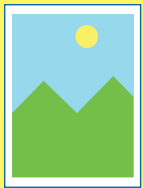
Impact statement:

This change would prohibit a delegate speaking on a yellow card from yielding the microphone or speaking time to another delegate.



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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 on this page and Page 34 were recommended as proposed by the Resolutions Committee with one exception. The Board recommended amending Resolution C-25, as

indicated, before voting on March 24 to recommend passage of all revisions 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.

To review current resolutions and bylaws, please visit www.massteacher.org/resolutions.

Current Resolution A-10

Public Support of Private Institutions

The Massachusetts Teachers Association shall continue opposition to the concept of public financial support for private educational institutions. The MTA urges the state Legislature to deny appropriation of any funds directed toward support of any private institutions which would diminish, in any way, the support of public education from preschool through graduate studies. (75, 77, 80)

Proposed Revised A-10

Public Support of Private Institutions

The Massachusetts Teachers Association shall continue opposition to the concept of public financial support for private educational institutions. The MTA urges the state Legislature to deny appropriation of any funds directed toward support of any private institutions which would diminish, in any way, the support of public education from preschool through graduate studies. (75, 77, 80)

Privatization of Public Institutions

The Massachusetts Teachers Association fervently opposes the privatization of the institution of public education or any component therein. The MTA opposes any efforts, including public-private partnerships, that undermine institutions of public education by diverting funds and/or weakening their democratic autonomy. The MTA stands strongly against the transformation of educational institutions from a public good to profitable commodities. (75, 77, 80, 17)

Current Resolution B-2

Achievement for Ethnic Minority and Economically Disadvantaged Students

The Massachusetts Teachers Association, recognizing that poor academic achievement continues to plague many ethnic minority and economically disadvantaged students, encourages school districts and local affiliates to research, analyze and take steps to correct this phenomenon,

which prevents many ethnic minority and economically disadvantaged students from developing to their full potential.

Furthermore, the MTA supports all efforts concerning the establishment of statutes dealing with racial imbalance which will strengthen the attempts of minority groups to achieve equal educational opportunity. (89, 99, 00)

Proposed Revised B-2

Achievement for Ethnic Minority and Economically Disadvantaged Students

The Massachusetts Teachers Association, recognizing that poor academic achievement continues to plague many ethnic minority and economically disadvantaged students, encourages school districts and local affiliates to research, analyze and take steps to correct this phenomenon, which prevents many ethnic minority and economically disadvantaged students from developing to their full potential.

Furthermore, the MTA supports all efforts concerning the establishment of statutes dealing with racial imbalance which will strengthen the attempts of minority groups to achieve equal educational opportunity. (89, 99, 00)

Equity for Racial and Ethnic Minority and Economically Disadvantaged Students

The Massachusetts Teachers Association recognizes that many racial and ethnic minority and economically disadvantaged students and communities are burdened by inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities. Therefore, the MTA encourages school districts and local affiliates to research, analyze and take steps to correct this injustice.

Furthermore, the MTA supports all efforts concerning the establishment of policies and practices that ameliorate racial and economic inequities and support equal educational opportunities. The MTA opposes policies and practices that exacerbate racial and economic injustices. (89, 99, 00, 17)

Current Resolution B-9

Health Awareness and Education

The Massachusetts Teachers Association recognizes that sensitive and comprehensive health education can be a positive force in promoting physical, mental and social health.

The MTA urges school systems to assume an important role in developing and implementing courses in this area.

The MTA believes that school systems should establish and support quality comprehensive health programs including sex education programs that include information on birth control and family planning, parenting skills, prenatal care, communicable and infectious diseases, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS prevention, incest and sexual abuse, the effects of substance abuse during pregnancy, and problems associated with and resulting from preteen and teenage pregnancies; as well as other programs that include information on violence and mental health.

The MTA further recommends the continued development and implementation of programs designed to instill in young people and adults a respect for the human mind and body. Teachers must be qualified and licensed to teach health and must be legally protected from censorship and lawsuits. (69, 75, 79, 81, 85, 87, 94, 99, 09)

Proposed Revised B-9

Health Awareness and Education

The Massachusetts Teachers Association recognizes that sensitive and comprehensive health education can be a positive force in promoting physical, mental and social health.

The MTA urges school systems to assume an important role in developing and implementing courses in this area.

The MTA believes that school systems should establish and support quality comprehensive health programs, including sex education programs that include information on birth control and family planning, parenting skills, prenatal care, communicable and infectious diseases, sexually

Amendments to resolutions are recommended

Continued from Page 33

transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS prevention, incest and sexual abuse, the effects of substance abuse during pregnancy, and problems associated with and resulting from preteen and teenage pregnancies; as well as other programs that include information on violence and mental health.

The MTA further recommends the continued development and implementation of programs designed to instill in young people and adults a foster respect for the human mind and body and the full range of sexualities and gender expressions. Teachers must be qualified and licensed to teach health and must be legally protected from censorship and lawsuits. (69, 75, 79, 81, 85, 87, 94, 99, 09, 17)

Current Resolution B-13

Labor Education

The Massachusetts Teachers Association encourages classroom teachers to include the study of labor history as part of American history, with special emphasis on the right of workers to organize and to bargain for wages, hours and working conditions. (81)

Proposed Revised B-13

Labor Education

The Massachusetts Teachers Association recognizes encourages classroom teachers to include the study of labor history as an integral part of learning American history, with special emphasis on the right of workers to organize and to bargain for wages, hours and working conditions. American history curricula need to recognize the centrality of labor history in order to offer a complete understanding of our country's past. (81, 17)

Create a new C-22 and renumber all following "C" resolutions.

