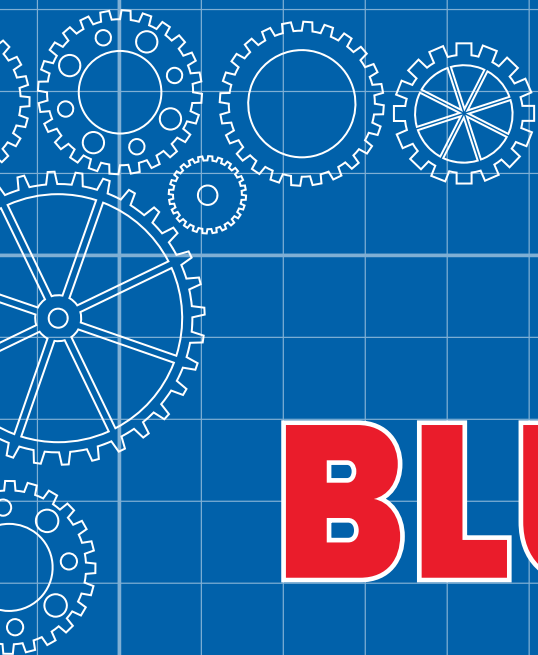


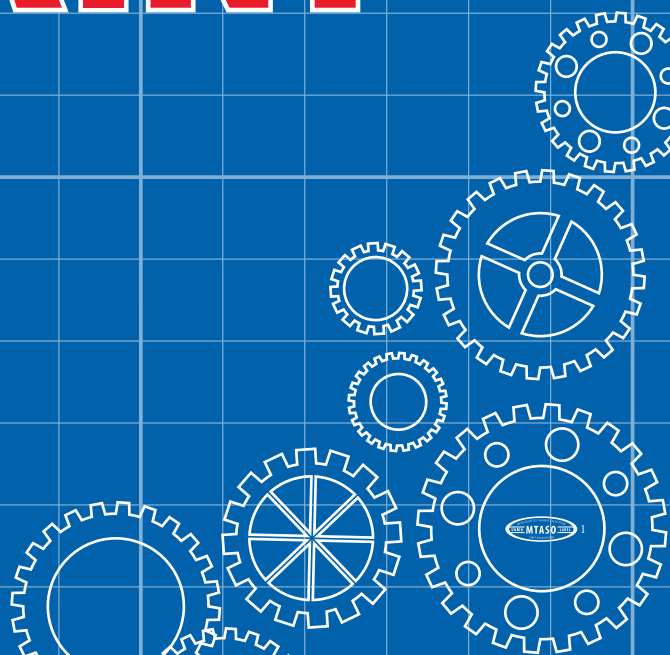
**All  
IN**



- for - **UNION POWER**



**BLUEPRINT**



# WE ARE THE MTA



**117,000** educators *- in -* **377** locals *- all -* **across** the Commonwealth

United in our commitment to ensuring that our students receive the education they deserve and that our members have the careers they envision.

**Our vision** is of a society where all students, from prekindergarten through college, have the right to a free and outstanding public education; a society where those of us who educate and care for our students are treated with dignity, have a meaningful voice in our work, quality health care, and a secure retirement; a society where students are able to learn because they are free from fear, food and housing insecurity, and live in thriving communities; a society where public education and trade unionism are revered as essential pillars of democracy and justice.

We believe in rank-and-file member activism so that we have power in our work, our communities and our union. We believe that collective bargaining agreements are crucial tools by which we achieve justice for our members and our students. We believe in social, racial and economic justice for all people as essential conditions for a democratic society.

## Adapting to Changing Times

**The world in which our public schools and colleges and our union must operate has changed dramatically.** The U.S. Supreme Court's *Janus* decision was just the most recent step in a decades-long campaign to denigrate and privatize public education. The same dark-money billionaires and organizations funding so-called education reforms are bankrolling an all-out assault on worker and union rights and the public sector as a whole. It's not surprising that many of our members and local leaders report that overwhelming demands are being placed on them — and that many of our MTA staff report their workload has increased due to changing priorities.

