

A TALK WITH THE NEW LEADERS OF THE MTA



MTA Today

*A publication of the Massachusetts Teachers Association
Volume 49, No. 1/Summer 2018*

**MEMBERS GO ALL OUT
FOR ALL IN INITIATIVE**



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MTA Today

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This edition also includes the MTA's 2018 Primary Election Guide. The primary is set for Sept. 4.

MTA'S MISSION STATEMENT

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

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ON THE COVER

Theresa Pietrzykowski, a paraeducator in the Holyoke Public Schools, left, talked to Sumayya Ghalaini, center, a paraeducator in West Springfield, and Amy Herring, a teacher in Palmer, about the importance of sticking with the union. The conversation was among thousands that took place in recent weeks as MTA summer organizers fanned out to speak with members and nonmembers about the need to be *All In* following the U.S. Supreme Court's anti-union *Janus v. AFSCME* decision. You'll find articles about organizing in the post-*Janus* era throughout this edition of *MTA Today*. In an interview featured on Page 3, the MTA's new leaders, President Merrie Najimy and Vice President Max Page, discuss their backgrounds and their vision for the future.



Cover photos by Chris Christo and Laura Barrett
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MTA TODAY, ISSN 08982481, is published quarterly by the Massachusetts Teachers Association. Subscription: \$2.67 of MTA members' dues is designated for *MTA Today*.

Periodicals postage rates paid at Boston, MA, and at additional offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: *MTA Today*, 2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor, Quincy, MA 02171-2119.

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Quote-Unquote

"I don't want to get separated from my daughter. She's everything that I have, and I'm everything that she has."

— Patricia Carvajal, an immigrant from Honduras, speaking to WBUR during a rally in Boston protesting family separation

A talk with the MTA's new leaders

MTA President Merrie Najimy and Vice President Max Page took office on July 15. Najimy is a 28-year elementary school teacher, most recently teaching kindergarten in Concord. She was president of her local for 11 years and served on the MTA Board of Directors. Page is a professor of architecture and history and the director of the Historic Preservation Program at UMass Amherst. He formerly served as president of the Massachusetts Society of Professors and was a member of MTA's Executive Committee and Board of Directors. Detailed biographies of both are posted on the MTA website. Najimy's first *MTA Today* editorial as president — which appears on Page 4 of this issue — outlines the leaders' policy platform. This interview with MTA Communications Specialist Laura Barrett focuses on what led Najimy and Page to run for positions of leadership in the union and their vision for the future.

Q: *Why did you become involved in union work?*

Najimy: When you are dissatisfied with something, you either disconnect or you get more engaged. I was dissatisfied with decisions being made in my local 20 years ago. I decided to get more engaged. Ultimately, I became president. It's a very hard job. I was a full-time teacher with no release time. Being a union president is also a full-time job. But it was also a job that was in my heart.

Page: I became active in the MSP as part of a group of members who wanted to make the union a lot more relevant to members' lives. We found out what really mattered to members and refocused the union's work.

Q: *How did your family backgrounds influence your decision to do this kind of work?*

Najimy: My grandparents were immigrants from Lebanon. My dad and his sister were educators; my uncles were factory workers, all protected by unions. We were a working-class immigrant family able to have a comfortable life because of unions and I had access to affordable higher education. My father, Norman, who started his career as an elementary school teacher in Pittsfield, became a curriculum coordinator and then a principal in the most racially diverse school in the district. In 1985, he won a Human and Civil Rights Award from the MTA. I believe it was for his organized resistance to closing his school. The atmosphere at his school had been explosive, but he was able to bring about more racial harmony, and the school had strong community support. He held organizing meetings in our dining room, where I got my first exposure to people coming together to take collective action. My mother also played a critical role in our family. She supported my father's decision to keep fighting the school closure even though it eventually cost him his job.



Photo by Laura Barrett

MTA President Merrie Najimy and MTA Vice President Max Page have an ambitious agenda.

Page: I grew up in an academic and pro-union family. My father, Alex Page, a refugee from Nazi Germany, was an English professor at UMass and a founding member of the MSP. My mother was an elementary school principal. I moved away for college and work but came back to teach at UMass in 2001 — I even moved with my family back into the house I grew up in! And I married a union organizer — Eve Weinbaum, who was director of the Labor Center at UMass Amherst and is the president of the MSP.

Q: *Can you describe some successes you had as leaders in your local unions?*

Page: We won a paid parental leave policy that is one of the most far-reaching, progressive policies anywhere. It provides for a full semester of leave for a father or mother for births or adoptions. It is one of the most popular benefits we have won. We have also worked hard to raise up the pay and benefits of our adjunct faculty members, including winning per-course pay parity. As MSP president, I also became engaged in fighting for funding for public education statewide. The MSP was involved in the founding of the Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts — PHENOM. We wanted to help launch a nonprofit that would involve faculty, students and staff from across the 29-campus public higher education system. PHENOM has done great work and this past year celebrated its 10th anniversary.

Najimy: When I became president in Concord, everybody was looking to me to solve things. But over a period of 11 years, we had begun to change what we thought of ourselves as a union. Victories we had fighting a bullying superintendent and a bullying principal were transformational. We had to turn to each other because we all felt we were under attack. After we got through the worst of

times, we opened up our bargaining. The district did everything it could to try to stop us from bringing our members to bargaining sessions, but on the third day of negotiations, we brought 50 people into the room. When they saw that we had the capacity to mobilize that large a group, they agreed that both parties could have non-participatory guests. We talked to our members about the things that brought us joy in our work and the things that sucked joy out of our work that we wanted to change. We translated that into a platform of our aspirations and turned that platform into bargaining proposals. Open bargaining changed how our members understood both the negotiating process and their role in that. And then something unanticipated happened. They went back to their buildings and started to talk to each other about what was going on. They started to *be* the union. We won the strongest contract we had ever won. We made public all of the problems we were having in the district — and all of the obstacles. We changed public opinion about unions and changed the narrative about who the teachers were.

Q: *What is your vision for the future?*

Page: There's no daylight between Merrie and me in terms of our vision. That's why we ran together as one team. What's clearer than ever if you want a more equal society and more equality of opportunity is that you have to have strong unions. And if you want strong unions, you have to have strong educators' unions. And if you want to have strong educators' unions, you have to have a strong MTA. People look to Massachusetts because of our deep commitment to outstanding public education here and our broader commitment to a just society. We set the bar. That's why it is our obligation that we fight the persistent inequities and make sure we provide outstanding public education to all students, no matter what their ZIP code. What we do reverberates around the nation. Our Commonwealth, and our union, matter.

Najimy: We need a broader social movement in order to think big. We need to create a community platform that says, "These are the schools that our communities deserve, and these are the communities that families deserve." When students don't come to school physically and emotionally well, that impacts their learning conditions. It is incumbent upon educators to build bridges that help solve the ills of society. We have to ask, "What kind of working conditions and wages do the families of our students need so that they can have a relationship with the school? What kind of health care do they need so they can come to school healthy?" We know that our students need neighborhoods free of gun violence. We know that they need to be free from the fear that Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents might raid their homes and separate their families. When we raise up the living conditions of our students and their families, we actually raise up their learning conditions. That's what our campaign was about.

Taking back our schools and colleges

My first experience with MTA's Annual Meeting was as a child, when my father brought my family to spend the days in the pool at the Sheraton while he attended the meeting as a delegate. After years of being a delegate myself, it is an honor to have been elected president of the MTA, to serve with Vice President Max Page, and to work with the MTA's dedicated staff — and with you, the members and local leaders.

Max and I ran on a shared platform of continuing to grow our collective power and standing up for social, racial and economic justice



Merrie Najimy
MTA President

with our members, our students, their families and the Commonwealth. Our top priorities are to win significant new funding for public education and a moratorium on high-stakes testing and to deepen efforts already underway through the *All In* initiative to help our members grow their union muscles. The work ahead is challenging but not daunting. Max and

I believe that we have the power to achieve our goals together.