New Resolution C-22

Humane Lunch Breaks

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that students and educators should be provided a break of at least 30 minutes for lunch. A break of this duration is needed to promote holistic well-being. (17)

Proposed New Resolution C-25 at the end of Section C

New Resolution C-25*

Critical Information Literacy

The increased ease of publishing and broadcasting has allowed for a proliferation of media that contain information of questionable truth and value. The Massachusetts Teachers

Association believes that learning to analyze information, discern fact from fiction and contextualize sources has become is essential to educating our students to be responsible citizens. The MTA supports the development and implementation of units and programs in all schools, which will help our students develop critical information literacy. (17)

**The strikethroughs and bold text in new Resolution C-25 as printed above reflect amendments proposed by the MTA Board on March 24. The underlined text with those words stricken and "is" added comprise the Board's proposed text.*

Current Resolution D-16

Educator Licensure

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or an 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 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 Revised D-16

Educator Licensure

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or an 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 educator licenses in Massachusetts. Licensing criteria should reflect the pedagogical demands of the field and be linked to building the skills and experience of the practitioner, not to student testing outcomes.

Professional development required to maintain an educator license should be relevant, practicable, and respectful of educators' professionalism and time. (00, 09, 16, 17)

Current Resolution F-28

Equitable Support for Collective Bargaining

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)

Proposed Revised F-28

Equitable Support for Collective Bargaining

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. The MTA opposes any measure that undermines this solidarity, such as so-called right-to-work legislation. (16, 17)

Current Resolution I-3

Hate-Motivated Violence

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that hate-motivated violence, including but not limited to physical and verbal violence against individuals and groups because of their race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, disability, size, marital status or economic condition, is deplorable. The MTA also believes that the threat or promotion of such violence is equally deplorable.

The MTA further believes the federal, state and local governments and community groups must oppose and eliminate hate-motivated violence and that current events and/or economic conditions should not diminish such opposition. (07)

Proposed Revised I-3

Hate-Motivated Violence

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that hate-motivated violence, including but not limited to physical and verbal violence against individuals and groups because of their race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, disability, size, marital status or economic condition, is deplorable unconscionable. The MTA also believes that the threat or promotion of such violence is equally-deplorable similarly reprehensible.

The MTA opposes any act that infringes upon the civil rights of any person. The MTA supports all efforts to make schools sanctuaries for vulnerable groups, in addition to the creation of communities that support those efforts. The MTA further believes the federal, state and local governments and community groups must oppose and eliminate hate-motivated violence and that current events and/or economic conditions should not diminish such opposition. (07, 17)

Annual Report of the Executive Director-Treasurer

Fast-forward to the end of 2018. The MTA is at the height of its power, voters have passed the Fair Share Amendment, high-stakes testing has been beaten back in our schools, the Commonwealth is moving toward free public college for every student on a fully funded campus, and the “Fight for \$15” has been won. All this has been achieved even though the U.S. Supreme Court has struck down the law allowing educators’ unions to collect agency service fees, President Donald Trump has continued his relentless assault on the public good, and the right wing has been more active than ever.

Impossible? Hardly. It’s totally up to us.

Although the obstacles we face have never been greater, I believe that the same holds true of the opportunities within our reach.

Think back one year, to the 2016 Annual Meeting of Delegates. The ballot initiative seeking



Ann Clarke

to recklessly expand charter schools throughout the state dominated our agenda. We faced a seemingly invincible array of political foes as millions of dollars flowed into the Commonwealth from groups that hid the identity of their donors. Pro-privatization legislation was being

pushed hard on Beacon Hill, and the media chorus was loud and getting louder.

But MTA members — joined by parents, students, labor allies, community groups and other supporters of the schools and colleges our communities deserve — went all in. On Election Night, the results of our principled and exhaustive efforts were clear for all to see: Despite spending some \$26 million, enlisting Governor Charlie Baker as their public face and buying television time as far as the eye could see, the forces behind Question 2 lost in a landslide. Voters, many of whom had been called or visited by MTA members and other educators, showed that they cherish public education by sending the proposal down to an ignominious defeat. The final tally was 62 percent to 38 percent.

There is no denying that Trump’s victory over MTA-recommended presidential candidate Hillary Clinton was devastating. It will have consequences for the foreseeable future. One of them will be the loss of agency fees, which public-sector unions now collect based on the services they provide to bargain better wages and conditions for employees who do not want to become members.

The recent swearing-in of Justice Neil Gorsuch brings the Supreme Court bench back to full strength. With numerous anti-labor cases in the

Sometimes it takes looking back to see what going forward can be. This is one of those moments.

pipeline, the MTA must examine itself in a new light. Very soon, we will exist in a post-agency-fee era even as we continue to face renewed efforts to expand charter schools, as well as a campaign to use vouchers and other forms of privatization that further the attack on public education at all levels.

