



MTA
Massachusetts Teachers Association
MTA Candidate
Recommendation Committee
2022 Questionnaire – Governor

Candidate Name: Maura Healey

Party Affiliation: Democrat

Home Address: _____

City: Boston _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Personal Phone Number: _____

Campaign Address _____

City: Boston _____ State: MA _____ ZIP: _____

Campaign Manager: _____ Contact Number: _____

Campaign Treasurer: _____ Contact Number: _____

Campaign Phone: _____ Email: _____

Website: maurahealey.com

Twitter Handle: @maura_healey

Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/MauraHealeyMA/

Candidate Signature: _____

Please submit two high-resolution photos (300 dpi at full size) — one a head-and-shoulders or full-body shot, and one action shot in an educational/community setting — with your completed questionnaire. Please ensure that your campaign has full, royalty-free rights for reproducing these photos and state that in writing when they are sent to us.

INTRODUCTION

The Massachusetts Teachers Association represents more than 115,000 active and retired educators in the Commonwealth's public schools, colleges and universities. The MTA has been a positive force for quality education since its founding in 1845.

Educators in Massachusetts are proud that our state continues to be the highest-performing state in the country by many measures. In recent years, the MTA has increasingly focused attention on investing in the public schools, colleges and universities that our students and communities deserve.

MTA ADVOCACY ON BEACON HILL — THREE KEY AREAS

- Strengthening Massachusetts' public schools, community colleges and universities to maximize student learning
- Defending and promoting the rights and benefits of public education employees
- Increasing revenues to ensure quality public education

Below is a series of statements based on major issues that make up the MTA's legislative agenda. For each statement, please indicate whether you:

- **AGREE** with MTA's position (will support the MTA's legislative recommendation)
- **DISAGREE** with MTA's position (will oppose the MTA's legislative recommendation)

Feel free to elaborate briefly on any of these issues in order to clarify your position.

INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Discuss why you are running for governor. What are the major issues that you are most interested in working on if elected? *Please use a separate sheet if more room is needed.*

I am running for Governor to bring people together and build an economy in which every family can thrive through economic mobility, jobs, and education. My top priorities are addressing the climate crisis, addressing the high costs of living and barriers to opportunity, and ensuring fairness and equity for all.

I believe that we need to invest in our human capital through workforce development, education, child care, housing, and transit, as well as addressing serious investment needs in mental health and the supports that communities need. As Governor, I will see people and work to meet their needs to make life better for all our residents, communities, and families. I believe in this state and I believe in our people and I am ready to help move us forward and make things happen to achieve better outcomes.

STRENGTHENING OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES TO

1. The passage of the *Student Opportunity Act*, which was signed into law in November 2019, was a major victory for students, for educators, for communities and for racial and economic justice. When the new law is fully phased in, it will increase annual state funding for public education by \$1.5 billion over inflation. Much of that money will go to low-income districts — disproportionately communities of color — that have been left behind by our Commonwealth's outdated and inequitable funding system.

A. The MTA is committed to ensuring that the new funding is fully phased in by the Legislature as of fiscal year 2027, in accordance with provisions of the *Student Opportunity Act*.

Agree with MTA position () Disagree with MTA position

I was a strong advocate for the Student Opportunity Act and I am committed to fully funding our schools as outlined by that legislation.

B. The MTA strongly believes that local educators, parents, school committee members and administrators — not state education officials — must play the central role in determining how the new funding will be spent in their districts.

Agree with MTA position () Disagree with MTA position

2. Public higher education promotes student success and is essential to economic growth and job creation. To maintain and improve our competitive position in Massachusetts, we must have a first-rate system of affordable and accessible public higher education. State financial support for higher education has plummeted. When adjusted for inflation, per-student state spending on public higher education has been cut by 31 percent since FY 2001. As state funding has declined, tuition and fees have continued to increase to make up for state cuts to public higher education, resulting in the burden of student debt increasing for students and their families. At a time when student debt is at an all-time high, additional state funding is needed to preserve access to higher education and relieve the untenable financial pressures facing students.

A. The MTA supports increasing funding to our public colleges and universities, in line with the goals of the proposed *Cherish Act*, for public higher education.