In our first month on the job, in the aftermath of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Janus* decision, we witnessed the right wing attempting to undermine our unions. We experienced outrage as state legislators were unwilling to pass simple legislation to mitigate the damage of that decision and then failed to perform their most essential duty: providing sufficient funds, as demanded by our Constitution, to "cherish" our public schools. But we have also experienced the joy of going door to door, talking to members about their aspirations, their desire to fight

for their schools, and their commitment to staying in the union.

The time is now for a funding campaign. A generation of children has been failed by a broken foundation budget formula that has not adequately funded basic educational needs and by budget cuts and tuition hikes that have weakened our public colleges and universities. State per-pupil spending on public higher education has been cut by one-third since 2001, in inflation-adjusted dollars, while tuition and fees have risen and student debt has skyrocketed.

The lack of funding has also taken a toll on faculty and staff. More and more courses are being taught by poorly compensated adjunct faculty. We must demand better pay and benefits for adjuncts, particularly in our community colleges.

We had high expectations that we were going to fight for and win the Fair Share Amendment, which was enormously popular with our members and the general public. But in a blatantly political decision, the state Supreme Judicial Court, dominated by appointees of Governor Charlie Baker, robbed us of that opportunity. Our students, especially those who are most vulnerable, will go yet another year without getting what they need and deserve.

We will NOT be deterred!

We will soon be rolling out a yearlong plan to win full funding for our public schools and colleges — "P-16," as we like to say. The campaign will be based on you and your local rising up, creating heat in the street and demanding action from our elected officials.

Education is the most precious resource in a democracy. The enemies of public education use austerity budgeting as a way of undermining public schools and colleges. Their other tool has been high-stakes testing to "prove" that public schools are "failing." We reject that narrative.

High-stakes testing creates a racial hierarchy, placing white students at the top and black, brown,

poor and English learner students at the bottom. It is an instrument that the privatizers use to take over public education by ranking our students, schools and districts — wholesale — and then sending them into receivership or channeling them into the charter school system. It also contributes to funneling our students, primarily black and brown young people, into the prison pipeline.

Enough is enough. Our members will not stand for it, and we have public opinion on our side!

We won't win full funding of our schools and colleges, nor will we win a moratorium on high-stakes testing, if we don't succeed with the third plank of our platform: making our union stronger by continuing to build the *All In* initiative begun under MTA President Barbara Madeloni.

The union provides space for us to come together, share our aspirations, grow our imagination of what is possible and make plans to protect the things we hold most dear — public education and unions. Max and I feel incredibly optimistic as we witness members across the state talking to each other, making connections, flexing their union muscles, and winning local fights against bullying bosses and in favor of better contracts and community-based overrides to fund public schools.

Together we can take back our schools and colleges!

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.

Members are honored for teaching excellence

MTA members and other educators received recognition recently as teachers at the top of their profession.

At the annual Massachusetts Excellence in Teaching Awards ceremony, which was held on June 21 at the State House, **Jamil Siddiqui** was honored as the 2019 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year.

Siddiqui, a math teacher at East Bridgewater Junior-Senior High School, is a member of the East Bridgewater Education Association. He has been a math teacher in East Bridgewater for his entire 24-year teaching career.

On June 25, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy announced the 2016 winners of the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

The honorees from Massachusetts are **Jennifer Donais**, a classroom teacher at the Dr. Paul Nettle

Middle School in Haverhill and a member of the Haverhill Education Association, for math, and **Lorie Hammerstrom**, a classroom teacher at Merrymount Elementary School in Quincy and a member of the Quincy Education Association, for science.

The Presidential Awards are the nation's highest honors for kindergarten to grade 12 science and math teachers. Awards are announced on a two-year cycle, alternating between teachers of students in kindergarten through sixth grade and those teaching seventh through 12th grade.

Also honored at the State House ceremony were **Brinda Tahiliani**, a teacher at New Mission High School in Boston and a member of the Boston Teachers Union, who was named the 2018 Massachusetts History Teacher of the Year, and **Daniel Adler**, a science teacher at UP Academy

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Jamil Siddiqui, the 2019 Teacher of the Year

Conference serves as call to action

By Scott McLennan

“Don’t Mourn — Organize!” That popular labor adage came fully to life at the 2018 MTA Summer Conference.

Members were clearly fired up to tackle the challenges before them. The four-day conference, which began Aug. 5, was held for the third year in a row at UMass Amherst, and participation was the highest yet on the campus.

In the months leading up to the gathering, which is designed to offer MTA members opportunities for intensive professional development and training in union-building skills, organized labor and public education were dealt two damaging blows.

First, in mid-June, the state’s highest court knocked the so-called millionaires’ tax off the ballot. The ballot question, which had enormous popular support, would have imposed a surtax on annual income over \$1 million, with the revenue raised going to fund public education and transportation. Less than two weeks later, the U.S. Supreme Court, in a case called *Janus v. AFSCME*, overturned 40 years of legal precedent that had allowed public-sector unions to collect agency or “fair-share” fees from nonmembers who benefit from union contracts.

But members were ready to fight back. This year’s conference served as a launch pad for activism on two fronts: keeping membership strong within MTA locals and mounting an aggressive campaign for full funding of public education.

The opening session set the stage — with members of locals in Springfield, Chicopee, Methuen and Worcester, as well as at Bridgewater State University and UMass Amherst, describing the fights they face and the ways in which they are organizing to achieve their goals.

The cheering audience heard about Methuen educators’ activism in an electoral campaign to recall the mayor, who is pushing an austerity budget on schools, and plans by Chicopee members to demand public education funding at a march and rally on Sept. 22.

MTA summer member organizers shared their stories about canvassing throughout the state, meeting with and talking to members and potential members about the value of unions. One higher education organizer, Sasha Link, described how she felt when a longtime agency fee payer committed to becoming a member after talking with her.

A panel discussion followed, featuring Springfield Education Association President Maureen Colgan Posner, SEA member Lynn Budd, West Virginia teacher Jay O’Neal and United Teachers Los Angeles Secretary Arlene Inouye.

The Springfield members discussed their organizing to increase opportunities for educators of color. O’Neal talked about the outreach that led educators in West Virginia to strike when the state attempted to cut health benefits and further suppress educators’ already low pay. Inouye described how her union has transformed itself into



The MTA Summer Conference featured professional development and union-building skills opportunities. Above, members took part in an exercise developed for the New Member Program. At left, educators strolled through the heart of the UMass campus. Below, applauding during the opening session of the conference were, from left to right, MTA President Merrie Najimy, West Virginia teacher Jay O’Neal, United Teachers Los Angeles Secretary Arlene Inouye, Springfield Education Association President Maureen Colgan Posner and SEA member Lynn Budd.

Photos by Scott McLennan and Bob Duffy

an activist organization that is fighting back against privatization plans in the Los Angeles public schools.

All of the panelists emphasized the power and importance of members simply talking to other members about the planning and power necessary to build the workplaces they want and the public schools and colleges their students and communities deserve.

“There is no magic bullet,” Inouye said. “It’s the one-on-one conversation that matters.”

The flip side to these small, more personal conversations is the mass collective power they help create.

“In the fights you heard described by others, I’m sure you heard your own fights,” MTA President Merrie Najimy said during the session. “It’s time to harness righteous anger and take action. That action will turn into power.”

MTA Vice President Max Page told the crowd about the most recent setback for education funding: the failure of Massachusetts lawmakers to act before the end of the legislative session in July to increase school funding through the foundation budget formula.

The crowd responded with a chant: “Take it back!”

“We are going to bring heat to the street,” Page said.

Higher education locals also strategized about pushing back against the austerity narratives they typically hear when negotiating new contracts with the state.