We cannot and will not underestimate the dangers ahead. The good news, however, is that we have been building for years to overcome them. We were preparing for the loss of agency fee as a result of earlier cases that had made their way to the high court. And before the huge win on Question 2, members had mustered their energies to make the MTA a major contributor to the Fair Share Amendment signature drive as part of the Raise Up Massachusetts coalition.

So our organizing began long before Election Day. And we have not let up since — far from it.

Indeed, the success of the No on 2 campaign has ultimately turned many eyes toward Massachusetts. That victory stood out on Nov. 8 as an example of how grassroots activism can triumph over a flood of out-of-state money and unions’ most aggressive opponents even while a national debacle is taking shape.

As I spend time with MTA leaders, members and staff, my pride in what we accomplished together only deepens. I also understand what we have gained during other campaigns we have taken on — winning, losing or simply living to fight another day. I know the extent of our members’ dedication to their students, our communities and our Commonwealth.

In addition, I have a full view of the resources that we possess in locals and chapters across the state and in the organization as a whole. Focusing on them gives me confidence that if we proceed on our current course, we have a good chance of realizing the vision we share for succeeding as a union while ensuring that our students have the opportunities they deserve as they progress from prekindergarten to higher education.

Within MTA locals, our level of activity continues to grow stronger. Members are talking to members about why it is essential to belong to the union. The staff in all divisions is working tirelessly to help structure the organizing effort and ensure that it encompasses every MTA educator. MTA President Barbara Madeloni, MTA Vice President

Erik J. Champy and the Board of Directors are all committed — and they are taking the long view of how we need to manage our finances to thrive in a world that will allow us to take nothing for granted as we rapidly adapt to new realities.

Sometimes it takes looking back to see what going forward can be. This is one of those moments.

We are approaching our 172nd Annual Meeting. Our history of fighting on behalf of students, public schools and colleges, organized labor and democracy is long and distinguished. The advances we have achieved through collective bargaining have furthered worthy goals for our state and our society.

As I write today, the MTA is a key participant in coalitions such as RUM and the Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance. We have a legislative package that speaks to and for the values we share with the great majority of the residents of our state. We are determined to stop the inappropriate use of test scores, to win the battle for livable wages, to improve conditions for *all* faculty and staff members on public higher education campuses, to make sure every worker has access to paid family and medical leave, and to protect the retirement security of people who have given their lives to public service. We will do everything possible to see through the passage of the Fair Share Amendment, which would raise roughly \$2 billion a year for public education and transportation by adding four percentage points to the state tax rate on annual income above \$1 million.

The list goes on. The MTA offers unparalleled field services and unmatched legal representation. It allows members to participate in high-quality conferences and events, provides outstanding training opportunities, and communicates and lobbies strongly in all forums. It facilitates phone banking, canvassing, advertising and all of the other actions that were so vital to defeating Question 2. It is building on that crucial victory with its coalition partners and is working with them to hold a Rally for Public Education in Boston on May 20.

But by itself, that formulation is sorely lacking. For the MTA is not just an entity. It is a composite of its members. It is truly driven by you and depends on you. Your strength, decisiveness, ingenuity and collaboration with one another are the means through which we can keep and expand the power we have built.

Today, those noble attributes must be joined by a willingness to engage without hesitation. This is our time, and the future will reflect what we are willing to commit to right now.

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 2017 Annual Meeting. The full report is also posted in the members’ area of the MTA website.

Award from the PTA



Photo by Bob Duffy

MTA Vice President Erik J. Champy received the Male Involvement Award at the Massachusetts PTA's 107th annual convention on March 18. The theme of this year's conference, which was held at UMass Lowell, was "Opening Doors: Inclusion & Diversity in the PTA." Pictured with Champy is Geronimo Rodriguez, a member of the national PTA Board.

ESPs urged to 'take that first step'

Continued from Page 11

McGuire Grigg, a special education paraeducator from California, said ESPs "work tirelessly for their students every day."

"If it weren't for the work you do, our schools wouldn't function," she told the crowd.

McGuire Grigg said that ESPs generally account for more than one-third of the public education workforce. Fellow ESPs "feel your pain, but they've also experienced your strength," she said. "This is why we must continue to support and stand with one another."

Ramos, a paraeducator who works with visually impaired students at Burncoat High School in Worcester, recounted being named the national

ESP of the Year at the annual NEA ESP Conference in Dallas.

He said he had never seen such a possibility for himself — and had no idea just how powerful his voice could become — when he first became an ESP.

Union involvement "helps bring out that inner person in you that you sometimes neglect because you're busy doing other things," he said, urging fellow ESPs to "take that first step" and join the journey.

"It's my name on the award," he said. "But really, this award is for all of us."

To see more photos from this year's MTA ESP Conference, please visit massteacher.org/espsconf.

School starts restorative justice program

Continued from Page 17

how well the school is functioning as a learning community.

"This is all about the culture and climate we create," said Jose Duarte, who is in his first year as principal at Fuller but has worked previously in schools where restorative justice practices were used to resolve conflicts.

Using the work underway at Fuller as a model, Framingham now envisions expanding the restorative justice approach across the district.

MTA President Barbara Madeloni said the work being done at Fuller is an

example of what should be happening in public schools across the country, not only to combat the lingering ill effects of harsh punishment, but to enhance schools' learning experience.

"It's a different way of thinking," she said. "We're looking at how we come together in a community, come together in a school, where it's not about compliance and punishment, but how to listen, talk, share and understand each other."