**At the same time, educators are organizing and winning on issues that matter to them.** The Red for Ed movement has swept the country. High-profile local strikes in places such as Los Angeles and Chicago have demonstrated the success of common good bargaining campaigns built with students and families, and through community partnerships. And within the MTA, we have seen the fruits of new bargaining and organizing strategies as well.

The questions that the MTA's strategic priorities must address are these: How can we be ready to face both the challenges and the opportunities ahead? Do we have the systems and the tools we need? Are we harnessing our capacity and power — both member and staff — to the fullest extent possible? Are we allocating resources in the most effective ways? Do we have the open minds needed to embrace innovation and change as well as the clarity to change old habits or assumptions?

# Blueprint Findings

To inform the MTA's strategic priorities, the All In Member Blueprint Working Group, representing a broad cross-section of locals and constituencies, began work in the fall of 2019. The group's charge was to gather data on how leaders and active members viewed their locals and the MTA. In particular, the working group sought to better understand local needs given changes in the education and union landscape.



## Data-Gathering Tools:

- Working closely with a consultant, the All In Member Blueprint Working Group designed a Local Needs Assessment survey and distributed it to all local presidents in both preK-12 and higher education. Two hundred forty-four surveys were completed, covering nearly two-thirds of locals of all sizes, regions, and jurisdictions.
- Working group members facilitated 29 focus groups, including groups of local presidents, members by region, educators of color, higher ed members, and ESP members. More than 200 people participated.
- MTA Board members completed an online questionnaire and discussed preliminary findings at the winter Board meeting.

## Key findings identified by the working group as a result of detailed analysis include:

1. **There are many bright spots.** Respondents pointed to important successes across the Commonwealth — increased solidarity, greater activism, stronger member-to-member connection, more diversity, new leadership, and greater transparency. There is excitement about the union.
2. **Most locals say they do the core work of contract enforcement well.** Leaders gave high marks to their local's ability to respond to member questions, handle grievances, and negotiate contracts.
3. **Member involvement is the #1 need.** More than anything else, when it comes to doing better, leaders want to improve their ability to get members actively participating in the union.
4. **Enlisting active members to recruit their peers is critical to growing involvement.** Local presidents understand that more member engagement is essential to building a stronger local and that recruitment is most effective when done co-worker to co-worker.
5. **The job of local leaders is getting harder.** The press of complex demands on a daily basis, challenging contract negotiations, and the loss of agency fee make the job harder. Yet few locals report providing training to new officers and Executive Board members.
6. **Local issues and statewide issues both need attention.** The data affirms both that each local is unique, with its own strengths and struggles, and that there are regional and statewide issues that require a coordinated strategy.
7. **The *Janus* decision brought new challenges.** The need for accurate membership data and for vigorous systems of membership orientation and sign-up were especially apparent.
8. **Marginalized groups sometimes feel excluded.** ESPs and educators of color, in particular, expressed a desire to see action on issues that disproportionately impact their constituencies, as well as support for their development as leaders.
9. **Higher ed locals face major challenges.** Increasing use of part-time faculty and the loss of agency fee as a result of the *Janus* decision multiply the challenges of growing the membership and power in higher ed locals.
10. **Social media is an underutilized resource.** Use of social media by locals is still limited, especially for member-to-member communication and internal community building.



