

MTA Today

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Opening day arrives
for reading champs

Members meet with legislators on funding, bargaining rights

By Sarah Nathan

MTA members have put out the call to “recession-proof our schools” in numerous recent meetings with state legislators.

The in-district meetings, which began during the winter and are ongoing, are part of a statewide effort to affect key decisions about public education funding and to preserve collective bargaining rights as deliberations continue over the budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1. Health insurance proposals that would place educators into the state Group Insurance Commission or otherwise change benefits are a key issue on Beacon Hill as the state’s fiscal crisis continues to worsen.

“When members are able to connect issues with the people they elect, there is much more accountability,” said Diana Marcus, president of the Burlington Educators Association. “It is no longer about the House of Representatives or the Senate or the Legislature — it is about how this

‘When members are able to connect issues with the people they elect, there is much more accountability,’ said Diana Marcus, president of the Burlington Educators Association.

person whom I know and I elected voted on issues that are important to me.”

Marcus organized a meeting in March with close to 50 members and an aide to Rep. Charles Murphy, D-Burlington, who recently was named chairman of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee.

After the meeting, the aide brought the questions from BEA members back to Murphy, who then sent along a detailed response via e-mail. Marcus is in the process of organizing a face-to-face meeting between BEA members and Murphy in the coming weeks.

Please turn to **Members**/Page 14

For the love of books



Photo courtesy of the Taunton Gazette

The LaLiberte School in Raynham hosted a number of guest readers in celebration of Read Across America Day. They included, from left to right, Pat Riley, a Bridgewater-Raynham School Committee member who is president of the Raynham Association of Volunteers for Education; Dr. Jacqueline Forbes, superintendent of the Bridgewater-Raynham school district; MTA President Anne Wass; and Kathleen Roberts, chair of the MTA Retired Members Committee and a member of the MTA Board. RAA Day, scheduled for March 2, was postponed in many locations because of a snowstorm that blanketed the state. But schools soon proceeded with their celebrations. Each year, RAA Day marks the birthday of Dr. Seuss, the author of children’s books such as “The Cat in the Hat” and “Green Eggs and Ham.” Dr. Seuss was actually Springfield native Theodor Geisel, who lived from 1904 to 1991.

MTA Today

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This edition of **MTA Today** also includes the spring issue of the **MTA Advantage**.



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MTA’s Mission Statement

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

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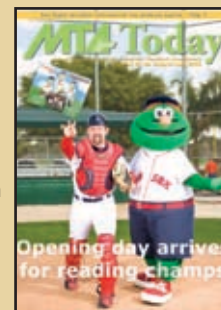
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On the cover

A new season is under way for the MTA Red Sox Reading Game. Each year, the contest encourages Massachusetts students in kindergarten through eighth grade to read hundreds of thousands of books. Each participant pledges to read nine books over the summer — one for each position on the team. The lucky winners and their teachers will



get to enjoy a game at Fenway Park in September. In addition, five grand prize winners will get a tour of the ballpark, autographed baseballs and other special recognition. It’s all made possible by the MTA’s partnership with the Sox — and by a generous grant from The Hanover Insurance Group Foundation, the reading game’s principal sponsor. A story about the contest appears on Page 36.

Photo by Rick Friedman
Cover design by Jacqueline Feng

Quote-Unquote

“You can’t create competition between teachers — and a lot of these programs have failed because of that. It can’t be a zero-sum game; it can’t be ‘I win, you lose.’ It’s got to be incentivizing everyone to move in the same direction. I think you have to value individual teacher work but also the collective work.”

— U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan, commenting on merit pay proposals during an interview with *Education Daily*

Priorities for higher ed

New commissioner outlines ambitious agenda for campuses, students and state

Richard Freeland began work as the Commonwealth's commissioner of higher education just after the start of the new year. He was appointed to the job by Secretary of Education Paul Reville on Dec. 17, following a unanimous vote of the Board of Higher Education recommending him for the post.

Freeland has spent his entire academic career in urban higher education. He spent 10 years as the president of Northeastern University before stepping down in 2006. He also spent 22 years at UMass Boston, where he held several positions, including assistant to the chancellor, director of education planning, founding dean of the College of Professional Studies and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Sarah Nathan of MTA's Division of Communications interviewed Freeland on March 23. Below are Freeland's responses, edited in some places for brevity.

Q. *As the new commissioner of higher education, what are your top priorities?*

A. My number one priority has to be to help our public campuses work their way through this terrible financial crisis. That means dealing with the current budget situation and potential cuts and managing the federal stimulus money. There are a lot of moving parts and [administrators on public campuses] are making very difficult decisions right now.

Q. *Other priorities?*

A. We are creating a task force to take a fresh look at what kids ought to be able to do coming out of college with a degree. We are convening a distinguished group of non-academics — business leaders, government leaders, nonprofit leaders — to talk to us about this subject as a first step in a multi-step process. We are hoping to get from this group a sort of template of what the employer world thinks college grads ought to be able to do and know. This is really about getting an outside view of what we should be doing. However, this is not an evaluation process. We are still in the process of putting this together, but the goal is to have the task force begin its work this spring. We expect the first phase to be completed by the middle of the fall. The second phase will involve the campuses and taking a look at their programs.

Q. *What else are you focusing on?*

A. Alignment of our programs and majors and work force needs is a current area of focus. State and community colleges, as well as UMass, are a major source of skilled personnel for companies region by region. Most of our graduates stay in this area and work, so it is really important that we offer programs that are congruent with the economic character of each of the regions. We are doing some things — for example in Nursing and Allied Health and the STEM fields — but there is work to be done in getting a more systematic look at our programs region by region.

Q. *Where do you stand on funding for public higher education?*

A. We are not funding public higher education at the level that it ought to be funded. Not everybody wants to hear this, but I think, as commissioner, I have to keep making that point. I think the state basically wants and needs a quality system of public higher education. To do that, you need to fund it at



Photo by Sarah Nathan

Commissioner Richard Freeland says he will do all he can "to help our public campuses work their way through this terrible financial crisis."

a competitive level. Whenever the economy is in trouble and the state budget has to be cut, there is a tendency to look to higher ed because you can always pass the costs on to students. In 2001, the percentage of institutional operating costs borne by students and their families at our public campuses was less than 30 percent; six years later, in 2007, that percentage was over 40 percent, which is a pretty high number. If this trend continues, there is a danger that we will end up privatizing or semi-privatizing our public institutions, and kids are going to get squeezed out of the system. The kids who are going to be squeezed out will be the low-income kids who are less likely to be prepared for college and aren't going to have any alternatives.

Q. *What positive message can I bring back to MTA's higher ed members?*

A. I do think this financial situation is going to draw greater attention to the importance of public higher education in the Commonwealth. Families are going to find that their young people are having more trouble getting into public colleges and paying than has historically been true. I think that will translate into feedback to the Legislature that public higher education needs to be attended to, because a lot of people are depending on it and are going to be disappointed. I think that is positive news, even though it is arising out of what could be a negative experience for some young people.

Q. *What kind of relationships have you had in the past with educator unions?*

A. I had a good experience at UMass Boston. The MTA union reps were enormously responsible in terms of using their organizational power as a union. Not only did they make sure that their members were appropriately compensated and fairly treated, but they also made sure that the quality of education provided to students was at a level that was appropriate. They were our allies in many important respects. They made sure that the Legislature and state government paid attention to quality public higher education. The experience left me with a very positive sense that unions can use their power in very constructive ways and often have access to political levers that administrators do not. More recently, I've been very favorably impressed with the leadership of the unions that I've met. I've reached out to all the major unions and met with their leaders. I've been very impressed with their goals and generally constructive attitudes.

Q. *Can you offer some insight about your style as a manager and leader?*

A. I would like to think of myself as someone who understands the importance of listening to all stakeholders in anticipation of a major decision and giving full weight to what other people think and say. I try to think of myself as someone who strikes a balance and is also able to make a choice based on the best outcome, given the issues at hand.