Agree with MTA position () Disagree with MTA position

I believe we need increased funding for our public colleges and universities. I know well the heavy burden our student debt system places on the shoulders of young people. When I started as Attorney General, one of my first actions was to establish a first-of-its-kind Student Loan Assistance Unit in my office, staffed with a team to help struggling borrowers seek discharges, better repayment plans, and fight unlawful and deceptive student loan servicing practices. I have aggressively investigated and litigated cases against for-profit schools and helped tens of thousands of student borrowers saddled with debt get relief. I have also taken action against loan servicers who have exploited student borrowers, including actions against the U.S. Department of Education, PHEAA and Navient. I also recognize that the lack of affordable higher education is a matter of racial justice. For example, after twenty years of payments, the median Black borrower owes 95% of their initial student loan, while the median white borrower owes 6%. We know that higher education is a key driver of economic mobility

and leads to higher incomes, access to better health care, and more. Massachusetts is home to excellent public colleges and universities. We need to ensure that quality education is accessible to everyone.

- B. The MTA supports legislation to guarantee debt-free public higher education as a right for all residents by creating a state grant program to pay the equivalent of tuition and mandatory fees to an eligible student attending any Massachusetts public college or university or certificate, vocational or training program at a public institution, up to the equivalent of four years of public college or university.

Agree with MTA position Disagree with MTA position

I believe we need to make every effort to support our low-income students and students of color so that they can access public higher education. I have done extensive work to address our broken student debt system, including major settlements with predatory student loan servicers and the U.S. Department of Education, as well as creating a first-in-the-nation Student Loan Assistance Unit to help borrowers navigate the student debt system. I believe that more support is necessary. Affordability is an issue of both racial and economic justice, and fully funding our public colleges, universities, and vocational programs will be essential to meet this moment as our economy shifts to clean energy and continues to grow.

3. The MTA supports policies that promote the success of quality public schools that serve all children. We believe that the expansion of Commonwealth charter schools in Massachusetts diverts critical resources from local schools and creates an education system that is separate and unequal. As evidenced by the overwhelming defeat of Question 2 on the November 2016 ballot, it is clear that the majority of Massachusetts voters agree with the MTA.

For the benefit of all students, the MTA supports the following charter school restrictions and reforms:

- Keeping the current cap on Commonwealth charter schools.
- Requiring local approval of any new Commonwealth charter schools.
- Requiring any new charter schools to be established and managed by a nonprofit organization or entity
- Requiring licensure of all teachers.
- Ensuring that charter schools adhere to the same administrative rules as public schools concerning public records, as well as open-meeting and procurement requirements concerning recruiting and retaining students to reflect the demographics of the community.

Agree with MTA position Disagree with MTA position

I was a strong supporter of the 2016 No on 2 campaign. I agree that we should maintain the current cap on charter schools, and that those schools should be not-for-profit, employ qualified teachers, and be subject to the above transparency requirements when it comes to recruiting and retaining students who reflect the demographics of their community.

4. Parents, students and educators across the Commonwealth are pushing back against the high-stakes MCAS exams. Among the many serious concerns about the MCAS are the excessive amount of time and money spent on creating and implementing the tests and the high stakes attached to the results. In addition, research clearly shows that standardized tests such as the MCAS demonstrate and reinforce racial and economic inequities across school districts. The MTA supports the following changes to address the Commonwealth's current testing system:

- Eliminate the high-stakes nature of the MCAS test for high school graduation.
- Reduce the state's emphasis on standardized testing by changing education law to allow the use of alternative measures of academic success.
- Expand state support to local school districts to develop their own school accountability and assessment frameworks such as those currently being developed and piloted through Massachusetts Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment (MCIEA).

Agree with MTA position Disagree with MTA position

I support modifications to MCAS to improve the ability to support students, schools, and districts. I support efforts like MCIEA to develop more holistic, comprehensive and equitable ways to assess performance and determine accountability. Within the constraints of federal law, I will support efforts to re-assess how our state should set expectations and measure the performance of our schools and districts. It is critical to ensure that all of our public schools are meeting the needs of all student populations, particularly students with special needs, English language learners, low-income students, and other disadvantaged groups. As we re-assess the use of standardized tests and our school accountability system more broadly, the voices of educators will be central to this conversation.

5. The MTA supports policies that shift focus in school and district improvement efforts from penalization to collaborative, community-centered support that promotes involvement by parents, educators and community members while preserving collective bargaining rights for all educators working in these schools.