Some good news on the higher education front arrived during the conference as a planned demonstration to support the UMass Amherst

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All out for All In initiative

By Scott McLennan

Standing together on a porch in Holyoke one sunny morning in July, three public school educators discussed their work, their unions and the impact of a U.S. Supreme Court decision that has emboldened anti-worker forces bent on weakening organized labor.

"I'm determined to make sure our union stays strong," said Theresa Pietrzykowski, a paraeducator in the Holyoke Public Schools.

Many of Pietrzykowski's fellow educators share that sentiment. Members and leaders have been working throughout the summer to help the MTA and its local affiliates maintain and build their power in the aftermath of the court's 5-4 decision in the *Janus v. AFSCME* case. The June 27 ruling overturned 40 years of legal precedent that had allowed unions to collect fair-share or "agency" fees from nonmembers in bargaining units because they benefit from contract provisions and protections.

The conversation between Pietrzykowski, Palmer teacher Amy Herring and West Springfield paraeducator Sumayya Ghalaini was one of thousands that have occurred as part of the MTA's *All In* initiative, which focuses on the reasons to belong to unions.

"People are appreciative that we've stopped by," said Herring, who has been going door to door to hold one-to-one conversations. "Everyone's story is different."

The visits have provided an opportunity for members trained as organizers to make sure their colleagues are informed about the ramifications of the *Janus* decision and its place within a well-funded assault on working people. Less than 24 hours after the Supreme Court ruling, right-wing groups launched a deceptive nationwide campaign urging public employees to drop out of their unions.

In addition to discussing the value of maintaining membership and keeping MTA locals strong, the summer organizers have had the opportunity to discover which issues are most important to educators.

Organizers hired by the MTA last year to help kick off the *All In* initiative have been joined in recent weeks by 82 preK-12 educators, including Herring and Ghalaini, and 21 higher education activists to take part in the effort. Locals, for their part, are making sure new employees are welcomed — and that they understand the need for unions to have power as they fight for the schools and colleges that students deserve.

The attack on public-sector unions has spurred numerous MTA members to action. Herring, for



Throughout the summer, MTA organizers have been holding thousands of conversations with fellow educators at their homes as members work to maintain and build union power in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's decision in the *Janus v. AFSCME* case. Above, *All In* organizers regrouped at the MTA regional office in Holyoke in July after a day of one-to-one conversations with members. At left, Amy Herring, a teacher in Palmer, and Sumayya Ghalaini, right, a paraeducator in West Springfield, made their rounds.

Photos by Scott McLennan and Chris Christo

example, has been a teacher for 25 years. But the *Janus* decision showed her the need to spread the word.

"My daughter actually inspired me to get more active. She is going into education and has been active in her SEAM chapter," Herring said, referring to the MTA-affiliated Student Education Association of Massachusetts.

Herring described herself as normally reticent to strike up a conversation with people she does not know. But the court decision changed that. "This work is important," she said.

To Stephanie Marcotte, the union provides a way to combat injustices — both at her college and in the city where she works.

Marcotte, an adjunct faculty member, was recently elected president of the Massachusetts Community College Council chapter at Holyoke Community College. She is also part of the higher education team going door to door with the goal of signing up new members.

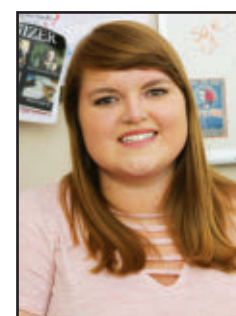
"I've received a lot of support as an adjunct from the MCCC and the MTA," Marcotte said.

Her education career began in 2015, as public-sector employees were hearing about a case before

the Supreme Court that was similar to *Janus*. That case, *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, ended with an evenly split court after the death of Justice Antonin Scalia in 2016. But Marcotte's awareness of the ongoing effort to undermine educators' unions had been raised. Marcotte said

she never doubted that she would join her local union. What she did not know was that adjunct professors like her could be as involved as full-time employees.

Mobilizing for both better working conditions and a stronger community through initiatives such as the fight to raise the state's minimum wage to \$15 an hour motivated her to



Stephanie Marcotte

pursue a leadership role.

"I want to do more than get more members," she said. "I want to create avenues for people to follow to become leaders or to highlight their leadership qualities through different initiatives."

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Unions stay strong after *Janus* ruling

By Laura Barrett

The U.S. Supreme Court's 5-4 ruling in the *Janus v. AFSCME* case marked the latest victory for the right-wing program to undermine unions and working people. While the impact of the decision will reverberate for years to come, the MTA and other public employee unions are fighting back against an immediate onslaught: corporate-sponsored efforts to manipulate people into dropping their union membership.

"This is all part of the long-held dream of the Koch brothers and other corporate billionaires to 'defund and defang' public employee unions," said MTA President Merrie Najimy, citing a memo by the Koch-backed State Policy Network that outlined the multipronged attack against public-sector unions. "They are intent on weakening us so that they have more leverage to privatize and slash public services and pay less in taxes. We must make sure they don't succeed."

In its ruling on June 27, the deeply divided court overturned its own unanimous decision in *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*, decided in 1977. In that case, the court balanced the interests of unions, employers and nonmembers. It ruled that the U.S. Constitution allowed public-sector unions to collect a fair share fee — also called an "agency fee" — from nonmembers for the costs of negotiating and maintaining the bargaining agreements that provide them with wages, benefits and protections.

But with the *Janus* decision, the majority — over a stinging dissent by their fellow justices — decided that the court that ruled in *Abood* was completely wrong.

A politically motivated decision

"It is very rare for the Supreme Court to overturn its own decisions," MTA General Counsel Ira Fader noted. Najimy added, "This is clearly a politically motivated decision. There is nothing just about it."

While the National Education Association and other unions filed briefs against the *Janus* case in court, the ruling became a foregone conclusion when the Republican-dominated Senate blocked then-President Barack Obama's nominee to the Supreme Court in 2016 and subsequently approved President Donald Trump's anti-labor nominee, Neil Gorsuch.

Immediately after the decision was issued, the right-wing Michigan-based Mackinac Center for Public Policy flooded the inboxes of educators in states across the country, urging them to drop their membership. Members in at least 50 locals in Massachusetts reported receiving the e-mails in July.

"We have every reason to believe that the drop efforts will continue in the future," MTA Vice President Max Page said.

The MTA immediately fought back against the Mackinac attack, alerting members to the spam e-mails and highlighting the fact that Betsy DeVos,

'We have to help our members experience themselves as the union. This will happen when they are involved in identifying the problems at their worksites, the solutions to those problems and the actions they need to take to achieve their goals.'

— MTA President Merrie Najimy

the much-reviled U.S. secretary of education, has contributed heavily to the effort.

The attack seems to have had little impact, since there were few requests to drop membership after the e-mails went out. In fact, the effort may well have backfired, with some members becoming offended at the obvious attempt at manipulation.

The MTA's response

The MTA's *All In* campaign continues. In preK-12 locals, organizers and field staff worked in dozens of districts during the school year and then fanned out across the state over the summer to knock on doors and talk to members one to one to hear their concerns and discuss the benefits of the union.

Lynn Kaupp, a special education teacher in Hingham, was happy to talk when a summer organizer — a paraprofessional from Attleboro — knocked on her door in mid-July. She told the organizer that she is definitely "in" with the union, especially after an experience in another district in which the school administration did nothing to help her after she reported being harassed and intimidated by a student who had significant behavior issues. Her husband, a state trooper, advised her to go to her union.

"I went to my building rep and it was action right away," she said. "I had 100 percent support from our local president and also our MTA field rep. The union dues are a drop in the bucket compared to the support you are going to get."

In the MTA's public higher education chapters, the focus has been on reaching out to agency fee payers, talking to them about their concerns, and asking them to become members.

The primary message to prospective members is that a strong union empowers — giving members the power to negotiate a fair contract, improve working conditions, fight bad education and labor policies and support pro-public-education initiatives at the local, state and national levels.