"There are so many possibilities to teach with this approach," she added. "This is the future our schools need to be moving toward."

UMB cuts spark protest

Continued from Page 16

Though the deficit has been blamed on construction projects, veteran educators reminded the trustees that the work has been necessary largely to remedy crumbling infrastructure.

Union members and students staged a rally in the Campus Center after the trustees' meeting.

At the rally, MTA President Barbara Madeloni assailed the attack on the campus, which educates more

minority and first-generation college students than any other in the system.

She said the UMass Boston community's willingness to fight cuts and tuition hikes sends a powerful message to state leaders: "You can't undermine hope."

The activism appears to have had an impact.

Hours after the actions, all summer courses — which had been on the chopping block — were restored.

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New regulations leave many questions unanswered

Continued from Page 14

improvement plan and to determine its length.

■ Ratings for each educator were to be reported annually to the DESE.

The DDM requirement — as it was commonly referred to — led to measures such as judging nurses by how quickly they got sick students back to their classrooms and physical education teachers by how fast their students could run a certain distance at the end of the year, compared to the beginning.

More broadly, educators and education researchers challenged the legitimacy of using assessments designed to measure student learning as meaningful indicators of educator performance. There were more questions than answers about how to measure growth on DDMs.

For example, if the top student in a class had a score of 90 in a pre-test and 100 in a post-test, would that be considered poor growth if the average increase for that class was 15 points? If a student with poor growth scores was out of school for three months, would

In written and oral testimony, the MTA and AFT Massachusetts urged state education officials to reject both the old regulations and the proposed new ones. Instead, they urged officials to incorporate student learning into the evaluation system in a way that supports educators and encourages reflection.

his scores be held against the teacher? If a special needs student was periodically pulled out of class for personalized reading instruction, to whom would her scores be attributed, the classroom teacher or the reading specialist?

Those and many other questions were never answered, and yet they still could affect results under the new system.

The new regulations include these features:

■ Trends and patterns are no longer required, but a Student Learning Indicator based on “multiple measures of student learning, growth and achievement” must be identified for each educator.

■ For educators who provide “direct instruction,” these measures “must include student progress on common assessments and, where available, statewide student growth measures.”

■ Instead of creating a separate Student Impact Rating, these new Student Learning Indicators are to be included in determining an educator’s rating under Standard 2, “Teaching All Students.” A teacher must earn a rating of at least “Proficient” on Standard 2 to receive an overall rating of “Proficient.”

■ The new Student Learning Indicator determinations do not have to be reported to the DESE.

In written and oral testimony, the MTA and AFT Massachusetts urged state education officials to reject both the old regulations and the proposed new ones. Instead, they urged officials to incorporate student learning into the evaluation system in a way that supports educators and encourages reflection.

“Of course student work matters,” said Madeloni. “It should be reviewed and celebrated, not reduced to a convoluted metric.”

The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents initially shared many of the unions’ concerns, but in the end supported the commissioner’s new plan.

“We aren’t happy with the new regulations, but we aren’t surprised they were passed,” Madeloni said. “From Governor Charlie Baker on down, this administration is committed to a test-and-punish accountability system and has displayed a profound lack of respect for classroom teachers. We need to organize locally for power and not allow this nonsense to continue.”

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DT240317

Spring ahead with Educators Insurance

The warm sun and the smell of flowers blooming are a breath of fresh air this time of year. It's important to remember, however, that even though the cold is now behind us, the treacherous snows and gusty winds of winter may have caused damage to your home.

Now is the perfect time to inspect your house and have a consultation with a licensed and trained representative at Educators Insurance to help ensure that you have the protection you need.

Inspect your home

Houses often need a tune-up after the long winter months. Inspections include everything from checking the condition of your roof to making sure your smoke detectors are working properly.

Here are some tips to help you and your family stay safe from the elements all year long:

- **Check your roof for damage.** Snow, ice and wind can severely undermine your roof. Make sure you inspect it for any missing or broken shingles. Shingles that either "curl" (turn up) or "claw" (turn down) make your roof inefficient and susceptible to leaks. You should also check for any rusted flashing and cracked caulk around pipe collars and skylights.

- **Position your gutters and downspouts.** When there's been a lot of freezing and thawing, gutters can expand and contract. It's important to make sure your gutters are flush with the roof and that your downspouts are correctly aligned.

- **Repair chipped paint.** Try to keep painted surfaces in good condition by scraping off any chipped or peeling paint and spot-painting exposed surfaces. Any wood that is left exposed can easily rot.

- **Clean up your yard.** Winter storms leave debris all over your yard. Take some time to rake your yard to remove any debris, as well as thatch and "snow mold," a type of fungus that can damage or kill grass. Once the lawn is cleaned off, spread fertilizer to get a jump-start on a well-kept yard this summer.



- **Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.** Use the test button to ensure that the detectors are fully functioning. This is also a good time to change the batteries.

Review your homeowners insurance

After inspecting your home, it's time to review your homeowners insurance policy. Experienced and licensed advisers at Educators Insurance spend time every day with MTA members to evaluate their insurance needs and check for opportunities to provide them with great coverage at a solid value.