Q. *As you know, several MTA higher ed unions have been working without contracts since July 2008. Can you comment on contract negotiations?*

A. I don't think anyone really knows what the economy is going to look like six months from now, or 12 months from now, or two years from now. I think we are all disappointed at what looks possible right now.

Q. *Independent salary studies indicate that faculty and staff at the state's public colleges are paid significantly less than their counterparts at comparable institutions in other parts of the country. How do you plan to address this issue?*

A. It is a problem. I think the same is true for the salaries paid to college presidents. If we just committed ourselves to increasing the percentage of the state budget allocated to higher education so that it was more in line with the commitment made by the states with which we are competing, there would be enough money to pay our people at a competitive level and also make sure that our institutions are at the level of excellence that we need. Years ago, a formula was developed to determine appropriate levels of support for our public campuses. The formula has been widely praised and accepted as a reasonable basis for financing public higher education in Massachusetts at a competitive level. I'd like to get the state on a multi-year pathway toward funding for public higher education at the formula level.

Q. *What is your position on the use of adjunct professors?*

A. Up to some reasonable percentage, hiring adjuncts is a positive thing because you can bring an enriched mix of talent into the faculty. Beyond that point, what you are doing is filling up your work force with people whose sole job is to teach classes. Because they don't do any advising and they are not part of the institutional governance mechanism, the quality of service and quality of institutional life ends up going down — even if good things are happening in the classroom.

Q. *Enrollment at our public higher education institutions is at an all-time high. How can you guarantee that students are getting the education they deserve with the limited resources available to our public colleges and UMass?*

A. It is inevitable that some students are not going to have access to the system in the way they would have in the past. In some ways, this situation will draw attention to how dependent the students of our state are on our public campuses and that will help overcome some of the complacency. But the downside is that some students are going to find it harder to gain access to the programs of studies they want at the campuses they want to attend.

A quest for reasonable solutions

Education reform is a loaded term. It has been co-opted by conservatives, and we need to take it back.

No Child Left Behind was also a masterful phrase. Who can be against that? The bill would never have passed if it had been called The Test and Punish Act.

Education reform is the term currently in vogue. It sounds great, but unfortunately is often a code for merit pay, privatization and weaker unions.

“Reform” means changing the status quo to make improvements. These proposals meet the first condition: They represent change. But will they improve the quality of education? We believe not.

Let’s look at merit pay, since that issue has arisen again in the form of bonuses for certain Advanced Placement teachers whose students achieve a certain score on a math, English or science AP test. Although our gut instinct is that paying teachers for test scores is a bad idea, we have approached the issue with an open mind by researching it and asking our members what they think.



Anne Wass
MTA President

The research overwhelmingly finds that it doesn’t work. Vivian Troen of Brandeis and Katherine Boles of Harvard studied teacher merit pay from 1710 onward and wrote a forceful op-ed in *The Boston Globe* in which they concluded: “Merit pay

Great public schools are a basic right for every child.

comes in many forms and flavors. None of them, past and present, has ever had a successful track record.” (“How ‘merit pay’ squelches teaching,” September 28, 2005.) Other research continues to support that conclusion.

We also recently polled our members, asking them if they favored or opposed the following proposition: “Pay higher salaries to teachers based on student test scores.” An incredible 92 percent are opposed.

Instead of wasting time arguing over a pay system that teachers don’t want and history shows doesn’t work, we’d rather talk about the kinds of reforms that classroom teachers themselves say should be considered. For example:

■ Mass TeLLS results show that many teachers do not believe there is enough time in the day to cover the curriculum and work with their colleagues. We have embraced the Expanded Learning Time initiative as one possible solution and are open to exploring other ways to address the lack-of-time challenge.

■ Mass TeLLS results also show that teachers, particularly in urban areas, believe that student performance is strongly affected by external factors such as unsafe neighborhoods and lack of parental involvement. Let’s create more and better community schools, sometimes called full-service schools. Under these systems, schools are open from early in the morning until late in the evening. Students and their parents receive a wide array of

services through the schools, such as referrals for social services and evening English language classes for parents. We would love an education reform discussion about this and other ways to improve the school-community connection.

Great public schools are a basic right for every child. That is what we in NEA and MTA believe. It’s not just a slogan that sounds good. It is at the core of what we do every day.

Our association has a twofold mission: to advance the professional and economic interests of our members and to be the voice that ensures every child gets a high-quality education. We must work for both these goals. In this 21st century, we must be open to new ideas and new strategies.

While many of the so-called reformers are not open to our ideas, no one has a monopoly on a closed mind. Although it is not common, I do sometimes hear stories of members or local leaders who also do not want to even think about, let alone talk about, ideas that are outside their comfort zones. That is understandable. Humans are, by nature, creatures of habit. However, refusing to even consider new ideas doesn’t mean that change will be stopped in its tracks. Sometimes, it just means that change will be imposed from above.

Believe me, not every idea that cloaks itself in the guise of “reform” is a good one. Some of these ideas, once thoroughly considered, should be fought with all our might. Others, however, may be worth pursuing. I believe we will be stronger and more effective in whatever direction we choose to go if we approach serious new ideas with an open mind and propose viable, reasonable, teacher-supported solutions.

Analysis

Far Right remains determined to undermine public education

NEA Staff Report

Anti-tax activist Grover Norquist was so excited last fall about the prospect of repealing the income tax in Massachusetts that he used the campaign to rally his anti-government brethren nationally.

“If you can do it in Massachusetts, you can do it anywhere,” Norquist proclaimed, his words lending hope to activists who watched the Question 1 campaign for signs that they could prevail with revenue curbs in their own states.

This is the same Grover Norquist whose long-stated goal is to cut government in half — “to get it down to the size where we can drown it in the bathtub.” As president of Americans for Tax Reform,

the nation’s leading anti-tax group, Norquist has spent his career trying to convince legislatures, Congress and voters that the nation would be better off imposing private school vouchers, eliminating public assistance and privatizing transportation, public utilities and Social Security.

Norquist’s support for Question 1 in Massachusetts signaled how high the stakes were for the ballot question as activists waged war to create a “drownable” state government in the Commonwealth. Far Right contributors and libertarian figures from California, Georgia, Nevada and Washington, D.C., poured their support into the Question 1 campaign.

Groups such as Advocates for Self-Government and the local Center for Small Government — whose allies and members support an end to public education altogether — led the ground effort to eliminate the income tax.

The ballot fight is over in the Bay State for the moment, but the simmering anti-government sentiments remain strong and will fuel still more fights in states over the next two years. Question 1 was an unsuccessful test case — an early casualty — for local anti-government activists and their sister groups nationally who want to tap into voter frustration over the economy to push through dangerous spending-reduction plans.

Right Wing foundations and national anti-tax groups such as Americans for Prosperity, Americans for Tax Reform and Americans for Limited Government, plus the Club for Growth political action committee, are encouraging state-based

WEB LINKS

- Media Transparency**
For research on the Right (Now part of Media Matters)
<http://www.mediatransparency.org>
- Ballot Initiative Strategy Center**
For tax and education ballot initiatives
<http://www.ballot.org>
- Right Wing Watch blog**
Tracking the Right through a project of People for the American Way
<http://www.rightwingwatch.org/>
- Center for Budget and Policy Priorities**
On state spending and revenue issues
<http://www.cbpp.org>

think tanks and tax groups to challenge spending on big-ticket items, namely public schools. State legislatures are under pressure to consider tax caps and tax rollbacks, and activists are taking new runs at ballot measures to limit municipal spending, reduce property taxes and impose general revenue limits.

All this is playing out in uncertain financial conditions. Across the nation, 2009 and 2010 state budgets are targets of small-government groups

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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. For additional information, please refer to the guidelines posted at www.massteacher.org/news/mta_today.

Weaver energizes EMAC crowd

Former NEA president urges conference participants to lobby for public education

By Sarah Nathan

Reg Weaver to MTA members: “Your voice matters.”

The immediate past president of the NEA delivered a rousing keynote address to a crowd of close to 100 people during a recent two-day conference hosted by the MTA Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee.