# A Blueprint to Grow Our Collective Power

**Connect  
Members to  
the Life of  
the Union**

**Cultivate  
and Support  
Leadership at  
All Levels of  
the Union**

**Maximize  
Our  
Bargaining  
Power**

**Advance  
Policy  
Solutions and  
Campaigns**

**Lead on  
Economic,  
Social and  
Racial  
Justice**

In the lead-up to the *Janus* decision, the MTA initiated the *All In* campaign to proactively respond to the ongoing attack on the collective power of working people and their organizations. The success of the *All In* campaign demonstrated that MTA members see their union membership as essential to their professional respect and to their quality of life — and that they are willing to fight for their rights. Now, we need to take the lessons of the *All In* campaign and the insights from the assessment we have completed through surveys, focus groups and collaborative analysis to create a blueprint for not only sustaining but growing our collective power. The following blueprint lays out the foundations and strategic priorities that will get us there.

Our ability to achieve these strategic priorities depends on leaders, members and staff getting the support and resources they need to do their part. In 2020 and 2021, the MTA will be acting on the findings of this project to make strategic investments in staffing, leadership development and technology to support the implementation of this blueprint.

**The Blueprint.** The MTA will support its members and leaders, its local associations and chapters, and its staff by focusing on the following five strategic priorities:

**#1: Connect Members to the Life of the Union**

**#2: Cultivate and Support Leadership at All Levels of the Union**

**#3: Maximize Our Bargaining Power**

**#4: Advance Policy Solutions and Campaigns**

**#5: Lead on Economic, Social and Racial Justice**

## PRIORITY #1: CONNECT MEMBERS TO THE LIFE OF THE UNION

Because of the *All In* campaign and the impressive statewide and local victories we have won, MTA membership has actually grown in the past two years. But experience tells us that operating in a post-*Janus* “right-to-work” environment requires state-of-the-art systems for membership signup and retention. The shared experience of unions throughout the country reinforces the knowledge that personal, one-on-one contact is essential to a sense of belonging as well as collective power. To welcome new educators and improve membership and communication systems, we will prioritize the following:

- Modernize membership data and communication systems
- Implement best practices for membership signup, orientation and retention
- Re-establish robust *All In* communication networks in every building
- Open new doors for marginalized groups, such as Education Support Professionals and educators of color, to feel part of and have power in their union
- Resource targeted membership recruitment needs, such as those for ESPs and higher ed part-time and adjunct faculty and staff
- Leverage social media and other new technologies to share information, create connections and build community among educators



## PRIORITY #2:

# CULTIVATE AND SUPPORT LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS OF THE UNION

Rank-and-file members *are* the union. Members are the source of our power and a reservoir of untapped capacity. Local and chapter leaders overwhelmingly report needing support for the day-to-day operation of their union, as well as a pressing need to increase the level of member involvement. To provide support for engaging new activists, while at the same time addressing the day-to-day issues of running a local or chapter, we will prioritize the following:

- Systematize methods to provide the advice, resources and tools that local leaders need to enforce the contract and address day-to-day problems
- Create orientation programs and provide training to new local officers and Board members
- Enhance union skills training programs, such as Summer Member Organizers and Next Generation, to increase peer-to-peer outreach and rank-and-file involvement in collective action to solve problems
- Cultivate an awareness among leaders and staff around systemic barriers to engaging members of color
- Provide opportunities to networking, professional development and increased leadership opportunities for ESPs
- Recruit black educators and all educators of color to our profession and increase ethnic minority activism and leadership in the MTA



## PRIORITY #3: MAXIMIZE OUR BARGAINING POWER

We will strengthen our ability to win strong contracts by democratizing the process and involving the rank-and-file membership. By creating opportunities for members to help develop bargaining platforms and demands, stay up to date on progress and setbacks at the table, lead contract action teams and participate in negotiations, we harness the full power of the union. In addition, by partnering with families and the community, we win stronger contracts, build better schools and create more just communities. To advance bargaining wins, we will prioritize the following:

- Expand current initiatives to innovate bargaining methods, including open bargaining, coordinated bargaining, coalition bargaining, and Bargaining for the Common Good
- Organize and mobilize through contract and issue campaigns
- Develop and strengthen regional local-to-local solidarity networks (such as the WEMEAN and SOMEAN networks)
- Support bargaining through greater research capacity and shared expertise
- Gather gold-standard language through a central database and develop regional standards