This year there is also a special focus on signing up newly hired educators early on by engaging them in union activities and making sure they feel welcome. Some local associations organized

gatherings for new hires over the summer and many others are planning events for them during orientation or on opening day.

The MTA is also continuing to work closely with other unions. In preparing for the *Janus* decision and in its aftermath, the MTA was an active participant in the Massachusetts AFL-CIO's Public Sector Task Force. The task force organized a Working People's Day of Action when the case was argued in February, shared materials and strategies throughout the spring and summer, and responded with unity in the media when the *Janus* decision was announced. The coalition work will continue into the future.

What should individuals do?

If you are a member, stay a member. Talk to your colleagues about the importance of a strong union, and consider becoming more active in your association.

To keep your membership, you don't have to do anything. Your membership remains intact. While some districts have been telling members they have to re-sign membership cards, that is not true, according to Fader and Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey.

In a legal memorandum, Healey wrote, "The *Janus* decision does not impact any agreements between a union and its members to pay union dues, and existing membership cards or other agreements by union members to pay dues should continue to be honored. The opinion only impacts the payment of an agency service fee by individuals who decline union membership."

Regarding agency fee payers, local associations were instructed to notify employers to cease collecting those fees as of June 1 — and certainly no later than the day the *Janus* decision was handed down if they had missed the earlier deadline. Agency fees no longer exist.

There were very few agency fee payers in the MTA's preK-12 locals, but a larger number in public higher education, particularly among adjunct faculty. Adjuncts usually don't have offices, and may work at more than one institution, sometimes making them less connected to their bargaining unit peers. Yet adjuncts also have some of the greatest need for union power and protections since they have little or no job security and are often shortchanged on both pay and benefits.

"The *Janus* decision is a classic example of both a threat and an opportunity," said Najimy. "It is a threat because our opponents are intent on weakening us and undermining our funding. It is an opportunity because we know what needs to be done to remain strong. We have to help our members experience themselves as the union. This will happen when they are involved in identifying the problems at their worksites, the solutions to those problems and the actions they need to take to achieve their goals."

For more information on the *All In* campaign, please visit www.massteacher.org/allin.

Human and civil rights leaders honored

By Jean Conley

MTA members gathered on June 15 to honor those who have shown their commitment to human and civil rights.

MTA Human Relations Committee Chair Denise LaPolla welcomed the crowd to the 2018 Human and Civil Rights Awards banquet, noting that in the 36 years the MTA has been conferring the awards, the winners “have served immigrants, minorities, the homeless, students with special needs, people who have been denied health care and education, and victims of discrimination based on race, class, gender, disability and sexual orientation.”

LaPolla led a moment of silence to commemorate the contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This year marked the 50th anniversary of his assassination.

Belmont Against Racism, an all-volunteer group that has worked for decades in the community to fight prejudice and bigotry of all kinds, received the Louise Gaskins Lifetime Civil Rights Award during the event, which was held at the DoubleTree Hilton Hotel in Westborough.

Jessica Lander, a social studies teacher of English learners at Lowell High School, received the Kathleen Roberts Creative Leadership Award.

Outgoing MTA President Barbara Madeloni told the crowd that the choice of this year’s honorees — one a group of individuals being recognized “for the work they have done in the community, addressing issues of whiteness and racism,” and the other a classroom teacher “being honored for her commitment to acknowledging and respecting her immigrant students” — seemed especially fitting because “educators work every day to make the world better not just by themselves but arm in arm with the community.”

LaPolla noted that Belmont Against Racism got its start in 1992 in response to rioting that erupted after a jury in Los Angeles acquitted four police officers charged in the brutal beating of Rodney King, an African-American. Since then, she said, the group has expanded its mission to confront not just racism but all forms of bigotry and prejudice.

Among the programs the group co-sponsors are the town’s annual Martin



MTA Human Relations Committee Chair Denise LaPolla, at left in the photo above, presented Belmont Against Racism President Kathryn Bonfiglio and Vice President John Robotham with the Louise Gaskins Lifetime Civil Rights Award at the MTA Human and Civil Rights banquet. In the photo at right, Jessica Lander, a social studies teacher of English learners at Lowell High School, spoke after receiving the Kathleen Roberts Creative Leadership Award. During the event, LaPolla led a moment of silence to commemorate the contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This year marked the 50th anniversary of his assassination.

Photos by Jean Conley

Luther King Jr. Community Breakfast, the Belmont Public Library’s “One Book, One Belmont” program, and “Make a Statement Day” at Belmont High School.

Belmont Against Racism President Kathryn Bonfiglio and Vice President John Robotham accepted the award for the group. Bonfiglio said members were “truly humbled” by the honor and that they were especially pleased to have had the chance to meet Gaskins, for whom the award they received is named. “We know what teachers do, day in and day out, to serve students,”



Bonfiglio said. “Teachers have an eye on the inequities in society, and you are leading the way among your teaching colleagues to address biases in our schools.”

She expressed the frustration of watching “in horror as anti-bullying efforts in our schools seem to melt away as children mimic the brutish and uncivil behaviors of so-called adults.”

“And yet,” she continued, “how inspired we have been by the young people organizing to stand up to racism, as the Black Lives Matter movement has done, or refusing to accept political indifference to school

shootings, as the Parkland students have shown us. This gives us hope.”

Bonfiglio said the group is especially proud of Belmont’s young people. A group named Black in Belmont has organized meetings and rallies to address racial incidents and lead community dialogue, and Muslim students have spoken eloquently about fasting during Ramadan “to express their gratitude for all the things we normally take for granted,” she said.

Then LaPolla conferred the Creative Leadership Award on Lander, saying she is “living her dedication to education, creating positive change and defending the rights and aspirations of her students.”

LaPolla noted that Lander’s advocacy and leadership skills grew from stints abroad in Thailand and Cambodia. Lander fully engages her high school students in history, civics and community involvement, LaPolla said, ensuring that they not only read about the issues they tackle but also learn to speak with community leaders and set about creating tangible change.

Lander expressed her gratitude to the committee and to the MTA for honoring her work with her students, most of whom have been refugees and immigrants from more than 30 countries.

“For me, the most important part of this work is supporting my students,” Lander said. “I believe they teach us so much about what makes America great. At a time when our country is grappling with its commitment to refugees and immigrants, I find this fight deeply personal.”

Lander said her students are “young men and women who have faced almost unimaginable odds,” whether fleeing war in the Congo or Iraq, growing up in a refugee camp in Thailand or Turkey, or escaping gang violence in El Salvador or Somalia.

“I am inspired every day by my students’ stories, their passions and their determination as well as their generosity and deep caring for one another,” Lander said.

“These young men and women will help create America’s future,” she added, noting that her job is helping her students acquire the tools that will help them bring about change.

Reconnecting with the 'human element of teaching'

By Gina Garro

“How can we be good teachers if we don’t know where our students live and we have no connection to their neighborhood?” asked Sandra Speziale-Burke, a kindergarten teacher at the Garfield Elementary School in Revere. “What’s happened to the human element of teaching? All we seem to talk about is data,” said another colleague of mine.

I was in complete agreement when I heard these comments, which led me to work with Garfield’s Parent Teacher Organization to organize neighborhood walks during the past school year that involved our faculty, students and their parents, and other community members.

During these walks, I and many of my fellow educators learned not just about the lives of our students, but also about our need to build coalitions with parents and other allies if we are to realize the schools and communities our students deserve.

Revere is an incredibly diverse community. Although I grew up in the city, it’s a different place now, with significant Spanish-, Portuguese- and Arabic-speaking populations. At the Garfield School, I and my colleagues drive into the garage in the morning and drive out again at the end of the day. We don’t often cross into the neighborhood.

Last fall, after I spoke with my co-teacher, Josephine King, about the concerns expressed by our colleagues, she and I initiated the neighborhood walks with our first-grade class.