For about an hour, Weaver commanded the room with his trademark energy, charisma and warmth. He shared experiences from his time at the helm of the NEA; talked about teaching and connecting with students and how things have changed over time; recalled the words of several famous Americans, including Langston Hughes, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Eleanor Roosevelt; and, most important, urged MTA educators to join the fray.

“Typically, minorities don’t think they have a voice,” said Weaver, a retired middle school science teacher with 30 years of classroom experience who served as president of his own local in Harvey, Ill., and president of the Illinois Education Association before joining the leadership ranks of the NEA. “I’m here to tell you that you do.”

Weaver spoke of lobbying Congress and the Illinois Legislature and stressed the need to be present when state and federal leaders are making decisions that will affect children, educators and public education.

“If you don’t become involved in your organization, I can tell you what’s going to happen,” he said.

Without member activism, Weaver continued, elected officials “are going to run right over you because they feel that you are not concerned.”

“You need to constantly be there and watching them,” he said. “It makes a difference — it really does.”

Tracey Pratt, a special education teacher in Cambridge, embraced Weaver’s message and the overall theme of the conference, “A Brand New Future.” Pratt, a first-time participant, said she left feeling inspired to get more involved in association work.

“The conference was not only engaging, it was entertaining,” said Pratt, who is serving for the first time this year on the executive board of her union, the Cambridge Teachers Association.

Pratt alluded not only to Weaver, who spoke as the event opened on April 3, but also to remarks by MTA President Anne Wass, who addressed the conference on April 4.

“Reggie Weaver and Anne Wass both let me know how important it is to be involved on many levels,” Pratt said. “We want to be great teachers and we pour all this time into our classrooms and our lesson plans, but being an effective teacher also means being involved outside of the classroom.”



Photos by Sarah Nathan



In photos clockwise from top left: New EMAC member Christine Boseman, who belongs to the Classified Staff Union at UMass Boston, shakes things up during a performance by the Boston Community Gospel Choir; former NEA President Reg Weaver shares a moment with Cambridge Teachers Association Executive Board member Tracey Pratt; Linda Yeh, left, and Maurisa Davis, both of the Amherst-Pelham Education Association, listen intently to Weaver’s speech; and Antonio Marin, Ruth Ortiz and Luvia Berduo, members of the Framingham Teachers Association, get into the spirit during the choir performance.

Wass, who served as the event “closer,” offered specific ways for MTA members to get involved in a more hands-on fashion. She shared the story of how she became active in her local association and subsequently the MTA. She also handed out a two-sided document listing the names and functions of close to 30 member-run MTA committees and asked conference participants to give serious consideration to signing up to participate in their activities.

“If you are already involved, please stay involved,” Wass said. “If you have not yet taken the leap, please do so. We can work together to make a difference.”

Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee Chairwoman Susan Baker

said she was pleased with the energy and excitement participants brought to the conference, which was held at the Crowne Plaza hotel in Natick. She was also happy with the large number of first-time attendees.

“It’s such a great opportunity for people of all different backgrounds from all over the state to come together and share experiences and connect with one another,” Baker said. “For so long, there has been a feeling that a glass ceiling exists for minorities. I think that is still true in our workplaces and our unions. While we have come a long way, we still have a lot of work to do.”

As has become tradition, the Boston Community Gospel Choir, led by NEA Regional Representative Dennis Slaughter, entertained the

crowd with a mix of contemporary songs. Slaughter passed out musical instruments so that audience members could not only sing with the choir, but play along as well.

On the second day of the conference, participants had their choice of workshops to attend. There were sessions about bias, bullying and school safety, recruiting and retaining teachers of color and working as a field representative for the MTA.

“There is something really special about this conference and the fact that it gives minority members, who hold many different jobs in public schools and public higher education, a chance to come together, regroup and recharge, and then go back out there and keep fighting,” Baker said.

One town's lessons on health care

By Laura Barrett

Imagine that the amount of money available for employee compensation — wages and benefits — is a pie. If you are a local association president, you work hard to make sure the pie is big enough by rallying the members to work for local, state and federal revenues. While keeping up the pressure, many locals simultaneously must consider how to slice their share of the pie.

In recent years, health insurance costs have been rising much faster than inflation, and they now account for an ever bigger share of the pie. What is a local to do?

The Weston Education Association is one of many to face this problem over the past several years. After many twists and turns, the association, school committee, other municipal unions, town officials and retirees reached an accommodation last fall that has widespread support. They are bringing down the costs of health insurance and sharing some of the savings with the town.

The lessons learned in Weston may not be applicable to all communities. After all, Weston has far greater property tax wealth than most others, though it receives less state aid. But it shares with other municipalities the “pie” dilemma. There’s only so much to go around, so how should it be divvied up?

Cuts threatened

In 2004, the pressure was mounting in Weston to reduce health care benefits for both active and retired public employees. WEA members and retirees had good health insurance and were happy with a premium split of 90 percent-10 percent for the HMO plan. From the town’s perspective, however, rapidly rising costs were gobbling up too much money and were unsustainable over the long term.

The town and School Committee insisted that teachers give up the 90-10 split. Teachers refused, arguing that the real cause of the health insurance crisis was the skyrocketing cost of the total premium amount, not the split. As a result of a well-organized campaign, the teachers kept the split at 90-10 that year.

Town officials realized that although the teachers could hold them off, the retirees were more vulnerable.

Weston adopted Section 18, a provision in state law under which all retirees who are eligible for Medicare are required to enroll in it. Weston did not opt to hold the retirees harmless by picking up a fair share of the needed supplemental insurance. This stood in sharp contrast to places such as Brockton, which adopted Section 18 in a win-win way, saving money for both the municipality and for retirees.

Health care benefits for retirees not eligible for Medicare were also on the chopping block. The town decided

‘We considered the option of accepting higher co-pays through the GIC if they could be offset by lower total premiums and an improved split for employees,’ explained David Poras, president of the Weston Education Association.



to reduce its share of the premium split for those on the town plan by 5 percentage points a year.

Carol Dailey, a retiree who had taught in Weston for 35 years, was strongly opposed to the cuts. She helped form an ad hoc group of Weston retirees that went by the name “AWARE.”

Although they don’t have bargaining rights, retirees do have political clout. Members of AWARE protested and spoke out at public meetings. They achieved some relief from the higher premiums and filed a lawsuit seeking additional relief. That lawsuit is still pending.

The WEA also fought back by filing an Unfair Labor Practice charge. The state issued a complaint concluding that the town did not have to bargain over whether to adopt Section 18, but did have to bargain with the WEA over the impact of

changes in retiree benefits since that affected a future benefit for current employees.

The WEA ULP charge was eventually rendered moot by changes initiated by the WEA.

Deal reached on split

In 2007, the WEA finally agreed that members would pay a larger share of their premiums — an 80-20 split for the HMO plan — in exchange for significant salary increases: 5 percent the first year and 3.25 percent in each of the subsequent two years.

David Poras, president of the WEA, said that most members were pleased with the tradeoff. Getting salary increases of 11.5 percent over three years in return for an 80-20 split was the way to go, a majority felt.

But the story doesn’t end there. Even with all these changes, Weston’s health insurance bills were very high.

MTA field representative Brendan Sharkey advised the local that members could possibly reduce overall costs and get a better deal on the premium split if they considered going into the Group Insurance Commission, or GIC, the state insurance pool that teacher and municipal employees may now join.

An added bonus to this route was that retirees would have a seat at the table in bargaining over whether to go to the GIC and could potentially stop the downward slide of their benefits.

The WEA initiated the conversation, first contacting the municipal employee unions in town to see if they were interested. After several informational meetings, the other unions agreed to consider the GIC option.

What’s Section 19?

To consider going into the GIC, the town must adopt yet another provision in state law. It is called Section 19 and is sometimes referred to as the coalition bargaining law. Under Section 19, all of the public employee unions and a representative of retired employees form a Public Employee Committee — PEC — and bargain simultaneously with municipal officials on an equal footing.