## PRIORITY #4:

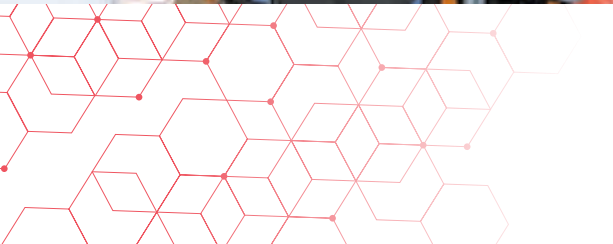
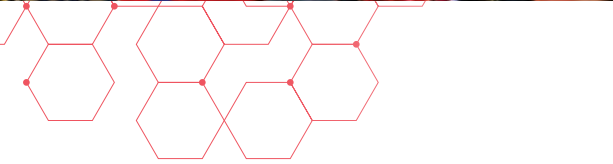
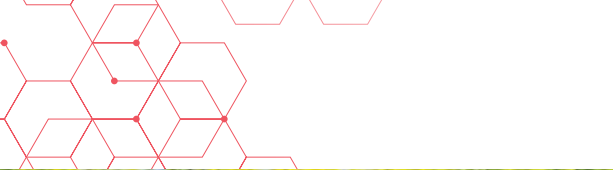
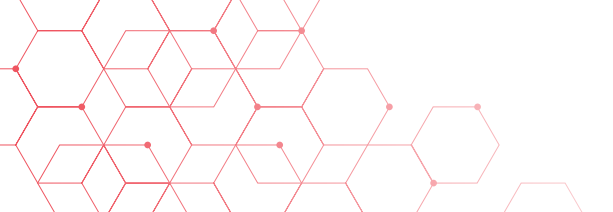
# ADVANCE POLICY SOLUTIONS AND CAMPAIGNS ON KEY ISSUES

Rank-and-file members and locals see the impact of policy firsthand: in school and college funding levels, in the testing regime, in licensure requirements, in regulation of their working conditions. Despite huge victories — such as the *Student Opportunity Act* — surveys of our members show that we underestimate our influence with policymakers and the public. To mount effective legislative, policy and electoral campaigns, we will prioritize the following:

- Broaden the structure of Legislative and Political Action Teams and integrate them into local communication networks
- Deepen partnerships with coalitions and allies with a shared vision for public education and social justice
- Train and mentor emerging activists and leaders in advocacy skills
- Forge campaigns to win on issues our members care about, such as an end to the exploitation of adjuncts, a living wage and a bill of rights for ESPs, student well-being/behavior, debt-free public higher education, ending the high-stakes testing regime, and passage of the Fair Share Amendment
- Conduct research on public education issues to position the MTA as the leading voice on policy issues relevant to our members, schools and colleges







## PRIORITY #5:

# LEAD ON SOCIAL, RACIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

To achieve our vision of just public schools and colleges and a just society, we recognize the necessity of addressing the deep divides by race, gender and class that exist in our society, in our education system, and in our union. Survey and focus group results affirm that we have work to do on overcoming the impact of systemic economic inequality and racism in our locals, in our MTA leadership bodies, among our staff and members, and in our educational institutions. To realize more just institutions, we will prioritize the following:

- Facilitate dialogue about racial justice/diversity and inclusion for staff, the MTA Board, and locals
- Develop anti-bias policies and practices for the MTA as an employer, and the MTA Board as a governing body
- Support rank-and-file member-led racial justice initiatives such as ALANA, the Task Force on Race and EMAC
- Root professional development, union skills programs and member communication and engagement strategies in a growing awareness of and commitment to overcoming systems of racism and other types of oppression
- Center social, racial and economic justice in statewide campaigns
- Deepen the political education of our members and staff around the history of unions and class and racial inequality