When evaluating your policy, make sure you have the right coverage and are receiving all of the discounts you deserve. These can be substantial, including the Educators Insurance account credit. This credit applies when you have both your primary homeowners and private passenger auto policies with Educators. The discount also allows you to have one

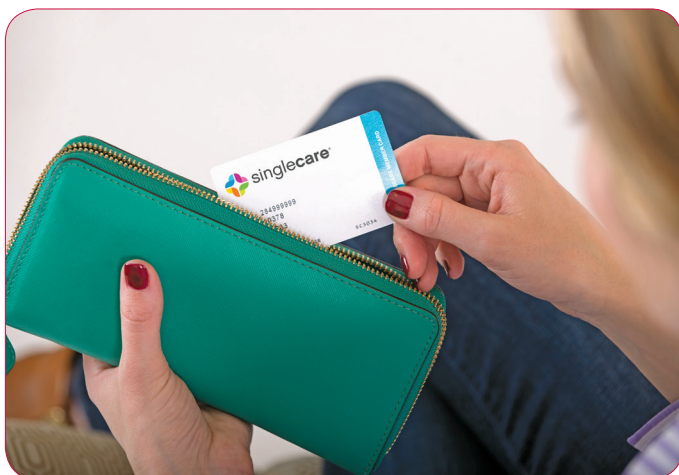
account, one deductible and one bill — so you can spend less time worrying about your insurance and more time maintaining your house. Time saved is just as valuable as money saved.

Even if you don't currently have a policy with Educators, it's worth making a call to speak with an adviser who will help ensure that you have the coverage you need. Advisers are available at your convenience from 7 a.m. to midnight Monday through Friday and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

To learn more, please call 888.908.6822 or visit www.educatorsinsuranceagency.com.

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MTA Benefits and SingleCare announce partnership



MTA Benefits is proud to announce a partnership with SingleCare, providing a free prescription savings program to all of our members. SingleCare is a nationally known name in pharmacy savings. With SingleCare, MTA members get exclusive access to discounts on every FDA-approved prescription medication sold at the 10 largest pharmacies in the United States.

"We're always looking for products and services that provide value to our members," said Elizabeth Bejoian, marketing manager for MTA Benefits. "The price of prescription drugs seems to rise daily, and we're excited about an opportunity to help our members save as much as they can."

SingleCare is not insurance, and as such, MTA members won't need to worry about deductibles, claim forms, limitations, maximums, exclusions or fine print. This partnership allows MTA members who wish to participate in the SingleCare program — for free — to receive complimentary access to widespread savings and reduce their out-of-pocket costs.

Visit the Health and Wellness section at mtabenefits.com for more information.

Benjamin & Sarah

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Obituaries

Richard L. Arieta, 81, of Kingston. Was a teacher and coach at Fairhaven High School and at Silver Lake Regional High School. Jan. 9.

Edward J. Clancy, Jr., 71, of Holyoke. Taught history for 37 years at Chicopee Comprehensive High School. Feb. 22.

Bernice C. Dondero, 82, of Revere. Taught in the Revere Public Schools for many years. Feb. 1.

Arleen L. Greene, 72, of Canton. Taught violin in the Cambridge Public Schools for more than 30 years before retiring. Jan. 14.

Sandra L. Hehir, 49, of Worcester. Was a teacher, coach and instructional specialist in the Worcester Public Schools for more than a decade, most recently at Claremont Academy. Feb. 5.

Wayne R. Higney, 69, of Ware. Was an English teacher at Ware High

School for 37 years before retiring. Jan. 10.

William J. Kilroy, Jr., 85, of Centerville. After teaching, he served as president of the education associations of Somerville and Burlington. Was elected to the MTA Board and became the MTA's director of publications and public relations. He also worked for the NEA for 30 years. Jan. 21.

Suzanne Mahoney, 73, of Douglas.

Taught music for 33 years in the Blackstone-Millville Regional School District and three years in the Uxbridge Public Schools. Jan. 1.

Linda E. McGillicuddy, 79, of Somerville. Was a teacher and counselor educator for the Somerville Public Schools. Jan. 6.

Leo P. Miller, 79, of St. James City, Florida, formerly of Orleans. Was a coach and special education teacher for 39 years at Nauset Regional High School. Dec. 14.

Shirley Mishara, 91, of Newton. Was a middle school teacher for 25 years in the Newton Public Schools. Jan. 13.

Nancy B. Morse, 80, of Wareham. Taught at Old Rochester Regional High School for 26 years. Jan. 31.

Marjorie L. Needham, 93, of Lynn. Was an educator for 45 years. The majority of her teaching career was spent at the Huckleberry Hill School in Lynnfield. Jan. 27.

Leslie C. Paul, 71, of Wareham, formerly of North Easton. Was an elementary school teacher in the Brockton Public Schools for 42 years. Jan. 6.

Alvin Pearlmuter, 86, formerly of Sharon and Easton. Taught for 36 years and served as chair of the Social Studies Department at Foxborough High School. Jan. 10.

Nancy E. Picardi, 59, of Arlington. Taught at the Clarke Middle School in Lexington for 15 years before retiring. Had also taught in Reading and at schools in Brazil and Burma. Jan. 3.

June Roberts, 95, of Greenfield. Taught history and civics at New Bedford High School for many years. Jan. 2.

Rosanne Sannicandro, 59, of Framingham. Was a guidance counselor at Wellesley High School for the past 30 years. Oct. 20.

Theresa A. Shuman, 68, of Chicopee. Was a teacher and a special education school adjustment counselor in the Chicopee Public Schools. Jan. 9.