Some employers don’t like Section

Please see **Coalition**/next page

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MTA leaders sound alarm on Beacon Hill proposals

In a memo to local association presidents sent on April 3, MTA President Anne Wass and Vice President Paul Toner sounded the alarm on health insurance for MTA's preK-12 members.

"Our health insurance is under attack on Beacon Hill," they wrote. "The Legislature is considering changes to municipal employees' health insurance in the weeks ahead."

The memo describes some of the proposed changes and urges members to contact their legislators and voice their concerns about health insurance during in-district lobbying meetings.

Under current state law, any changes in health insurance plan design — including co-payments, deductibles and which health insurer is used — must be negotiated with affected public employee unions. Proposals to change the system are being debated on Beacon Hill.

One bill, filed by Governor Deval Patrick,

would require municipalities to determine whether their health insurance costs are higher than they would be if their employees were enrolled in the state Group Insurance Commission. If that proved to be the case, municipal officials and labor unions would enter into negotiations to either join the GIC or modify their health insurance plan designs so that costs were no higher than if the employees were in the GIC.

If no agreement could be reached, the state would reduce its local aid to the municipality by the amount that health insurance costs exceeded the GIC level.

A second proposal, filed on behalf of the Massachusetts Municipal Association, would grant municipal officials the right to make unilateral changes in their employees' health insurance plan designs. They would be allowed to increase co-payments and deductibles to the levels offered

under the comparable GIC plans without engaging in any bargaining whatsoever.

A third plan under discussion would give municipalities the discretion to require — without bargaining — that public employees join the GIC.

Under all three plans, the premium split would still be negotiated.

The pressure for change is percolating up from the local level and is increasing in intensity as municipalities face budget cuts during the current economic crisis.

Phyllis Neufeld, president of the Lexington Education Association, warned other association leaders that health insurance can become a contentious issue, causing a rift between local governments and municipal workers. She noted that the Appropriations Committee in Lexington proposed a resolution at a recent town meeting

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Coalition bargaining brings results for Weston

Continued from previous page

19 because they believe it gives the unions too much power, and some unions don't like it because they are no longer free to cut the best deal possible for their own bargaining units. But both sides say that when the conditions are right, they benefit by getting everyone around the table at once and reaching an agreement.

Coalition bargaining may result in continuing to participate in a municipal plan or a joint purchasing group or, under a law passed in 2007, going into the GIC.

Poras said that in Weston the employees were quick to see the potential benefit of the GIC.

"Our premiums are very high," he explained. "This year our Blue Cross family plan costs \$22,000 and our Harvard Pilgrim family plan — the HMO — is \$19,000. Knowing that the comparable plan under the GIC is \$14,000 or \$15,000 a year, even with the higher out-of-pocket expenses, we realized that the overwhelming majority of people would be saving a lot of money."

As is the case in many other communities, Poras said, Weston teachers currently have plans with low co-payments: \$5 for office visits and many prescription drugs and nothing for hospitalizations.

"We'd hear stories about when members would go to the desk in the physician's office and the person would be shocked we still have a \$5 co-pay," Poras said. "We considered the option of accepting higher co-pays through the GIC if they could be offset by lower total premiums and an improved split for employees."

The employee associations approached the town, which initially was skeptical a deal could be put together in just a few short months. The PEC showed them that even with improving the split for employees to 87-13 for the HMO (up from 80-20), 85-15 for the Preferred Provider Organization (up from 50-50) and 67-33 for the indemnity plan

(which also had been 50-50), the town and employees could each save more than a million dollars a year.

But what about the impact of those higher co-payments on employees?

Boston Benefits Partners, a consulting firm the MTA hires to help analyze health insurance plans, created a calculator under which low, average and high users of health care services could calculate the costs and benefits of combining lower premiums with higher co-payments. Poras said they found that all but a small number would save money under the GIC. For an average user on a family plan, the annual savings would be about \$1,500 a year — and this on top of the recently negotiated salary increases.

They started bargaining with the town in May or June, Poras said, and had a deal in place by late September, in time to meet the October deadline for joining the GIC as of July 2009.

When it came time to vote, all but two small unions supported going into the GIC. Once in the GIC, a municipality must stay in the system for either three years or six years, after which time the municipal leaders and unions can reconsider and bargain a different plan.

Dailey said that a majority of the retirees supported the GIC agreement, even though retirees use health care more than younger ones, on average, and would be hit harder by the higher co-payments. They were eager to join the PEC and have a seat at the table and happy that once in the GIC they would be receiving benefits and premium splits comparable to those of the active employees.

In addition, under the GIC agreement, the town will reimburse retirees for approximately 58 percent of their Medicare Part B costs. (While there is no premium charged for Medicare Part A, which mainly covers hospital costs, there is a \$96.40-per-month per-person premium for Medicare Part B, which mainly covers doctors' fees, outpatient services and durable medical equipment.)

Pros and cons

Pros and cons of going into the GIC will vary from community to community, which is why the costs and benefits must be analyzed carefully and the final plan must be negotiated.

Pros of the GIC for Weston

- ✓ Improved premium split for employees and retirees.
- ✓ Lower total cost of health insurance premium, which reduces insurance costs for the town, the employees and retirees.
- ✓ Retirees have bargaining rights; municipality cannot unilaterally change the plan design or premium split.
- ✓ Stronger positive relationships with other unions.

Cons of the GIC for Weston

- ✓ Higher co-payments.
- ✓ No recourse if GIC changes health insurance plans or plan design, such as increasing co-pays and deductibles or eliminating certain coverage.
- ✓ No Blue Cross/Blue Shield plans offered.

Bottom line for WEA: Saving employees and the town more than \$1 million each in premium costs was the decisive factor. Estimates show that the average health care user on a family plan will save \$1,500 a year, even when higher co-payments are factored in.

Poras said that taking on such negotiations is not for the faint-of-heart.

"People had a lot of concerns," he said. "They had concerns over giving up control over plan design by going into the GIC. They had concerns over the high co-pays."

"Some of the biggest resistance was that the GIC has no plans offered by Blue Cross," he continued. "That was a big hurdle to get over, and understandably so. Blue Cross has good customer service and a good reputation. People were worried that they would no longer be able to go to their own doctors."

Poras said members were urged to call their doctors' offices and ask

questions or visit the Web sites of Tufts and Harvard Pilgrim, two of several providers under the GIC. As it turned out, he said, all but one doctor for one member would take the insurance offered by the GIC.

Dailey called Poras "the key mover in making this work."

"It may not work in every community because it takes a lot of work and a lot of trust," she said. "David is the kind of person who is extremely positive, organized, skilled and respected. And he listens well. He happens to be a math teacher, so he could analyze all these numbers. Since he understood it so well, he agreed to meet with the members of the other unions to explain it to them. There's a lot involved in making this work."

Poras, for his part, praised the retirees for their organizing efforts and added that support from the MTA was critical in helping the local navigate the complex health insurance choices.

"We couldn't have done this without the expertise of Brendan Sharkey and the other MTA staff we worked with," he said. "Brendan worked really hard to foster a win-win solution. Is it a perfect deal? No. But we feel it's the best deal for these times. The town will save over a million dollars per year. And we'll save the vast majority of our members a lot of money. The tradeoff is we had to accept higher co-pays for a better split."

"I have to give a big plug to the Board of Selectmen and the town manager," Poras added. "For five to seven years they worked really hard to get everyone down to 80-20. For them to raise the employer's share of the premium split back up after all that work took courage. But the numbers were too big to be ignored."

Local associations interested in analyzing their health insurance plans and exploring options should contact their MTA field representatives. MTA Vice President Paul Toner is the labor representative on the Group Insurance Commission.

ARRA funding flows to states

By Laura Barrett

Federal dollars have begun to flow into states under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the massive bill designed to stimulate the economy.

Massachusetts will receive \$1.7 billion from the section of the ARRA dedicated to preK-12 education, higher education, and non-education local services.