Agree with MTA position () Disagree with MTA position

6. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated to the public what educators, students and our communities have known for decades – that state disinvestment has left our public schools in a chronic state of disrepair, especially in working-class communities and communities of color. Even before the pandemic, ventilation systems in too many schools could not maintain healthy indoor air quality. The MTA is advocating for additional funding to the Massachusetts School Building Authority to start addressing the most urgent safety needs while establishing green, healthy and equitable building standards.

Agree with MTA position () Disagree with MTA position

I would make updating our state's school building program and investing more resources in improving school facilities a priority for my administration. Despite the best efforts of the MSBA over the past two decades, too many of our school facilities are in disrepair, outdated, lack modern science labs and equipment, suffer from poor ventilation, and are not environmentally sustainable. This is an important equity issue since the school buildings most in need of renovation or replacement are disproportionately in lower-income communities. The MSBA's reimbursement rate and policies have not kept up with rising construction costs and the significant needs across many school districts. This is an increasingly urgent issue that needs to be addressed.

7. The Massachusetts 2050 Decarbonization Roadmap calls for retrofitting buildings to reduce greenhouse gasses. The MTA strongly supports this goal, which is why we endorsed *An Act for healthy and green public schools*, which calls for the development of new standards to create healthy and green public school buildings. Specifically, the legislation charges the Commonwealth to take the following steps:

- Assess the extent to which school buildings provide students with a healthy environment that is conducive to learning while efficiently using energy and resources and limiting exposure to toxic building materials.
- Develop standards for healthy and green schools.
- Offer recommendations and a plan for all schools to equitably meet healthy and green school standards by 2050.

Agree with MTA position () Disagree with MTA position

8. Decades of disinvestment and deferred maintenance have left our public colleges and universities in a state of disrepair. The COVID-19 pandemic has added to the urgency of addressing this infrastructure crisis, with many campuses having facilities that were unprepared to mitigate the spread of the virus and ensure healthy air flow. Infrastructure repairs have in recent years been taken on by campuses. The costs have then been passed onto students as campus fees, which in turn has contributed to the mounting burden of student debt. Campus buildings, which are state buildings, must be paid for by state dollars. The MTA is advocating for a substantial investment in public higher education infrastructure in order to better protect students and educators as well as the environment through green-building initiatives.

Agree with MTA position () Disagree with MTA position

9. The Commonwealth's current educator licensure process is excluding talented and qualified candidates from diverse backgrounds by requiring that they pass the multi-part Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL). Research clearly shows that candidates of color consistently have far lower passing rates on the tests than white candidates, thus making clear that they are a significant barrier to creating a more diverse educator workforce. The MTA supports efforts to recruit and retain educators of color, including through a statutory change to allow the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to approve alternative measures of proficiency to the MTEL for candidates for educator licensure.

Agree with MTA position () Disagree with MTA position

We know that a diverse workforce – including teachers, staff, and administrators – is critical to the success of students of color. Research supports this. In Massachusetts, more than 40% of our student population are students of color, but less than 10% of our educators are people of color. As Governor, I would work to assess alternative measures of proficiency for educators' licensure and work to better recruit and retain educators of color across the state.

10. The COVID-19 pandemic has proven that systemic racism is embedded within all institutions in our society, including public education. The MTA strongly believes that it is in our public schools that we can take meaningful steps toward dismantling systemic racism – acknowledging the painful histories that have brought us to this moment – and building an antiracist society.

As part of this effort, the MTA supports *An Act relative to anti-racism, equity and justice in education*, which would create a Commission for Anti-Racism and Equity in Education that would work with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to:

- Develop curricula with a social justice perspective of dismantling racism and advise on improving the history and social sciences framework.
- Ensure that ethnic studies, racial justice, decolonizing history, and unlearning racism are taught at all grade levels using a critical approach and pedagogy.
- Ensure that educators have access to professional development that fosters equitable, inclusive curriculum and pedagogy and practices that support racial justice.
- Support efforts to increase, support and retain educators of color in our public school workforce.