We asked our students’ parents to lead us on a walk around the neighborhood one day after school. Our small group learned about where to buy the best halal meats, where students get their hair cut, and where their families do their laundry. Probably the best part was the reaction from students when they saw us walking down the street. It was obvious to those of us on that first walk that this experience was connecting us to our students and improving us as educators in a powerful way.



On the last day of the 2017-2018 school year, teachers walked into Garfield Elementary School in an expression of solidarity. Among them, from left to right, were Revere Teachers Association members Emma Lombard, Connie Scata, Paula Elwell and Nawal Faris-Cochran.

Photo by Bob Duffy

I wanted the other teachers in Garfield to share this experience. I worked with Kristen Janjar, the PTO president, to identify parents and community members who would be willing to volunteer as guides for a larger-scale walk.

So on a sunny afternoon in June, as part of a faculty meeting, about 70 teachers divided into 10 groups took maps and went out walking. Teachers went to designated locations to hear parents and other community members describe what they love about their neighborhoods.

One parent — who chose to stand at the Banana Boat ice cream shop — said this was the first place she had come to after arriving in the U.S. from India. The group was moved to tears. We also went to a Moroccan bakery and the famous Bagel Bin deli, and we discovered a neighborhood mural and a “book box” built by a parent, where anyone can pick up or drop off a free book.

As teachers gathered back at the school after the walk, there was energy and joy in the room. We were struck by the profound experience of finally discovering a neighborhood that we had been teaching in for years. We were humbled by our realization that we had so much to learn from this community. We had entered a space that we were

typically separated from due to language, race or culture. And last, we felt fulfilled to have spent time learning about our students’ lives rather than their test scores.

For days afterward, teachers approached me in the hallway, expressing their desire for more experiences that bring us closer to our students and give true meaning to teaching and learning.

“I have driven down this street a million times and never noticed it,” said a colleague. “I’m ashamed to say I never realized how vibrant it is.”

I think that for many of us, this simple walk reminded us why we became educators: to make human connections and be lifelong learners.

It also exemplifies our union’s paramount struggle to reclaim schools that respect teacher voice and educate the whole child.

Weeks later, on the last day of school, many of us gathered, this time before school, and walked in together to express our solidarity once again with our union, our students and their families, our schools and our communities.

Gina Garro is a kindergarten and first-grade special education teacher at the Garfield School in Revere and a member of the MTA Board of Directors.

Members are *All In* for organizing as new school year nears

Continued from Page 6

Alongside the home visits, crucial organizing work has been taking place in many communities to engage newly hired educators, who are often unfamiliar with the full scope of the work happening in their locals.

In her city, where as many as 120 new educators are entering the school system this year, Fall River Educators’ Association President Rebecca Cusick developed a full day of union orientation activities to precede opening day.

In the past, the FREA had an hour to spend with new educators during an overall school district orientation. Cusick said that was nowhere near enough time to address all of the questions and concerns raised by people new to the profession.

“It was shocking when we realized that they really didn’t know their rights and that they had a lot of professional development needs, such as classroom management and dealing with student trauma,” Cusick said. “They really want workshops and information.”

So the FREA organized new-hire events with morning and afternoon sessions to accommodate different schedules. During the meetings, new educators are offered professional development workshops and learn about union membership as an advocacy tool. The FREA is also organizing members to greet new employees who arrive during the school year.

“Often, people can solve their own problems just by knowing what is in the contract, so we help

familiarize them with it,” Cusick said. “We show them how the contract is a tool to support them in teaching.”

That’s a message carried by the summer member organizers when they visit colleagues, as well.

Ghalaini, the paraeducator from West Springfield who was canvassing in Holyoke, said that she began her career in private preschools and recently started working at West Springfield High School. “I saw right away the difference of working in a school where a contract spelled out the working conditions,” she said. “Doing the organizing work this summer was my way into union activism. It’s important for us to keep the union strong.”

For more information on the All In campaign, please visit www.massteacher.org/allin.

Funding still 'top priority' after SJC ruling

By Laura Barrett

MTA members are regrouping in the fight for more resources for public schools and public higher education after receiving the deeply disappointing news in June that the Fair Share Amendment, also known as the millionaires' tax, would not be on the ballot this fall.

That piece of bad news was tempered by more positive results for the rest of the Raise Up Massachusetts agenda when the Legislature approved a package of bills increasing the minimum wage and guaranteeing many workers paid family and medical leave.

Merrie Najimy, who took office on July 15 as MTA's new president, stated, "We have raised the expectations of our members that together we will win full funding for our public schools and colleges. This is still our top priority for the MTA, with or without the Fair Share Amendment."

Najimy said that the onus is now on legislators to raise and allocate the funds needed to make sure that all students are provided with an excellent education.

Legislators "are not off the hook just because this question didn't go forward," she said. "It's their constitutional obligation to make sure that all

students have an opportunity to learn, grow and succeed despite the court's political decision."

Fair Share Amendment struck down

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court delivered a big blow when it ruled on June 18 that the Fair Share constitutional amendment, despite its broad popular support, could not appear on the November ballot. The court — dominated by appointees of Governor Charlie Baker — held that the provision calling for a 4 percent tax on annual income over \$1 million was not sufficiently "related" to the section of the initiative stating that the new revenues should be spent on public education and transportation.

"The court, in effect, invented a new rule that says tax initiatives cannot say how we want the money spent," said MTA Vice President Max Page, who also took office on July 15. "Legal experts are appalled."

The lawsuit that led to the ruling was brought by executives of five business groups: the Massachusetts High Technology Council, Associated Industries of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, the Massachusetts Competitive Partnership and the National Federation of Independent Business.

Barbara Madeloni, then MTA's president, wrote in a message to members, "Although the corporate lobby prevailed in this case, we are not diminished because our power has always been — and will remain — with collective action and coalitions. Strong locals and community alliances will give us the power to continue to fight for this issue, which is crucial to our members and our communities: fully funding public education, from prekindergarten through higher education."

Justice Kimberly Budd was one of two SJC justices who dissented, writing, "The petition does not have the same meaning if its subjects are separated." She added, "Prohibiting the people from voting on this petition undermines the legislative power given to the people to draft and enact laws" through the initiative petition process.

Striking down the initiative did indeed thwart the will of the voters. More than 150,000 people had signed petitions to qualify it for the ballot, and the Legislature overwhelmingly approved it in two consecutive constitutional conventions. Public opinion polls taken in 2018 indicated that two-thirds to three-quarters of all voters favored the measure.

Less than 1 percent of taxpayers — the same

Please turn to 'Grand bargain'/Page 12

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ESPs inspire growth of school gardens

By Jean Conley

Education support professionals are taking the lead on school garden projects that promote hands-on learning for students, thanks to new Farm to School grants recently awarded to local associations around the state.

The National Education Association awarded \$11,750 for the projects, which will allow six locals — the Franklin Education Association, the Granby Educators Association, the Leicester Paraprofessional Association, the Quabbin Regional School District Paraprofessionals Association, the Randolph Education Association and the Shrewsbury Paraprofessionals Association — to begin or expand projects at their schools.

The ESPs will work with members of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, which will provide advice and professional development.

Massachusetts has become a model for other states in the creation of learning gardens, and ESPs are in



Paraprofessionals will use a Farm to School grant to expand on a gardening program at the Leicester Primary School. Occupational therapist Michele Connor, center, has been a leader in creating opportunities for students with learning disabilities. Gathered around her, from left to right, are paraprofessionals Kristin Schimke, Erin Burlingame, Michele Dominy and Kathy West.

Photo by Bob Duffy

a unique position to offer them as an educational opportunity. Because many ESPs provide one-to-one assistance to special education students every day, they are often the educators most attuned to their students' needs.

Kathy West, an instructional paraprofessional at the Leicester

Primary School and president of the Leicester Paraprofessional Association, said she was "very excited" when her two-year-old 55-to-60-person local received its first Farm to School grant in July.