Because of uncertainty surrounding the stimulus funding, some communities have delayed their budget processes pending final word on how much they will receive this year.

“This is an unprecedented level of support from the federal government and is desperately needed to prevent massive layoffs in public education,” said MTA President Anne Wass. “With the state budget down several billion dollars and local aid and higher education both targeted for cuts, this help from the federal government can’t come fast enough.”

The biggest pots of money targeted for education in Massachusetts over the next two years are as follows.

- State fiscal stabilization fund: \$994 million, of which \$813 million is for education and \$181 million for public safety or other government services, which could include education.

- Title I: \$163 million for education services in districts with high concentrations of low-income students.

- IDEA: \$291 million for education services for special needs students.

- Pell Grants: \$137 million for college tuition grants for low-income students.

The education funding is specifically meant to prevent layoffs in public schools and colleges and to make higher education more affordable for students. In addition, the Obama administration has attached conditions on some of the money to promote the president’s vision of changes needed in public schools.

Already, some districts that had announced they were anticipating significant layoffs have begun to lower those estimates. But reductions in force are still expected in some districts, and there is concern about what will happen two years from now when the stimulus dollars dry up.

MTA members are urged to continue to participate in in-district meetings with their legislators to make the case for long-term, stable state funding for public education at all levels, as well as for giving municipalities new flexibility to raise revenues locally.

The four “guiding principles” for use of the ARRA funds are to save or create jobs, improve student achievement through school

‘This is an unprecedented level of support from the federal government and is desperately needed to prevent massive layoffs in public education.’

—MTA President Anne Wass

improvement or reform, ensure transparency and avoid a “funding cliff” when these one-time federal dollars dry up. The U.S. Department of Education has said that some of the money can be used for improvements such as professional development, dropout prevention, materials, regional capacity building and school modernization, renovation or repair.

Governor Deval Patrick has announced his intention to allocate \$168 million from the stabilization fund to 153 operating districts in fiscal 2010, which begins July 1. While many of the districts receiving the money serve a high percentage of low-income students — Springfield and Worcester, for example — others do not.

MTA Director of Research David Danning explained that these distributions were determined by the state’s school funding formula and that districts receiving additional funds from this source had been under-funded in the governor’s state budget proposal.

When Patrick filed his budget back in January, he level-funded Chapter

70, the law that establishes the formula for how much each school district and the state must contribute to schools in that district to make sure they reach their “foundation” levels of spending. In light of inflation and changes in enrollment, level-funding Chapter 70 actually resulted in 153 operating districts receiving less state aid than is legally required for them to remain at foundation. The \$168 million in ARRA funds was used to bring all districts up to their foundation levels. Districts that did not receive any of the \$168 million will still receive ARRA money from other sources.

The governor also has announced a plan to allocate \$162 million to public higher education, mainly to save jobs and reduce a planned fee hike for students. The intent of the allocation is to bring the FY10 higher education appropriation back to its FY09 level before so-called 9C cuts were made.

MTA members were among the NEA members nationwide who contacted their members of Congress in support of having stimulus funds

go to education. Patrick was an early and outspoken supporter of including education funding in the ARRA.

The NEA and state affiliates are keeping a close eye on conditions attached to some of the stimulus money. The U.S. Department of Education has put out for public comment guidelines specifying that states must document that they will be capable of reporting:

- Whether and how they use student achievement information in their local evaluation systems for teachers and principals.

- Whether the state has a cap restricting the number of charter schools currently operating and the number closed within the past three years for academic reasons.

- The number and percentage of high school graduates, by school, who complete one year’s worth of college credit within two years.

- The number of schools in the “restructuring” phase of academic improvement under the No Child Left Behind act that have demonstrated improvement.

For additional information on the budget and school funding, visit www.massteacher.org, the MTA Web site; or www.massbudget.org, the Web site of the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center.

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Higher ed affiliates reach new contracts

By Sarah Nathan

Six MTA higher education unions had wrapped up contract negotiations and several other affiliates with expired contracts were inching toward settlement as *MTA Today* went to press.

The unions representing faculty and librarians on the Amherst, Boston and Lowell campuses of the University of Massachusetts have all ratified four-year deals. The unions representing faculty and librarians at the nine state colleges and the professional and

administrative, technical and clerical staff at UMass Boston and UMass Amherst have all reached tentative four-year agreements. Each of these units was expected to hold ratification votes sometime in April.

"We are content with the settlement," said C.J. O'Donnell, president of the Massachusetts State College Association. "We understand that these are tough economic times, and we tried very hard to get as much money for our members as we could."

Recognizing the financial difficulties facing the Commonwealth,

the unions agreed to bypass pay raises for the current year and accept modest pay increases during the next three years.

Union leaders were able to negotiate some new and improved contract language. The contract negotiated by the University Staff Association at UMass Amherst includes a new anti-bullying/mutual respect clause that establishes a standard of conduct and puts mechanisms in place to address abuses. The Massachusetts Society of Professors at UMass Amherst and the

MSCA were able to make significant changes to sabbatical policies that give faculty members more flexibility than they have had in the past. The contract negotiated by the Professional Staff Union, whose members work at UMass Amherst and UMass Boston, includes an expanded family medical leave benefit.

Others were able to make financial gains in other areas. The tentative agreement reached by the Classified Staff Union at UMass Boston includes a new provision that will allow members

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Photo by Sarah Nathan

USA member Aggie Mitchkoski urges rally participants to lobby their legislators in support of revenues for public higher education.

PHENOM calls on legislators to support colleges and UMass

By Sarah Nathan

Students, staff and faculty from public campuses across the Commonwealth rallied recently on Beacon Hill in support of increased financial aid for students and funding for public higher education.

The April 8 lobbying effort, organized by the Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts, gave activists an opportunity to make their case for the state's public colleges and universities.

As part of the day's activities, PHENOM members rallied on Boston Common and then made their way to the State House to meet with legislators, who are considering the state budget for the next fiscal year.

"We, as citizens, need to be willing to pay for the common good. That includes public higher education, health care, transportation and other important public services," said Aggie Mitchkoski, a member of the executive board of the University Staff Association at UMass Amherst. "Our legislators are smart enough to recognize what is needed. Now they need to be brave enough to do it."

PHENOM's current legislative agenda calls for:

■ **Revitalizing the MassGrant program.** PHENOM supports a \$14.1 million increase in funding for the state's largest need-based financial aid program, as proposed by the Department of Higher Education. Funding for the MassGrant has steadily declined in recent years.

■ Funding for the Educational Rewards Grant program.

PHENOM is advocating for \$3 million in funding for financial aid for nontraditional students and an additional \$1.5 million for programs designed to help students stay in school and succeed, as outlined in the Workers Pathways to Self-Sufficiency Act of 2009, sponsored by Sen. James Eldridge, D-Acton, and Rep. Linda Dorcena Forry, D-Dorchester.

■ Restoring campus operating budgets to the original fiscal 2009 levels.

PHENOM supports Governor Deval Patrick's efforts to use federal economic stimulus funds to restore campus operating budgets to the levels that existed before the governor initiated mid-year budget cuts.

■ Education equality for immigrant students.

PHENOM supports the Equal Access to Higher Education legislation, which would allow students who have attended at least three years of high school in Massachusetts to pay in-state tuition rates at public colleges.

■ Increasing state revenues.

With the overwhelming defeat of Question 1, PHENOM believes that now is the time to launch a discussion about creating additional revenue streams and the fairest, most progressive approach to new taxes.

For more information about PHENOM or to join the organization, visit phenomonline.org.

Renewed GLBT committee seeks

By Sarah Nathan

Armed with a new name and a new mission, a long-standing MTA committee dedicated to protecting the employment rights of gay and lesbian educators is back after a lengthy hiatus.

At the start of the current school year, MTA President Anne Wass officially reinstated the Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Issues Committee, formerly known as the Lesbian and Gay Employment and Civil Rights Committee, and appointed Wellesley High School teacher Pedro Carrasquillo to serve as chairperson.