Agree with MTA position **Disagree with MTA position**

I strongly support efforts to advance racial justice in our public schools, including greater workforce diversity; appropriate training and professional development for educators, administrators, and school committee members; development of curriculum; and fostering safe, supportive, and inclusive school climate. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education should play an important role in guiding and supporting DEI efforts in our schools, along with other entities such as higher ed teacher preparation programs and local human rights and social justice organizations.

DEFENDING AND PROMOTING RIGHTS AND BENEFITS OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

1. Massachusetts is one of 15 states that has its own state pension plan for public employees and does not participate in the federal Social Security system. In 2011, the Commonwealth made changes to the state's public employee pension system. These changes required employees hired after April 2, 2012, to work longer, and some of their benefits were reduced.

The MTA supports the current defined-benefit pension system for all its members and opposes any changes in laws that diminish this pension benefit.

Agree with MTA position **Disagree with MTA position**

Our defined benefit system is an important cornerstone of economic stability for our retired civil servants and I am committed to protecting it.

2. The MTA supports the right of public employees — including retirees — to collectively bargain over health insurance and believes that no additional changes to the collective bargaining process are needed. Since the law modifying municipal health insurance bargaining went into effect, almost all of the hundreds of millions of dollars in savings has been paid for by public employees. The MTA believes that further health care savings must come from health care cost containment — not by eroding collective bargaining, reducing health insurance benefits for public employees, or increasing their share of health insurance costs.

Agree with MTA position **Disagree with MTA position**

I agree with the principles of this statement and that cost containment is critical for bringing down the cost of living. It is important that public employees have access to robust, affordable health benefits and that they have the ability to collectively bargain wages, benefits, and workplace protections. As Governor, it is important to me that our educators have a voice in these decisions.

I have an extensive record of litigation, advocacy and policy initiatives to address health care costs and to fight for improved access to health care. I have been a strong advocate for our community hospitals – I recently released a [report](#) on how the MGB expansion would drive up costs, and I [opposed](#) the proposed merger between Partners and South Shore Hospital. I have [testified](#) before the Health Policy Commission and published numerous reports on cost containment. I will remain focused on this issue as Governor.

3. Currently, public employees are eligible for health insurance when they retire from one of the 104 contributory retirement systems for public employees in Massachusetts. Maintaining a robust system that will continue to attract and retain high-quality state and municipal career employees is vital.

The MTA's position is that we must fight efforts to weaken health insurance benefits for current and future public employees and retirees and there should be no change to retiree health insurance unless it: (1) protects current retirees from changes in post-retirement health benefits, (2) maintains the current retiree health benefit for long-serving public employees, and (3) protects current employees.

Agree with MTA position **Disagree with MTA position**

4. The MTA believes that all retired Massachusetts public employees deserve a full cost-of-living increase each year to protect retirees' pensions from the ravages of inflation. The MTA's position is that there should be an annual appropriation for a full COLA at least equal to the Social Security COLA provided for employees covered by that system.

Agree with MTA position Disagree with MTA position

I am grateful to our retired public servants for their many years of service to the Commonwealth. With the rising cost of living and inflation, we need to ensure that our retirees can keep up and live healthy, stable lives. I hope to maintain the consistency of COLA payments. I was proud to earn the endorsement of the Mass Retirees and will work closely with them and the MTA to make improvements to COLA benefits.

5. In order to reduce costs, Massachusetts' public colleges and universities are relying more and more on adjunct faculty. Many of these faculty members work at several public colleges and universities and are therefore deemed to have more than one employer. Because of this, many fall short of the "part-time" employment status required to be eligible for health insurance or participate in the state pension system. The MTA's position is that state employee pension benefits and health insurance coverage should be extended to part-time higher education faculty who teach at least four three-credit courses per school/calendar year.

Agree with MTA position Disagree with MTA position

Public employees should be treated with dignity and respect. That means a livable wage and strong benefits to support our faculty. The increasing reliance on adjunct faculty is concerning. I know that some members of the legislature have explored phasing in health care benefits and I am interested in other solutions to address this issue. As Governor, I would work with our schools, the MTA, and other stakeholders to address this issue so that our schools are able to meet the needs of our students and support their staff.

6. The MTA supports legislation to ensure that municipal employees are covered by the Commonwealth's minimum wage and paid family and medical leave laws. Currently, the state's minimum wage law does not apply to municipal workers, and municipal employers are required to adhere only to the federal minimum wage, which is just \$7.25 an hour compared to the current Massachusetts minimum wage of \$14.25 an hour. Regarding paid family and medical leave, municipalities currently have the option to include their employees in the program but are not required to do so as they would be under the MTA proposal.