"This is all new to us," West said. "We look forward to expanding on this program and getting it up and running again." West said that while her prekindergarten-through-second-grade school is the smallest in the district, it has the heaviest concentration of paraprofessionals due to the large number of special education students enrolled.

Students formerly participated in a community garden near the school, but it was too far away and time management became an issue. The grant opens the possibility of constructing a garden right behind the school, with paver stones installed to form a path for students who use wheelchairs.

West noted that Michele Connor, the occupational therapist at her school and a fellow MTA member, has been a "gung-ho" leader in creating opportunities for students with learning disabilities — and that the association's grant comes at just the right time, as the district is grappling with budget issues.

In May, members of the NEA and the NEA Foundation visited a well-established learning garden at Haverhill High School that has become a model for districts around the country.

That project, the brainchild of 2017 Massachusetts ESP of the Year

Nancy Burke, began half a dozen years ago with a single raised garden bed.

With careful tending by Burke and her fellow ESPs — along with dozens of student, parent and community volunteers — the garden has grown into what it is now: an important and thriving outdoor learning laboratory for special education students in the school's life skills program.

The space includes an irrigation system, a weather station, Braille plant markers and an array of raised beds where the students plant, tend and harvest their crops. The students' produce has won ribbons at the Topsfield Agricultural Fair.

West said she looks forward to taking on a project that will help others recognize the evolving roles of ESPs.

"There's a new kind of mindset now," she said. "Paraprofessionals are no longer just a helping pair of hands. Getting this money is a way of saying, 'Hey, we're really serious about our jobs. We're in it for the kids.'"

That sense of pulling together — for the students and for each other as paraprofessionals — is key. "We wouldn't have this opportunity if it weren't for the strength of our union," said West. "We can't do this alone. We need everyone in. We can't run our union, stand up for our rights or negotiate if we don't stand together."

To find out more about the Farm to School program and apply for a grant, call MTA ESP organizer Audra Makuch at 617.878.8260.

REGIONAL RETIREMENT CONSULTATIONS AVAILABLE

The MTA provides individual retirement consultations throughout the state to assist members. Proof of membership must be submitted when requesting retirement services. This schedule is in effect from September to June except at MTA's Quincy headquarters, which is staffed during the summer and school vacations.

PLEASE NOTE:

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

AUBURN — Edward Nelson: 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, 774.239.7823.

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 — Karen Melanson: second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Fitchburg Teachers Association office, 245 River St., Fitchburg; call 978.355.6963.

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 — Peter Mili: third Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Northeast Office, 50 Salem St., Building B, Lynnfield; call 617.460.6589. Barbara Callaghan: fourth Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Northeast Office, 50 Salem St., Building B, Lynnfield; call 978.456.9997.

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.

RAYNHAM — Raymond Thompson: third Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Southeast Office, 756 Orchard Street, third floor, Raynham. Call Thompson at 617.347.4425.

HIGHER EDUCATION AT-LARGE — Edward McCourt, 781.325.2553.

Note: If your association would like to schedule a retirement workshop at your school, your local president should call Harold Crowley at 800.392.6175, ext. 8240. Please be aware that the MTA consultants do not have records of your service, so members are advised to bring that information along to meetings.

'Grand bargain' includes gains and losses for workers

Continued from Page 10

wealthy people who received huge tax cuts from the Trump administration — would have paid more under the Fair Share initiative. The tax was projected to raise about \$2 billion a year, providing a significant boost in funding for preK-12 schools, public higher education, road and bridge repairs and public transportation.

The fight back began almost immediately, with the MTA and other public school advocates supporting the Senate version of a proposal to update the foundation budget formula, the calculation used to determine how much each district needs to spend to provide all students with an adequate education. That bill, if fully implemented, would have raised over \$1 billion annually in new revenues for schools. Both branches of the Legislature approved versions of a foundation budget bill, but legislators failed to reach an agreement on a final measure before the session ended on July 31.

The MTA will be rolling out a plan to greatly increase funding for both preK-12 schools and public higher education.

After the Fair Share amendment was knocked off the ballot, negotiations quickly resumed over the fate of other potential ballot initiatives and proposed law changes. Raise Up Massachusetts representatives led the negotiations on behalf of workers, while the

Massachusetts is only the third state in the country to require a \$15 minimum wage.

Retailers Association of Massachusetts bargained on behalf of business owners. With the session drawing to a close, the Legislature approved a package that some called a "grand bargain" because it gave benefits to both sides while taking certain benefits away.

On the plus side for workers, it requires most employers to phase in a \$15-per-hour minimum wage over the next five years and establishes a fund that will guarantee most employees job-protected paid family and medical leave. The new leave program will provide employees who contribute to it the ability to take paid leave for up to 12 weeks a year to care for a family member or bond with a new child, up to 20 weeks to deal with a personal medical issue, and up to 26 weeks to deal with an emergency related to the deployment of a family member for military service.

Massachusetts is only the third state in the country to require a \$15 minimum wage. According to the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center,

in 2023 the increase will raise the wages of about 840,000 workers, or 25 percent of the workforce statewide. That includes one in five working parents. In all, low-wage workers are projected to see a total wage increase of \$2.75 billion over five years.

"These victories, coming on top of the earlier RUM victories on paid sick leave and raising the minimum wage to \$11, represent some of the biggest victories for working families in a generation," said Page, who serves on the RUM Steering Committee.

On the downside for workers, the bill leads to the elimination of Sunday and holiday time-and-a-half pay, fails to adequately increase the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers, and excludes municipal employees from the minimum wage and paid leave requirements.

The MTA projects that few, if any, MTA members will earn less than \$15 an hour by 2023, and the vast majority will have better paid leave benefits through their union contracts than those provided under the new law.

"The outcome underscores that organizing is more important than ever," said Najimy. "Local associations must be powerful enough to negotiate a living wage and fair benefits for all of their members, and the MTA needs broad member support to make a compelling case on behalf of educators and students in the Legislature."

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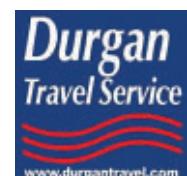
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Educators are honored for professional excellence

Continued from Page 4

Leonard in Lawrence and a member of the Lawrence Teachers' Union, who received the 2017 Milken Family Foundation Award.

Siddiqui has been named as a finalist for a 2017 PAEMST award. He and four other MTA members who have been named PAEMST finalists for 2017 were among those honored at the State House event.

They are **Jennifer Fairbanks**, a math teacher at Hopkinton High School and member of the Hopkinton Teachers Association; **Beth Johnson**, a

math teacher at Knox Trail Middle School in Spencer and a member of Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District Teachers Association; **Kara Yifru**, a science teacher at Milton High School and a member of the Milton Educators Association; and **Cara Pekarcik**, the 2018 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year. Pekarcik, a science teacher at North Quincy High School, is a member of the Quincy Education Association.

The June 21 event also honored Massachusetts Teacher of the Year finalist **Alexandra Caram**, a

media specialist at the Summer Street School in Lynnfield and a member of the Lynnfield Teachers Association, and Teacher of the Year semifinalist **Tracy Nadolny Duguay**, a music teacher at the Martin Young Elementary School in Randolph and a member of the Randolph Education Association.

A profile of 2019 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Jamil Siddiqui will appear in the next edition of MTA Today.