Dorothy E. Tivnan, 87, of Shrewsbury. Was a teacher in the Worcester Public Schools for many years. Jan. 21.

Elizabeth A. Walmsley, 67, of Somerset. Was a teacher in the Fall River Public Schools for many years. Jan. 12.

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¹ National Safety Council, Injury Facts, 2008 edition.

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

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VACATION RENTALS — Madeira Beach, Florida, two-bedroom, two-bath, furnished condo — balcony, right on the

beach with pool — monthly \$3,200. St. Petersburg, Florida, Park Place Complex, two-bedroom, two-bath, furnished condo with pool — monthly \$1,600. Sea View Towers, three-month minimum, two-bedroom, two-bath, 55+ gated community, two pools — \$3,200. Call Diane, 617.435.9048.

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Advocacy day focuses on higher ed funding

By Scott McLennan

More than 300 students, educators, social justice advocates and legislators — and even a few college presidents — turned out for a recent Public Higher Education Advocacy Day at the State House.

They filled the Great Hall before heading off to speak with state representatives and senators about the necessity of increasing state funding for public colleges and universities.

The Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts organized the advocacy day, which was held on March 1. PHENOM Executive Director Zac Bears' opening remarks framed the urgency of properly funding public higher education.

Per-student state financial support for public higher education has dropped by 31 percent since 2001, he said, while tuition and fees have risen by \$4,000 over the same time period.

The situation goes beyond keeping many students from accessing higher education, Bears said. It also saddles those who do attend with huge amounts of debt.

"The only way we can solve this problem is to have empowered, informed and engaged people come together and decide democratically how we are going to handle this," Bears said. He added that it is also an economic justice issue, citing people who are busy working two or three jobs to pay off their education debts and do not have the time to participate in lobby days or similar activities.

Students, staff and faculty members from across the public higher education system — UMass campuses, state universities and community colleges — gathered to hear the speakers and then share their personal stories with legislators. They tied those stories to their advocacy for specific legislative actions.

Participants in the lobby day, which is held annually, pushed for passage of a bill including a Finish Line Grant, which would cover one year of tuition and fees; passage of fully funded campus budgets and collective bargaining agreements; and passage of the Fair Share Amendment, which faces



Photo by Scott McLennan

Students, faculty and staff from public colleges and universities across the Commonwealth rallied at the State House on March 1. They asked legislators to increase funding for public higher education so that tuition and fees stop rising, programs stay in place, and students are not forced to take on large amounts of debt.

one more vote by the Legislature before it can be brought to voters in November 2018.

The amendment, which would generate almost \$2 billion a year for public education and transportation, calls for an additional tax of four percentage points on annual income over \$1 million.

Advocates also supported legislation that calls for better pay and benefits for adjunct faculty and bills that would better protect undocumented immigrant students and their families.

UMass Boston professor Joseph Ramsey delivered a fiery message about the assault on public higher education, which arrives in a "hidden argument" delivered by those in power amid a narrative about scarce resources. If unchallenged, that argument manifests itself in shrinking state funding for public colleges and increased debt for students attending public colleges.

"As budgets are cut, as class sizes are increased, as tuition is raised and students need to work more and more hours just to stay in that classroom, the time for critical-thinking education becomes more and more difficult to have, but becomes more and more important," Ramsey said.

MTA President Barbara Madeloni encouraged students who were heading out to meet legislators, reminding them that the defeat of Question 2, the charter school expansion initiative on the ballot last November, carried with it an important message.

"People in Massachusetts have a deep commitment to public education," she said. "And what people believe is in contrast to the narrative that we need to do more with less and that there isn't more money to fund public colleges. The people are with you."

THE MTA Advantage

VOLUME 29 / NUMBER 3 / SPRING 2017

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

New member benefit: exclusive hotel savings



MTA Benefits is excited to announce a new partnership with HotelStorm, which offers MTA members savings of up to 55 percent on hotels.

HotelStorm provides access to wholesale hotel rates at more than 400,000 properties worldwide at an average savings of 21 percent — but it is only able to offer these special rates to select groups.

In addition to deep hotel discounts, HotelStorm also offers a U.S.-based concierge service that allows you to call or e-mail anytime with questions or concerns about the booking process or your reservation. Call 888.519.5002 to reach the concierge.

Here are comments from two educators who tried HotelStorm and loved it:

"As a teacher, I have a lot of time to travel during my summers off. It's one of my favorite ways to learn about the world around me — and helps me relax and recharge so that when I come back for

another school year, I'm totally refreshed. But travel is expensive! I recently heard about HotelStorm and did a couple of searches for some of the cities on my wish list, such as San Francisco, Seattle and London. I found deals for up to 55 percent off at really nice hotels! I will definitely be traveling in style this summer." — Elizabeth M.

"During the summer I'm always looking for family-friendly activities to keep all of us from falling into a summer rut (community pool for the 20th time, anyone?). Last summer I booked an Orlando hotel on HotelStorm. It was right near Disney World, with a great pool and everything. We were able to save a ton on our Disney vacation, and my kids were over the moon! You can bet we'll be booking with HotelStorm this summer." — Maggie S.

To access exclusive hotel savings of up to 55 percent, visit hotelstorm.com/mta and enter access code MEMBERPERKS.