Carrasquillo and his fellow members are energized and eager to get to work.

The committee's main focus is to protect the employment rights of GLBT members and serve as a resource for all MTA members.

"Our hope is to be much more outspoken in terms of the needs of GLBT members," said Carrasquillo, who travels across the country to train educators on harassment and bullying as part of the NEA's Safe Schools program. "We want to be a voice for the voiceless."

While Massachusetts was the first state in the nation to legalize gay

'It's important for people to know that there are resources available to them. We can make a difference just by being out in our communities and serving as positive role models for students and adults.'

—Committee member Gary Chalmers

marriage and has long been considered progressive in terms of its positions on GLBT issues, gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender educators still face many challenges, according to committee member Gary Chalmers, who is a member of the Shrewsbury Education Association.

"We are in one of the best states in the country for GLBT people, but people still face issues," Chalmers said. "Nothing is perfect."

Chalmers and his partner, Richard Linnell, were among the seven couples who served as plaintiffs in *Goodridge v. the Department of Public Health*, the landmark lawsuit that paved the way for the nation's first same-sex marriage law.

Despite progress on GLBT issues in recent years, Chalmers said, there are still some school districts where both educators and students are openly discriminated against based on sexual orientation.

role models for students and adults. This is especially important for GLBT students."

Carrasquillo noted that the committee is made up of a diverse group of MTA members who represent different age groups, sexual orientations, backgrounds and regions of the Commonwealth.

"It is important to have people representing different parts of the state because there are different perspectives and philosophies depending on where you are," added committee member Bernadette Marso, who also is the

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to be 'a voice for the voiceless'

president of the Leominster Education Association.

To highlight the issues facing GLBT members, the committee has outlined plans to increase its visibility within the MTA and beyond.

Carrasquillo said the GLBT committee will have a presence at the MTA's Annual Meeting of Delegates and Summer Conference, as well as during Boston Pride Week 2009.

The committee will have a booth at the Exposition on the morning of the first day of the Annual Meeting and will be present the night before at the MTA's



'Our hope is to be much more outspoken in terms of the needs of GLBT members.'

—Pedro Carrasquillo
GLBT Issues Committee Chairperson

annual Human and Civil Rights Awards Banquet. Last year, Carrasquillo

attended the HCR dinner with Steve Smith, the executive director of the

Boston Gay Men's Chorus, which was honored for its efforts to support high school gay-straight alliances. This year, members of the BGMC — including Carrasquillo, who has been singing with the chorus for 10 years — will perform at the dinner. Carrasquillo will also be singing with the chorus on Sunday, June 14, at a special concert hosting MTA members.

In addition, GLBT committee members are inviting all MTA members to march with them in the annual Boston Pride Parade, which will be on Saturday, June 13.

The committee is sponsoring two workshops at the MTA Summer Conference. The first will address employment rights for GLBT educators, and the second is about incorporating the basics of the gay rights movement into an American history curriculum for high school students.

GLBT Committee member Kathleen Doherty, who will lead the teacher workshop on the basics of the gay rights movement, said the MTA community is invited to get involved with the committee.

"This is a work in progress," said Doherty, who is the president of the Harvard Teachers Association and also serves as an advisor to the gay-straight alliance at The Bromfield School, where she teaches history. "People should stop by our booth at the Annual Meeting or reach out to us at other times with ideas and suggestions on how to achieve our mission."

For more information about the MTA's GLBT Issues Committee, please e-mail glbt@massteacher.org.

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There are 107,000 good reasons to belong to MTA Retired—the 107,000 women and men who make up the strongest force for public education in Massachusetts.

MTA ESPs well represented at national conference

MTA was well represented at the national ESP conference in Orlando in mid-March. NEA organizers say that with 1,200 members taking part, the event was the largest national ESP gathering ever. Massachusetts members attending included, from left to right back row: Susan Van Tol, Mashpee; Millie Ficarra, Weymouth, an MTA Board member; Kathy Meltsakos, Pentucket; Lois Powers, UMass Boston Classified Staff Union; and Deima Torna, Worcester. Rosaleen Sullivan of Hudson, seated at left, was the winner of a conference scholarship provided to the MTA by NEA Director of ESP Quality Roxanne Dove. MTA ESPs used the scholarship as a raffle prize and raised more than \$1,900 to fund ESP members' participation in MTA programs. Sullivan is seated next to Robert V. Travers, Jr., of Cambridge, an NEA Director; Lorraine Niccoli, Brockton; and Beverly Saccocia, Bridgewater-Raynham. Sandra Moriarty of Somerville attended but is not pictured.



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Offset repeal bills quickly gain support

Legislation that would repeal the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision is quickly gaining steam in the 111th Congress.

The Social Security Fairness Act of 2009 has been filed by Representative Howard L. Berman, a California Democrat. The bill, H.R. 235, already has the support of 257 co-sponsors. Identical legislation, S. 484, was recently filed in the Senate by Senator Diane Feinstein, also a California Democrat. The Senate bill has 20 co-sponsors.

All members of the Massachusetts congressional delegation have been strong supporters of past efforts to repeal the GPO and the WEP, and all are co-sponsors of the current bills.

The two Social Security provisions unfairly penalize educators in Massachusetts and 14 other states.

The GPO reduces the spousal or survivor benefits of educators and other public employees by an amount equal to two-thirds of their public pensions. The WEP affects people who have worked in jobs not covered by Social Security and in jobs in which they have earned Social Security benefits.

To receive regular updates on the repeal effort, please send your name, complete address, MTA ID number, current or former local association affiliation and home e-mail address to Jo Ann Fitzgerald, MTA retired members service specialist, at jfitzgerald@massteacher.org.

Senator Kerry makes sure retirees get ARRA checks

When President Barack Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act into law on Feb. 17, it included a provision to provide retirees with one-time stimulus payments of \$250.

As originally drafted, the provision would have excluded federal, state and local retirees who do not participate in the Social Security system.

U.S. Senator John F. Kerry (D-Mass.) first introduced a technical correction designed to

Please turn to **Kerry**/Page 18

Arbitrator issues 'fantastic decision' in MCCC case

By Sarah Nathan

The MTA recently won an important legal victory for laid off community college members who apply for open positions years later.

On March 2, Arbitrator Mark L. Irvings found that Holyoke Community College violated its contract with the Massachusetts Community College Council when it failed to appoint a former full-time tenured assistant professor to a job in the nutrition department.

Almost two decades earlier, the faculty member, Elizabeth Hebert, had been laid off from a position in the department due to budget cuts. While contract language provides MCCC members with recall rights for only four years after retrenchment, the arbitration decision states that the laid off faculty member, based on her qualifications, should have been given priority of consideration regardless of the lapse in time.

"This is a fantastic decision," said Dennis Fitzgerald, who serves as the MCCC's day grievance officer. "This decision gives laid off unit members vested rights indefinitely."

The decision stems from a grievance filed by Hebert, who was employed for eight years in the college's nutrition department before she was laid off in 1989.

Hebert, who pursued a private consulting practice and also worked as an adjunct professor at the college after her original position was cut, applied in 2006 for a vacant full-time tenure track position in the same department. After a long and involved hiring process that spanned more than a year and included two search committees, the job was awarded to another candidate.

Hebert's grievance, filed in 2007, alleged that the college had acted in an "arbitrary, capricious, and unreasonable manner" and to the detriment of employee rights by failing

to apply the stated qualifications listed on the job posting.

"This award is a moral victory for me as I know that I am an excellent teacher and was more than qualified for the position and had given much to the college as both a tenured and adjunct faculty member over the years," Hebert told *MTA Today*. "I remain dumbstruck by how I have been treated and am grateful that an avenue exists for faculty to obtain closure."

Not only does the arbitrator's decision have lasting implications for MCCC members, but it also requires

the college to appoint Hebert to the position with full back pay and benefits based on the amount she would have earned, less interim earnings.

In addition, Irvings found that even if the college appeals the current decision and a court determines that reappointing Hebert is "inconsistent" with Massachusetts law, the college must pay Hebert what she would have earned "for each year that the position she would have occupied continues to exist."