Agree with MTA position Disagree with MTA position

Under my leadership, the Attorney General's Office became the first statewide office to implement paid family leave – long before it was required by law. I support extending the law to provide the same critical benefits to all public sector workers. While some municipalities and communities already do this, I am sensitive to concerns from many of our cities and towns that this is an unfunded mandate. I am committed to working closely with our local leaders, partners in labor, and the Legislature to arrive at a solution that is fair to our workers and our communities.

7. Massachusetts public employees, including educators, are currently prohibited by law from engaging in a strike, regardless of their working conditions or whether their employer may have committed unfair labor practices. The MTA strongly believes that a ban on public employees striking is unjust and outdated and that it unfairly restricts the ability of public employees to take collective action in support of themselves and the communities they serve.

Agree with MTA position Disagree with MTA position

I am a strong supporter of collective bargaining and wholeheartedly respect the dignity of workers across the Commonwealth, including the hardworking members of the MTA. I have advocated for the passage of the PRO Act and issued an [advisory](#) following the Janus decision to highlight existing state laws that protect employee rights to organize and to act collectively, free of interference or discrimination by an employer. Many public employees provide services essential to the functioning of our society, including educating our kids and protecting public safety. As Governor, I will champion good wages, benefits, and working conditions. Additionally, as Governor, I would strengthen the Department of Labor Relations and Commonwealth Employment Relations Board to ensure swift adjudication of unfair labor practices for public sector employees.

8. Current state law prohibits public employees from fundraising for their own political campaigns as well as for other political committees, including political action committees organized by their unions. These limitations unfairly punish public employees,

limiting their ability to successfully run for office themselves and preventing them from fully supporting political action committees that will advocate for their interests. The MTA strongly believes that the prohibition on public employee political fundraising should be amended to allow public employees to fundraise for themselves as well as for political action committees organized by their unions.

Agree with MTA position Disagree with MTA position

As someone who had to leave their job in state service in order to run for Attorney General, I fully appreciate the challenges that limits on fundraising pose to dedicated public servants running for office. I had that option, and many committed public employees do not have the financial resources to support themselves while they campaign, particularly people of color. But I also believe that these ethical checks are in place to protect public integrity and so I respectfully disagree. And, of course, my door will always be open to the MTA to further discuss points of disagreement in more depth.

RAISING REVENUES TO ENSURE QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION

1. The MTA supports increasing revenues to adequately fund public education and invest in our communities. The MTA is working as a coalition partner in the Raise Up Massachusetts campaign for a Fair Share Amendment to the Massachusetts Constitution that would raise revenue for education and transportation by asking those who annually earn more than \$1 million to pay 4 percentage points more on the amount over \$1 million.

Agree with MTA position Disagree with MTA position

2. In addition to supporting the Fair Share Amendment, the MTA supports raising funds through the following progressive corporate revenue proposals:

- GILTI (Global Intangible Low-Taxed Income) – Many multinational corporations that do business in Massachusetts dodge taxes by using provisions of the federal tax code to shift their U.S. profits to offshore tax havens. Massachusetts should do the same as other states and federal law, taxing a portion of those offshore profits.
- Tiered Corporate Minimum Tax – This proposal would ensure that larger corporations pay a minimum corporate tax bill in proportion to the size of their business in the Commonwealth, while small businesses would continue paying the current corporate minimum excise tax of just \$456 per year.
- Corporate Disclosure – Research and informed policymaking to close corporate loopholes are made more difficult because of the lack of available information about how much taxes specific corporations pay. Corporate disclosure laws would help identify corporate bad actors, measure the effects of existing corporate tax loopholes, and generate additional future revenue by closing corporate tax loopholes.

Agree with MTA position Disagree with MTA position

As Governor, I am committed to exploring progressive revenue models that direct much-needed funds into our schools, child care, and other vital infrastructure. I would like to learn more about these specific proposals but I am committed to ensuring that our early education, K-12 and higher education have the support they need.