TankFarm reduces propane costs for MTA members

Do you use propane in your home for a space heater or generator, to heat water or cook? If you do, you already know that propane prices can be outrageously high. TankFarm offers a member benefit that can help. MTA members save, on average, \$300 to \$500 a year on propane through TankFarm.

Buying propane in bulk for better prices

TankFarm, formerly known as Propane.pro, does for the cost of propane what the big wholesale buying clubs do for the cost of groceries. The program buys its propane in bulk from top local suppliers and passes the savings on to you — whether you use 50 or 5,000 gallons a year.

Low prices — no fees

Many propane consumers have signed up with propane suppliers and received a decent rate initially, then watched the price skyrocket. Very often they're also paying for things such as tank rental and delivery.

TankFarm eliminates all of these fees. Members pay for the propane — and nothing else.

Work with top local suppliers

TankFarm propane suppliers are the best in the business. You'll still work with one company, which provides you with a tank if you need it, handles all your deliveries, keeps your tank full, responds to service requests anytime and bills you directly. The only difference is that as a member of TankFarm, you'll get lower prices and better terms.

There's strength in numbers

You'll also get the TankFarm team. Most members never need to ask for help, but if you have a question or need to solve a problem with your supplier, TankFarm will help. And TankFarm is very effective because of its

Continued on page 4

Why should you consider solar power?

Have you been seeing more houses with solar panels on their roofs lately? What do those homeowners know that you don't?

Perhaps they're aware of the savings they can realize. Installing a solar power system can save you \$1,000 to \$2,000 per year on average on your utility bill. Or maybe they realize that going solar will help combat climate change.

Others may be looking to increase the value of their homes. Owning rather than leasing a solar power system can increase the resale value of a home by \$30,000.

The reasons could include all of the above, along with the fact that usually the house is ideally located for solar panels if the roof faces south, east or west.

Whatever the reason, demand is growing. A greater number of people have been researching solar power. When they do, they learn that purchasing a system can be much more affordable than they thought. Some reasons include:

- A federal tax credit of 30 percent of the project's value.
- A Massachusetts state tax credit of \$1,000.
- A Massachusetts state incentive — solar renewable energy credits can be worth \$1,500 or more per year for 10 years.
- A low-interest loan of 4.25 percent for 10 years, offered by the state of Massachusetts to new solar customers.



The state's solar renewable energy credits program, which offers incentives for homeowners to purchase a system, will expire on Dec. 31. The state-funded loan program also has a finite allotment, which could be exhausted by autumn.

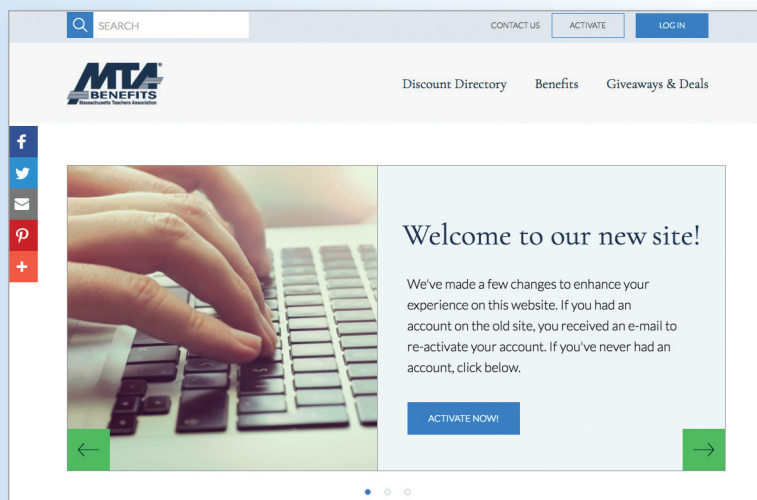
MTA members who want to jump on the solar bandwagon — or at least begin to research providers — should start with one of MTA Benefits' new programs through American Solar Partners.

In addition to providing members with a 10 percent discount on their solar purchases, there are other important reasons to consider ASP:

- Only American-made solar modules are used.
- All systems are installed by IBEW local union contractors.
- Systems come with a 25-year quality assurance.
- ASP staff will educate members about solar power and help them determine whether it's right for them.
- ASP will do a free site assessment.
- Members receive information from staff who are on salary, not commission.

Let American Solar Partners help you reap the benefits of installing a solar power system. Call 914.699.3366, visit americansolarpartners.com/mta/ or e-mail info@americansolarpartners.com. Be sure to mention that you are an MTA member.

MTA Benefits has a brand new website



If you haven't already done so, visit www.mtabenefits.com to see our new and improved website! You'll find an intuitive design along with updated functionality. Our site is now easy to use on mobile devices, which is sure to improve your experience. The website has everything you need, including:

- Discounted theme park tickets
- Monthly giveaways that run from August through June
- Travel discounts
- 350,000 nationwide discounts from Access, including the My Deals mobile app
- Free magazine subscription
- BJ's Wholesale Club discount

Plus, you'll find all of the benefit programs that will help you save on insurance, health and wellness, financial needs, wireless and more!



Editor: Elizabeth A. Bejoian
The MTA Advantage is published three times a year as a supplement to MTA Today by MTA Benefits, Inc.

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

Tip Sheet

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

Adventure awaits this summer

Summertime is great for travel. School is out for a few months, the days are longer and warmer, and time seems to move more slowly. Keep the thrills and excitement coming all summer by using your MTA member theme park discounts.