Attorney Will Evans of the the MTA Division of Legal Services represented the MCCC in the case.

Members meet with legislators

Continued from Page 2

Taunton Education Association President Janet Anderson and TEA Political Action Chairwoman Nancy Everidge have held separate meetings with Rep. James Fagan and Sen. Marc Pacheco, both Taunton Democrats. They took the opportunity to brief the legislators on the history of their current health insurance plan, which came into existence six years ago as a result of collective bargaining.

"We were able to thoughtfully explain why we want to keep our current health insurance plan," Anderson said. "It's not just because we like it and we are comfortable with it, but because it is cost-effective and has saved the city millions of dollars over the years — more than we would save by joining the GIC."

"It was an opportunity to offer a real-life example of how collective bargaining can make a significant difference," she added.

To keep the pressure on, Everidge is organizing a petition drive among the membership urging Fagan and Pacheco to vote against legislation that would harm collective bargaining rights.

In February, the MTA held regional trainings providing local associations with the tools and materials to build long-term local action teams. That effort continues to unfold as the legislative session progresses.

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Obituaries

Jean A. Benson, 59, of Marlborough. Was a teacher in Marlborough for 34 years, mostly at Marlborough Middle School, where she taught literature and language arts, retiring in 2008. Feb. 2.

Patsy V. Bucca, 83, of Winthrop. Was a teacher and principal in the Nahant school system, retiring in 1980. Jan. 8.

Harriet E. Donahue, 73, of East Wareham. Taught first grade for the town of Wareham for 31 years, retiring in 2000. Jan. 28.

Patricia Foley, 71, of Norwood. Taught for 20 years in the Westwood Public Schools. Feb. 13.

Robert J. Goff, 75, of Springfield. Taught for 42 years in public schools in San Diego, East Longmeadow and West Springfield and at Dean College in Franklin. Jan. 23.

Shirley H. Griffin, 96, of Shirley. Was a guidance counselor at Ayer High School for 30 years, retiring in 1993. Feb. 19.

Mildred Kantor, 84, of Longmeadow and Stockbridge. Taught

in Springfield for 25 years. Feb. 10.

Peter O'Malley, Jr., 70, of Clinton. Was an elementary school teacher for the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District for 40 years, retiring in 2001. Feb. 20.

Beverly A. Royce, of East Longmeadow. Taught in Belchertown for five years and in East Longmeadow for 33 years. Jan. 29.

Paul D. Shea, 83, of Waltham. Taught art for the Waltham Public Schools for 34 years, retiring as director of the school system's art

department. Feb. 11.

Dorene N. Skilton, 67, of Pittsfield. Taught in Portland, Conn., and at the Crosby and Herberg middle schools in Pittsfield. Jan. 30.

Daniel Stefanilo, 54, of Uxbridge. Was a special needs teacher in Lowell and Uxbridge for several years, then became director of the Uxbridge special needs program. Served as assistant principal at Uxbridge High School and then as the town's superintendent. Feb. 21.

William E. Waitt, Jr., 82, of Ipswich. Was a teacher for eight years in Ipswich elementary schools, then became principal of the Shatswell and Burley schools. Served as principal of the Paul F. Doyon Memorial School for 23 years, retiring in 1987. Jan. 9.

S. Jeanette Washburn, 86, of Lancaster. Was a special needs teacher in Somerset for 15 years, retiring in 1982. Dec. 4.

Dennis Wrenn, 58, of Grafton. Taught at Algonquin Regional High School in Northborough, where he was the director of music and chairman of fine and performing arts. Feb. 22.

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MTA leaders call for member action on bargaining rights

Continued from Page 7

in favor of allowing municipalities to increase employee health care costs without negotiating.

More than 250 Lexington teachers and municipal workers attended the meeting to protest the resolution and passed out a flier in which union representatives wrote: "We do not bargain over health insurance benefits in a vacuum. They are part of the larger compensation package and must be considered as such when changes are made. This resolution would destroy the spirit of cooperation and goodwill that the town and employees have built up around health insurance."

Despite the objections, town meeting members passed the non-binding resolution.

The Wass and Toner memo warned: "The Senate President and the Speaker of the House have indicated in meetings with MTA that there will be changes to educators' health insurance in order to save money."

Noting that no specific proposal had been settled on, they stated: "It is crucial that you take action and ask your members to do the same to prevent the Legislature from taking away our ability to collectively bargain over health insurance.

"MTA is lobbying all legislators as well," they continued. "Municipalities are pushing hard to make changes, and it is going to be difficult to maintain the status quo."

Members who have not yet sent in the postcards on this issue that were mailed to them in February are urged to do so as soon as possible.

Save money and still enjoy the trip

The media tell us that the troubled economy is causing people to scale back discretionary spending and pay down debt. While families may not dine out as often or make as many big-ticket purchases, many will indulge in some form of vacation during this year. People still want entertainment and a change of venue to renew energy and boost spirits.

If you're planning a vacation this year, keeping it affordable is probably at the top of your agenda. What are some of the best ways to save as you put together your 2009 vacation plans?

Take a "staycation." This new vacation trend doesn't mean you have to just sit on the front porch. Local day trips to events or venues that are new to you could provide plenty of entertainment and even introduce sources of diversion to be tapped throughout the year. Theater, opera, live music and art museums are often available close to home. Combining this kind of local cultural enrichment with visits to nearby restaurants will be much less expensive than vacationing in a metropolitan area.

Drive instead of flying. Pick a destination within a few hours' drive. This may be the most common way to save on a vacation. Draw a circle 200 miles around your hometown and chances are you'll find an interesting destination. The Berkshires in Western Massachusetts and New York's Adirondacks are great places to visit.

Consider an urban 'no-drive' vacation. Affordable bus, train and air fares to Washington, D.C., and New York City are readily available. Even better, both cities make it easy and inexpensive to get to all of their major attractions on public transit. Washington, in particular, has a fantastic (and clean) subway system.

Travel in off-peak periods. Most people plan their vacations around traveling on Friday or Saturday. Yet the best deals in airfare are usually reserved for Tuesday through Thursday flights. Since most MTA members have schedule flexibility during summer, midweek travel is an easy way to save on airfare.



Draw a circle 200 miles around your hometown and chances are you'll find an interesting destination.

Book early. Whether you're booking air travel, hotels or car rentals, you can usually find big savings by reserving at least 21 days in advance. Visit a "super aggregator" Web site such as farecompare.com to simultaneously compare flights with Orbitz, Expedia, Cheap Air and other travel sources.

Be flexible and book late. This also works. Sign up at airline Web sites for their last-minute e-mail specials. Huge savings are possible if you can drop everything and fly that very week to select destinations.

Check AAA hotel rates. Most hotels — even fairly exclusive ones — offer discounted

rates. A recent visit to a four-star hotel in Sarasota yielded a 15 percent savings compared to standard rates.

Bring food to your hotel room. Ideally, find a room that includes a refrigerator and microwave. Even if you just buy prepared foods at a supermarket near your hotel, you can easily save \$50 per day.

Get free eats. Some hotel chains provide free breakfast for all and/or have a kids-eat-free policy. Check the hotel home page before booking.

Teach your kids to save. Smart parents know that kids are impulse buyers of food, toys and souvenirs, which can wreck a carefully planned affordable trip. Let the children know up front that they will be given a certain amount of money per day for such purchases and that spending it will be up to them. If they save some money each day, they'll have more at the end of the trip to splurge on something.

For savings on places to stay on your trip, visit the [MTA Hotel Discount Directory](http://www.mtabenefits.com) at www.mtabenefits.com.

MEMBERS CITE MTAB SAVINGS AND SERVICE

Two MTA members recently discussed the significant advantages of MTA Benefits.

'I love getting discounts with my MTA card. New England Aquarium — which is free — is one of my favorite places. I also use my member card to save money at Borders and Shoebuy.com.'