3. The MTA believes firmly that during an economic downturn or financial crisis, that the Commonwealth should enact progressive revenue policies to meet its budgetary needs rather than implementing funding cuts to crucial public services such as preK-12 and higher education.

Agree with MTA position Disagree with MTA position

SHORT ANSWERS

Please use a separate sheet if more room is needed.

1. Massachusetts has excellent public schools. But there are challenges that hinder student success.
- What is your assessment of our preK-12 public education system?

Massachusetts is home to globally-recognized public schools and educators. We should be very proud of our reputation and the ways in which our hardworking educators prepare our students for full, successful lives. But this achievement masks the persistent reality that Massachusetts is also home to wide opportunity gaps that plague our students of color,

English language learners, students with disabilities, and low-income students. And, while we have seen incredible resiliency from our children, parents, and educators during the many challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, our entire education system has been upended by it. Every child has had their education and development disrupted at some level and the disparities that existed before the pandemic only widened. As we emerge from the pandemic, we need to rebuild our education system so it works better for everyone and to ensure that all children have equal access to a quality education.

Our educators have been hit hard, too. I know that morale is low and everyone – from administrators, teachers, paras, bus drivers, and school staff – is feeling significant strain. Educators have summoned tremendous strength in stressful times and like our students, need to have the support they need to navigate the ongoing pandemic. We also need to work toward greater diversity and inclusion in staffing, curricula, and work environments.

We have made important strides toward addressing these inequities through the passage of the Student Opportunity Act, which I strongly advocated for. I will fully fund our schools, as outlined in the SOA. We need to update our school buildings for the 21st century – not just schools in wealthy districts. And we need to take a well-rounded approach to our children's education. We cannot ignore the brewing mental health crisis among young people or the digital divide. We need to invest in the social-emotional needs of students, while also tackling the interconnected inequities in our transit system, school facilities, housing, health care, and early childhood access. As Governor, I pledge to continue to work to close these gaps in partnership with those who understand these challenges best – our public school educators.

- [Many students in our urban and rural communities – including our Gateway Cities – face a complex set of issues, such as homelessness, unaddressed physical and mental health issues, poverty, crime, the need to learn English as a second language and parents working several jobs to keep afloat. Studies demonstrate that these factors significantly affect student outcomes. What programs would you invest in or initiate to address student poverty and other issues that have adverse impacts on our students?](#)

We need wraparound services in our schools – social workers on staff who can work with families to assess their needs and connect them to the kinds of services they qualify for, such as SNAP, MassHealth, housing support, and mental health. The pandemic has made clear that we need to move quickly to close the digital divide. Many students lack their own room, computer, or adequate internet access. We need to make targeted investments to close these gaps.

I also believe that workforce development for educators will improve the lives of our students. From exploring more comprehensive approaches to licensure so we can recruit more educators of color, to investing in more training and professional development, to increasing support for school nurses, social workers, and bus drivers – these are ways we can also improve the overall quality of our education system. Our rural communities will also need a tailored approach, and I await the findings of the commission created by the Student Opportunity Act for guidance.

We also need to acknowledge that we cannot expect our schools to solve every problem. We need to expand affordable housing stock and bring down the cost of living through investments in transit and childcare, and significantly expand mental health services. This will ease the pressure on our schools and help students thrive.

- [Educators in Massachusetts are concerned that an emphasis on high-stakes testing is crowding out other important school activities. What would you do to address this issue?](#)

It is important that our educators are able to bring their best selves to our schools, and that our students receive a well-rounded education. It is similarly critical to ensure that all of our public schools are meeting the needs of all student populations, particularly students with special needs, English language learners, low-income students, and other groups. I share your concerns that MCAS is in need of modification. Within the limits of federal law, I hope we can explore a more holistic, comprehensive, and equitable approach to evaluating our students, schools, and districts. I support the MCIEA and I am closely monitoring the outcome of that program. I will support efforts to re-assess how our state should set expectations and measure the performance of our schools and districts. As we evaluate the role of MCAS, the input of our educators will be essential.