Six Flags New England

Six Flags New England has more than 100 rides, shows and attractions — as well as Hurricane Harbor, New England's best water park. New to the park this year, The Joker 4D Free Fly Coaster allows you to soar outside the confines of the track for a new roller coaster experience. The Joker joins other favorites such as BATMAN The Dark Knight, Goliath and Mind Eraser to create a full day of fun for the entire family.

Canobie Lake Park

Some things never get old, including the classic rides at Canobie Lake Park. Try the Yankee Cannonball, the Corkscrew Coaster, the Pirate Ship and Rowdy Roosters. With thrill rides, family rides, water rides and rides just for the kids, your crew will not want to leave. Be sure to visit Pinball Parlor, with new and refurbished pinball games, and try to win a prize at Midway Games or Skee Ball. If you need to rest, stop for some food and then catch some live entertainment!



Story Land

The kids will have the time of their lives at Story Land, especially while riding the newest addition to the park — the Roar-o-Saurus. As the major attraction in the new dinosaur-themed section of the park, the Roar-o-Saurus is the only wooden roller coaster of its kind in northern New England. Don't forget about all-time favorites, such as Dr. Geyser's Remarkable Raft Ride, Antique Cars, Bamboo Chutes and the Turtle Twirl.

York's Wild Kingdom

An all-time MTA member favorite, York's Wild Kingdom is one of the most popular discounts offered to members. The variety of animals at the zoo is extensive. A red kangaroo, African lion, two-toed sloth and blue and gold macaw are just a few of the beautiful creatures to be seen. The 5,500-square-foot Butterfly Kingdom, housing a variety of South American and Central American butterflies, is a popular choice. The amusement park offers more than 22 rides including Safari Bounce, Bumper Boats, Persian Kamel Funhouse and Scrambler, as well as mini-golf, batting cages and an arcade!

Hersheypark

The sweetest theme park in the nation is now even sweeter with the new Hershey Triple Tower. Choose your thrill by deciding which tower you'll ride. Hershey's Tower, at 189 feet, is the tallest drop tower, featuring a 45-mile-per-hour ride to the top and back. Reese's Tower, which stands 131 feet, has two thrilling cycles of positive and negative G-forces. The Kisses Tower is an 89-foot version of the Reese's Tower. In addition to roller coasters, family rides and kiddie rides, head to the adjacent 11-acre ZooAmerica and be sure to visit the Hershey Shoppe for the largest assortment of Hershey's merchandise anywhere!

Discounts for the theme parks listed in this section must be purchased in advance. Discounted tickets cannot be purchased at the gate. Please visit mtabenefits.com for updates.



Are you planning a move this summer?

Whether you're moving across town or across the state, your MTA membership will help you save substantially on moving costs. Budget Truck Rental offers reliable, easy-to-drive trucks up to 26 feet in length, 24/7 roadside assistance and boxes and other moving supplies. This new discount will save you 15 percent if you book your truck for use Sunday through Thursday and 10 percent if you plan to move on a Friday or Saturday. Make the move to your next home smooth with Budget Truck Rental. Visit mtavacations.com for details.

Myths about travel insurance

If you haven't purchased travel protection before, you might have some preconceived ideas. Travel Insured outlines some common travel protection myths and explains why they're untrue.

Travel protection is too expensive

Travel protection is actually very affordable, especially compared to the cost of your trip and the amount of coverage offered. At Travel Insured, a 10-day trip with a \$100 travel protection plan costs \$10 per day. You can get a no-obligation quote to see what your plan cost would be.

I have travel coverage elsewhere

This is true for some people, but coverage through other sources is usually more limited than it is through Travel Insured. Credit card companies typically insure only for things purchased on that card, for example. As for medical coverage abroad, travel protection may offer a wider range of coverage than your personal health insurance does.

The airline has me covered

Airlines might be able to get you on the next available flight, but what if the delay is extremely long? There is no guarantee that hotel and meal costs you incur during the delay will be covered by the airline. Travel protection could help you with these costs and more!

Every travel insurance provider or protection plan is the same

Not all travel protection plans and companies are alike. Travel Insured takes pride in excellent customer service and extensive coverage. Travel Insured can work with you to find the plan that best fits your needs.



It's too difficult to purchase travel protection

Purchasing protection is quick and easy. You can purchase directly on the Travel Insured website in just a few minutes. If you prefer talking to an agent, the Customer Care Department is always available — day and night and every day of the year — at 800.243.3174.

To find out more about what Travel Insured has to offer, visit mtabenefits.com. Get a quote today and find the right plan for your travel needs.

My claim won't be paid anyway

Travel Insured cares about its customers the same way it cares about its own family members. Travel Insured wants to help pay your claim, but it's important that you carefully read your documents to fully understand your coverage.

TankFarm reduces propane costs for MTA members

Continued from page 1

strength in numbers. TankFarm represents thousands of families buying propane together.

Unique benefits for members

As a member of the MTA, you will also receive a certificate good for \$50 of free propane upon sign-up, as well as a \$100 certificate toward the

purchase of a propane tank if you choose to buy from a TankFarm supplier.

Sign up

To apply, visit tankfarmgroup.com/mta or call 855.976.4141. See for yourself how much TankFarm can save on your propane bills.