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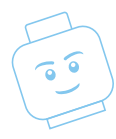
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Classifieds

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FOR SALE

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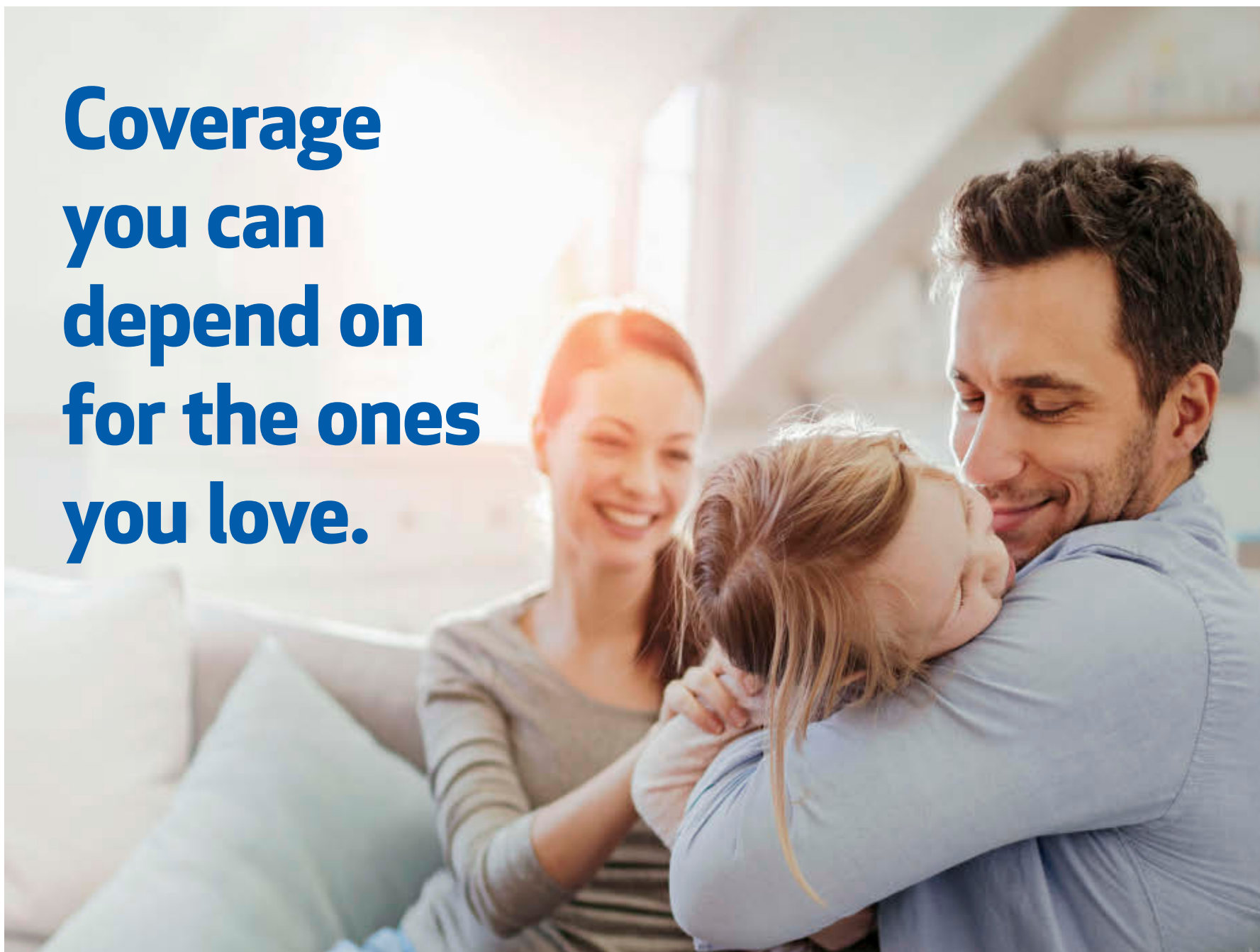
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Summer Conference helps members shape action plans

Continued from Page 5

University Staff Association turned into a celebratory gathering when the local reached a tentative agreement with UMass on the morning of the action.

Trainings and workshops offered during the conference covered topics of interest to new educators and veterans alike. Multiday programs focused on leadership development, and single-session workshops centered on everything from classroom management to communications.

Evening social events hosted by the New Member

Program, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Issues Committee, the Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee and the Field Services Organization highlighted the work of groups within the MTA and gave members and staff a chance to mingle.

The annual Political Dessert session mixed sweets and strategies, offering members a chance to look ahead to the next legislative session on Beacon Hill.

Filmmaker Kate Way showed her documentary, “G Is for Gun: The Arming of Teachers in America.” A discussion that followed delved into issues of

school safety and the resources necessary to provide every student with a comprehensive education.

Though shorter by a day than previous summer conferences, this year’s event went a long way in helping members shape plans for their locals as they address the challenges ahead.

Summer member organizer and Springfield educator Theresa Bryant captured the spirit of the conference when she told members during the opening session, “If you want to be the change that we need, you need to take action.”



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Members get complimentary life insurance

One of the first benefits many new members sign up for is the National Education Association's Complimentary Life Insurance coverage.

The NEA Members Insurance Trust makes this valuable benefit available at no extra cost to help members provide for their families.

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accident that occurs on the job or while serving as an association leader**

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Call the NEA Members Insurance Trust Member Service Center at 855.632.5433, or visit neamb.com to take the next step in securing this no-cost insurance protection.

*This policy provides ACCIDENT insurance only. It does NOT provide basic hospital, basic medical or major medical insurance as defined by the New York State Department of Financial Services. IMPORTANT NOTICE — THIS POLICY DOES NOT PROVIDE COVERAGE FOR SICKNESS.

**NEA Retired members are eligible for the \$50,000 Accidental Death & Dismemberment coverage only while acting on association business in the capacity of association leader.

NEA Complimentary Life Insurance coverage is issued by The Prudential Insurance Company of America, Newark, NJ. The Booklet-Certificate contains all details, including any exclusions, limitations and restrictions, which may apply. Contract Series: 83500. CA COA# 1179. NAIC# 68241. 1004132-00001-00



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MTA Benefits makes travel easy!

Summer may be coming to a close, but it's never too early to plan for upcoming school vacations.

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If you need a rental car for your vacation, you have five companies to choose from: Alamo, Avis, Budget, Hertz and National. Each offers great member rates. Be sure to reserve online through the MTA Benefits website to be sure you're getting the proper discount.

To learn more about all your travel benefits, visit www.mtabenefits.com/benefits/travel.

Family membership category expands

Did you know that your loved ones are eligible to participate in many of the programs offered by MTA Benefits? It's true!

As of July 1, your grandchildren became eligible to be counted as MTA family members. Other family members include mother, father, sister, brother, son, daughter and the spouse or domestic partner of an active, deceased active, retired or deceased retired member.

Family membership is FREE! That means your family can save — just as you do — on those everyday expenses that can add up to thousands of dollars per year. The most popular programs for family members are car and home insurance, student loan debt counseling and travel, along with other offerings in the *Benefits and Discount Directory*.

Visit www.mtabenefits.com/family-members to see a list of programs available to family members and to download an application.

The 2018-2019 Benefits & Discount Directory is on its way!

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- Crayola Experience
- Club Pilates
- Pioneer Valley Symphony
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- Pilgrim Monument and Provincetown Museum
- Blue Hills Observatory & Science Center
- Member Authors



And learn about the NEW Student Loan Borrowing Program available to students and their families!

Obituaries

Robert Bourgerly, 79, of Lincoln, Rhode Island, formerly of Blackstone. Was an elementary physical education teacher for the Blackstone-Millville school system for 34 years. May 1.

Linda G. Brown, 63, of Vineyard Haven. Was a substitute teacher and teaching assistant at the Tisbury School and a middle school teacher at the Edgartown School before retiring in 2015. April 7.

Thomas P. Carrigan, Jr., 86, of Brockton. Was a teacher and administrator in the Brockton Public Schools for his entire career. May 14.

Judith Cohen, 85, of Norwood. Taught in Newton and Walpole for 30 years until her retirement in 1999. April 26.

Phyllis R. Cohen, 78, of Hanover.

Was an elementary school vocal music teacher in the Marshfield Public Schools for many years. May 1.

John F. Dowd, 75, of Saugus, formerly of Somerville. Was a teacher and coach for 40 years at the Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational School. April 24.