- [At the end of four years in office, what changes do you hope to have made in the area of preK-12 public education? Please provide two or three examples.](#)
 - **Reduce the racial disparities:** Make our entire education system, from preK-12, more equitable.
 - **Invest in early education and care:** Make early education accessible and affordable for all families.
 - **Secure more funding:** Demand more money from the federal government and ensure that funding goes to the schools and students that need it most.
 - **Bridge the digital divide:** Ensuring that every student has a computer and reliable WIFI.
 - **Pursue more wraparound services in our schools:** We need more social supports, including social workers and mental health services for students.
 - **Modernize our school buildings:** We need to reform and better fund the MSBA so that more districts can have 21st century school buildings, including updated science labs, electrical energy, and updated air quality.

2. [Since FY 2001, state higher education spending per student has been cut by 31 percent when adjusting for inflation. Additionally, our public colleges and universities, particularly our community colleges, are relying more on adjunct faculty who are not comparably paid to full-time faculty; course offerings have shrunk; student support services, such as counseling, have been cut; and tuition and especially fees have gone up steadily.](#)
 - [What is your assessment of our public higher education system?](#)
 - [What would you do to address the inequities faced by adjunct faculty?](#)
 - [At the end of four years in office, what changes do you hope to have made in the area of public higher education? Please give two or three examples.](#)

Education is foundational. As a state, we should prioritize investments in education. Massachusetts is home to dedicated educators and strong programs, but we can do more to close racial and economic disparities in higher education outcomes. Our community colleges, in particular, are important pipelines for economic mobility for our first-generation students, and have tremendous potential to drive further economic growth by partnering with local employers ready to hire graduates with the skills for the jobs of tomorrow.

But the affordability of higher education remains an issue of equity, especially as so many good-paying jobs require a graduate degree. One of my first acts as Attorney General was to create the first-in-of-its-kind Student Loan Assistance Unit to help borrowers navigate our broken student debt system. I sued the Department of Education and brokered settlements with Navient and PHEAA that will help borrowers pay down their debt and receive loan forgiveness.

As Governor, I want to work to address the longstanding issues with how adjunct faculty are paid and supported at our community colleges. We need to work toward a model in which our schools are adequately funded, our students graduate at high rates and without crushing debt, our faculty can live healthy and

financially stable lives, and that programming evolves to better align with our job market.

3. The governance of public education in Massachusetts is very complex. Leaving local governance issues aside, the governor appoints the secretary of education and members of the boards of Elementary and Secondary Education, Early Education and Care, and Higher Education, as well as the Board of Trustees of the University of Massachusetts, the secretary of health and human services and other senior staff. The appropriate boards, in turn, appoint the commissioners to run the departments which oversee these different segments of public education.

- Upon taking office, what qualities would you look for in individuals you appoint? Will you commit to selecting appointees who will respect collective bargaining agreements?

I will prioritize diversity in the appointments I make. And as Attorney General who has led and managed an office of over 500 people (including myself having made numerous appointments to boards and commissions), I have a proven record to show that I know how to do that. Our boards and commissions should reflect the racial, linguistic, and geographic diversity of our state. We also need to include the voices of parents, educators, and labor.

I will continue my commitment to supporting workers and respecting their right to collectively bargain, and I will appoint others who believe the same.

- What specific charge and direction would you give to each of these boards to carry out? What directive would you give them in dealing with various constituencies such as the MTA?

I would direct boards to pursue the educational priorities outlined above – reducing racial disparities in educational outcomes, bridging the digital divide, and expanding wraparound services. We need to work to expand affordable early education, close opportunity gaps, and invest in higher education, and I would seek to have each respective board explore innovative ways to better support our students, educators, and faculty.

As a state leader, I have prioritized working with stakeholders and leveraging their input to gain perspective on particular issues, and I will continue this practice as Governor and expect that my appointees to do the same. Our educators will be at the table. Our educators understand student needs and are invaluable assets as we chart a new course for our schools.

5. The MTA firmly believes that the ability to organize strong unions and to collectively bargain are essential rights that enable workers to build better lives for themselves, their families and our communities. In public education, students benefit from educators' unions because educators' working conditions are students' learning conditions. This has never been clearer than during the COVID-19 pandemic when educators, through their unions, negotiated for critical health and safety measures at public schools and colleges. Do you agree with the MTA's position, and would you publicly support educators' unions fighting for fair contracts and working conditions, including by meeting with union members and participating in union-organized actions?

As Governor, I will continue to believe in and support union members and their right to organize and collectively bargain. I have frequently joined picket lines, most recently to stand with St. Vincent's nurses in Worcester and Marriott Hotel workers in Boston. It is also my hope that we will be able to create work environments where our educators feel truly supported and appreciated for what they do. I know morale is very low right now and we need to work together to lift up educators – from our paraeducators, to janitorial staff, and beyond.

5. Describe the role you see for unions in developing education policy and district- and school-based decision-making. How do you see your role as governor in working with unions representing state education employees?

It is a priority of mine that unions – both union leaders and members – play a collaborative role in our policymaking process. As Attorney General, I created the first labor advisory council that I meet with regularly

to discuss issues. We need that kind of approach when it comes to public education. Our educators are important stakeholders and we will have an open line of communication when I am Governor. We will institutionalize this philosophy with our appointments and in our administrative hiring, as well.

6. Explain your position on the state's takeover of the Lawrence, Holyoke, and Southbridge public school districts. Will you commit to taking those districts out of receivership and returning them to local democratic control, and will you commit to not placing other districts under receivership moving forward?

Our schools are best managed by their communities, and I am committed to working to move those districts out of receivership. I would like to see a plan that demonstrates how the districts can address the needs of vulnerable students. I welcome an opportunity to better equip districts to address the needs of their students.

7. In early 2018, the Group Insurance Commission, which serves hundreds of thousands of active and retired public employees, voted to significantly reduce the number of health insurance providers available to its subscribers. The details of these changes were not made available to the public prior to the vote. Nor were there opportunities for members of the public to comment on the proposed changes or adequately assess the impacts. Though the GIC ultimately changed course, the process that led to this decision remains flawed and highlights the need for greater transparency concerning decisions that impact subscribers.
 - As governor, what steps would you take to ensure greater transparency and a more thoughtful deliberative process in the GIC's decision-making?
 - As governor, would you support efforts to mandate advanced public notice and public hearings prior to important GIC votes and to increase employee representation on the commission?

Transparency and inclusivity are essential components of my governing philosophy. With every decision, our public employees and retirees and the unions that represent them, should have the opportunity to offer input. As Attorney General, [I opened an investigation into the GIC following its 2018 vote](#) and, alongside partners in labor, pushed the GIC to reconsider its process. I have a proven track record of holding agencies and public bodies accountable under the Open Meeting Law.

As Governor, I will appoint GIC commissioners who share these values and will work with stakeholders throughout the decision-making process. The decisions of the GIC impact public employees and retirees from every corner of the state, so we will invite input and collaborate regularly. The pandemic has broadened adoption of video conferencing methods that make it easier for people to view meetings of public bodies, including the GIC. We should continue to allow for that, and ensure recordings, agendas and meeting minutes are easily accessible. The GIC, like all public bodies, should follow the OML at a minimum. I am ready to work with labor to ensure there is robust notice and comment, particularly when significant decisions about plan design or the availability of plans are to be debated and voted on. Also, let's make sure our workers continue to have a strong voice on the GIC. As health care costs continue to grow, we will need everyone at the table and working together.

8. As governor, you would have an opportunity to reach people throughout the state and set a direction and common purpose for moving the Commonwealth forward. The command of the bully pulpit is a powerful tool.
 - Around what issues are you prepared to use the bully pulpit? Describe your experience in shaping public opinion to achieve change.

The Governor has an opportunity to use her voice to speak to people on matters of importance. I have done that as Attorney General on countless issues for the past seven years. I understand both the opportunity and the obligation to lead in that way and how integral it is to achieving action and results. For example, in the last year, this includes my calls for a more equitable vaccine rollout, including classifying asthma as a comorbidity, investing in local boards of health, and expanding access to vaccines in communities of color. As Governor, I will continue to push for greater investment in early education, our k-12 system, and our higher education system.

9. How would you make yourself available to the MTA to discuss questions or concerns that affect our members and our

students?

My door will always be open to our educators and students. I am the daughter of two NEA members and a local president. I promise to meet regularly with MTA leadership and members and ensure that we integrate supportive voices onto our boards and administrative staff.

This questionnaire is for the exclusive use of the Massachusetts Teachers Association Candidate Recommendation Committee for determining whether to recommend a candidate to our members.

©2022 Massachusetts Teachers Association | 20 Ashburton Place, 3rd Floor | Boston, MA 02108 | 617-878-8119