Margaret C. Duren, 89, of Franklin. Taught in the Franklin Public Schools for 27 years and in Mendon for 10 years. June 14.

Sonja Gullbrand, 86, of Worcester. Was an elementary educator in the Worcester Public Schools for 28 years until her retirement in 1994. April 28.

Constance C. Harris, 88, of Wakefield. Was a teacher in the Wakefield Public Schools for 30 years. June 11.

Janet M. Hassler, 93, of Quincy. Taught fourth grade in the Quincy Public Schools until her retirement in 1990. May 8.

Nancy J. Katin, 78, of Dracut. Was an elementary teacher at the Greenmont Avenue School until she retired. May 1.

Thomas F. Kennedy, Jr., 92, of Westfield. Was a teacher in the Westfield Public Schools. He later was an office manager for the MTA until his retirement in 1984. June 12.

Leslie S. Kiely, 66, of Swampscott. Was a physical education teacher for the Swampscott Public Schools for more than 30 years. She coached middle school field hockey and started the Friday night middle school basketball program in Swampscott. May 19.

Patricia Taylor Lambert, 88, of Exeter, New Hampshire. Taught in the Brookline Public Schools for many years. April 5.

Ann P. McSweeney, 77, of Watertown. Was a teacher in the Hull Public Schools. April 22.

Clare F. Murphy, 71, of Newton and Yarmouth Port. Was a teacher in the Brockton Public Schools for 35 years. May 14.

Joan Pieroni, 79, of Prescott Valley, Arizona, and Woburn. Taught in the Everett Public Schools for 34 years. May 11.

Violet V. Salem, 99, of Grafton. Taught for many years in public schools in West Virginia, Virginia and Massachusetts. She retired from the Grafton Public Schools in 1985. April 22.

JOBS AT THE MTA

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

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Organizing advances higher ed bargaining

By Scott McLennan

Leaders of higher education locals are crediting their members' increased activism for significant progress on contract negotiations, as bargaining has led to tentative agreements and ratifications in several units.

But they caution against letting a false sense of security set in.

"We need to always be organizing," said Margaret Wong, president of the Massachusetts Community College Council.

The MCCC's Division of Continuing Education unit representing adjunct instructors recently reached an agreement that did not make concessions on previous union gains and warded off harmful proposals from management, such as increasing class sizes. But the agreement also did not achieve full pay parity between part-time and full-time faculty.

"We need to get people to understand pay equity as an issue and as a reason for working collectively toward something," Wong said. "We start mobilizing now for the next contract."

Across the state's higher education system, MTA members are identifying issues that still need to be addressed even as new contracts are coming into force. Workers represented by the Professional Staff Union, Classified Staff Union, Classified/Technical Union, and Maintenance and Trades Union at UMass campuses in Amherst, Boston and Lowell are still at their respective bargaining tables.

Union members at UMass Boston, for example, will have to keep negotiating over proposed increases in employee parking fees, which trustees have been trying to more than double as they address a massive campus deficit. "We shouldn't have the highest parking fees in the UMass system to pay for bad building in the 1970s," said Marlene Kim, president of the Faculty Staff Union at UMass Boston.

She was referring to costs the campus has incurred to make necessary repairs to faulty construction of campus buildings and other structures. The issue dates back to a corruption scandal during the initial construction of the campus, and the state has not agreed to pay for the repairs.



MTA higher education members have been taking action around the state to move contract negotiations forward. Classified Staff Union members Bernice Fair, Shirley Williams and Kathleen McMullin, from left to right, were among the educators attending an open bargaining session at UMass Boston in June.

Photo by Scott McLennan

Meanwhile, Classified Staff Union members are still pushing for benefits that would put them on par with their colleagues in the professional and faculty units. Clerical, trade and staff unions affiliated with the MTA and other statewide unions are banding together to address these issues as they occur at UMass campuses in Amherst, Boston, Lowell and Dartmouth.

Pay disparities between full-time and adjunct instructors remain problems not only at community colleges, but also at state universities.

Local leaders, however, stress the effectiveness of member engagement and member activism as crucial to meeting their unions' goals.

Tactics have included prebargaining surveys of members, weekly solidarity events and protests.

Last fall, Massachusetts State College Association President C.J. O'Donnell wore a garbage bag to a state Board of Higher Education meeting to publicly call out a remark from management asserting that union proposals on the bargaining table were "trash." O'Donnell took the opportunity to tell board members that they needed to take seriously the issues being raised by the MSCA and the Association of Professional Administrators, which also represents state university employees.

The MSCA and the APA kept the pressure on at the campus level with solidarity events and protests and eventually settled their contracts.

When the Classified Staff Union at UMass Boston turned to open bargaining sessions in June and invited members of other campus units to simply come and observe, management became more willing to address workers' concerns, said CSU President Janelle Quarles.

Units on other UMass campuses are also working in unison, bringing more members directly into bargaining.

Eve Weinbaum, president of the Massachusetts Society of Professors chapter at UMass Amherst, explained that MSP members are working as part of a broader UMass labor coalition at the same time they are organizing to focus on issues specific to them.

Weinbaum credited the slow, steady engagement of members for advances that the union has made in bargaining, such as securing funding to address gender equity gaps in salaries and the creation of professional development leave opportunities for non-tenure-track faculty.

That came about, Weinbaum said, when the faculty organized an effective campaign that convinced management that allowing more faculty members to delve deeper into their fields of study is better for the university in the long run.

"It was a big win for our team," Weinbaum said. "We won something that we were originally told by management was never going to happen."

2018 Primary Election Guide



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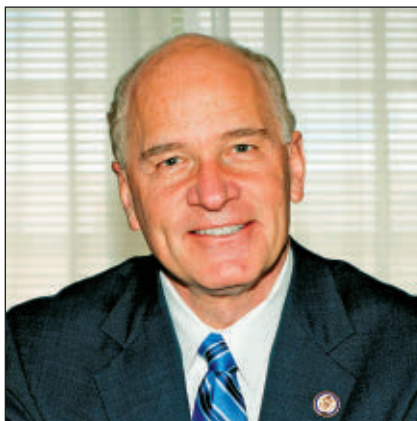
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HOW THE MTA RECOMMENDS CANDIDATES

MTA's member-elected Candidate Recommendation Committee establishes policies and procedures for recommendations in elections, which are reviewed by MTA's Board of Directors for final approval.

Evaluations of incumbent legislators in contested races are based on support for MTA's legislative agenda, voting records and access to MTA lobbyists and activists. Candidates running for open seats, and in some legislative races with contested incumbents, fill out questionnaires developed by the CRC and are interviewed by CRC members, MTA local presidents, members of the MTA Board and Executive Committee, and Senate district coordinators.

The recommendations in this Primary Election Guide are the result of that process. We hope you will take the guide with you to the polls on September 4 and help elect MTA-recommended candidates. These candidates will listen to educators and act in the best interests of students and public education.

The MTA also urges you to join our Legislative and Political Action Teams and participate in campaigns.

An Election Guide in the fall edition of *MTA Today* will make recommendations for the General Election on November 6.



MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



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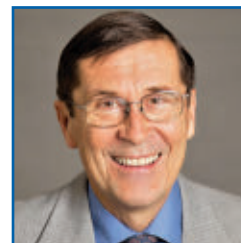
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(D-Arlington)
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Denise C. Garlick
(D-Needham)
13th Norfolk



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14th Middlesex



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19th Middlesex



David LeBoeuf
(D-Worcester)
17th Worcester



Liz Malia
(D-Jamaica Plain)
11th Suffolk



Tommy Vitolo
(D-Brookline)
15th Norfolk



DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!

The Massachusetts Primary Election will take place on Tuesday, September 4.

The MTA recommends candidates who appear in this Primary Election Guide.

An Election Guide in the fall edition of *MTA Today* will make recommendations for the General Election, which will take place on Tuesday, November 6.