Lorraine Gibbs

— Lorraine Gibbs
Educational Association of Worcester

'Last year I heard auto insurance agencies were battling for business and I began getting quotes. The MTAB program had the best rates. My customer service representative was very knowledgeable and answered all of my questions in a way that helped me understand the process, which involved transferring cars and adding my son to the policy. I am saving about \$300 a year on auto insurance and approximately \$250 on my home insurance, which was added to the policy. An automatic payment plan means additional savings and simplifies my life.'



Claire Cole's son, Joe.

— Claire Cole
Mansfield Education Association

It's never too early to begin estate planning

Deborah K. Blum-Shore is a popular presenter at events that bring retired educators together to network, listen and learn.

Blum-Shore, of the Shore Law Firm, has conducted workshops on topics such as life-care planning and estate preparation at several MTA Retired Members Gatherings.

"We have been thrilled with her presentations," MTA Retired Members Committee Chairwoman Kathleen Roberts says. "I've participated in her sessions and learned invaluable information."

Fellow committee member Gladys Durant has likewise been pleased. Durant was so impressed, in fact, that she invited Blum-Shore to attend a meeting of retirees in Attleboro, where she used to teach and where Blum-Shore's firm is located.

"Our group thought that she was outstanding," Durant says.

Blum-Shore, a member of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, has a bachelor's degree in psychology from Boston College and a law degree from the Northwestern University School of Law in Chicago. After returning to New England from the Midwest, she joined the Boston law firm of Warner and Stackpole, where she worked until she became an at-home mom to her two daughters.

Blum-Shore became interested in advocating for the rights and needs of seniors as she observed her mother's struggle to plan ahead for long-term care. After raising her children, she joined a small elder law firm in Medfield. In 2000, she and her husband, Peter Shore, founded the Shore Law Firm.

Jo Ann Fitzgerald, MTA's retired members service specialist, spoke to Blum-Shore several years ago about the possibility of meeting with retirees to provide an introduction to elder law.

"Her mother and other family members were teachers, and she knew about the challenges that our members face on a day-to-day basis," Fitzgerald notes. "She spoke not only about the legal issues confronting members, but also about the personal needs of individuals. She didn't view elder law as 'one size fits all.'"

Their interactions led to a professional relationship that continues today.

Blum-Shore urges her clients — and people in general — to begin making provisions for their potential needs early in life and to think in broad terms about issues that need to be addressed.

"We help to solve our clients' legal, financial and health care problems and to maximize their quality of life," Blum-Shore says.

Estate planning is vital, in her view.

"The essence of estate planning," Blum-Shore says, "is providing for your own disability and ensuring through your love, wisdom and

Steps to take

Elder law attorney Deborah K. Blum-Shore offers the following advice:

- ▶ Designate surrogates to make financial and health care decisions for you in the event that you are incapacitated.
- ▶ Ensure that your property and business interests will pass as you wish to your family instead of to the government in taxes.
- ▶ Determine who will care for your children and handle their finances if you pass away prematurely.
- ▶ Protect a disabled child's eligibility for government benefits.
- ▶ Take steps to ensure that the \$100,000-plus annual cost of nursing home care can be paid without wiping out a lifetime of savings.
- ▶ Become educated about whether to buy long-term care and supplemental insurance, and evaluate proposed policies.
- ▶ Become educated about public and private retirement and disability benefits.
- ▶ Enjoy each day confident that you have acted to protect yourself and your family.



Deborah K. Blum-Shore

resources that your loved ones will be cared for after you are gone in the same way you cared for them in life."

People often view such planning as something that only retirees or those near to retirement need to think about. Blum-Shore says it is never too early or too late to begin.

"Everyone 18 and up needs to have documents in place in case you are incapacitated for some reason," Blum-Shore says. "It is imperative that people have a durable power of attorney and a health care proxy. If you are incapacitated, decisions still need

to be made. Financial issues will need to be taken care of, and, of course, decisions about your health care will need to be made."

According to Blum-Shore, people who hold off on making choices while they are still healthy "run the risk of becoming incapacitated and having the decisions made in court through a guardianship proceeding."

"New teachers, as well as teachers about to retire, need to plan," Blum-Shore cautions.

"Estate planning is something that is a process throughout our lives," she

says. "It is a process that needs to start while we are young, and it must be reviewed throughout our lives as our needs and wishes change."

Asked to describe her typical client, Blum-Shore replies that no two are exactly alike.

"Our goal is to enable our clients to live free from concerns about the future," she says.

Blum-Shore will be offering workshops at the 8th Annual MTA Retired Members Gathering on Sept. 30 in Marlborough. Registration information will be available in July.

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Photo by Laura Barrett

Senator Susan Tucker (D-Andover) hands a citation to first-grader Neena Goldthwaite during a recent lobby day at the State House while Neena's library teacher, Nancy Snow of the Bancroft Elementary School in Andover, looks on. The event, held April 2, was sponsored by the Massachusetts Library Association and the Massachusetts School Library Association. Participants sought to convey the importance of library programs and called for state standards for school libraries that recognize their role in promoting 21st-century learning.

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Educators play vital role in fending off Right Wing

Continued from Page 4

looking for savings on employee benefits, pensions, compensation and staffing. Hard-liners argue that state deficits — which are projected nationally into the next two years, at least — offer an opportunity to permanently cut the size of government and scale back services.

So what's standing in the way of a radical small-government anti-public-school agenda?

Consider how critical MTA members were in educating voters about the devastating impact of Question 1 and defeating the measure at the ballot box. In Massachusetts and nationally, educators have been the roadblock, the sensible voice, in holding up the "reforms" that Norquist and other anti-public-education advocates envision for America.

If anti-government groups hope to have any success in the next few years, they will need to silence or diminish the influence of public education's strongest defenders. While the Right has taken a substantial hit on the national political landscape — progressives dominate statehouses, the Congress and the presidency — leaders of the "small government" movement will continue the same distract-and-destroy strategy to advocate their agenda.

They will produce "research" from Right-funded groups such as the American Legislative Exchange Council, the organization of conservative state legislators, to cite school spending as a leading culprit in state budget problems. They will be the loudest voices in pushing for reduced pensions for public employees, for cutting classroom expenses, for privatizing school services and for steering money from public schools to charter schools or private schools. Their hope is that their arguments will gain traction in a faltering economy.

They will fight hard against

card-check legislation in Congress and continue state-by-state efforts to weaken union rules and worker benefits — making proposals designed to knock educators off their message favoring public schools and public higher education.

And they will continue demonizing educators through groups such as the Center for Union Facts, a corporate- and Right Wing-financed group that last year mocked educators by identifying the "10 Worst Teachers" and offering each \$10,000 to retire from the profession.

Massachusetts has long played a key role in the struggle over spending, public education and the right of educators to speak effectively in a collective voice. Some of the nation's earliest Right Wing think tanks, such as the Pioneer Institute, and their leaders have worked in Massachusetts and elsewhere to support ballot measures, advocacy campaigns and political action committees aimed at reducing and privatizing government.

It's no coincidence that some of these same local players were involved in efforts launched more than a decade ago to cut off funding for teachers' unions through ballot initiatives and legislation to impose curbs on the use of union dues. They're now updating their messages for 2009 and adding their voices to the clamor for smaller government. Inevitably, the Right Wing will continue trying to make educators a target because they seek to protect school resources.

But back to Norquist and his "do it in Massachusetts, do it anywhere" mentality. It inspires us to remind public education supporters nationally that the same goes for beating back ill-conceived tax-cutting plans that would starve schools.

Educators were critical in making sure it didn't happen in Massachusetts. They hold the key to making sure it doesn't happen anywhere else.

Kerry provision ensures retirees get checks

Continued from Page 13

fix the provision so that all retirees would be eligible. The Senate version of the recovery bill, however, did not include the payments.

When the bill was being negotiated by a joint House-Senate conference committee, Kerry continued his fight for retirees. Fellow members of the Massachusetts congressional delegation joined the effort, and the Kerry amendment was eventually included in the final version of the bill.

Without that change, MTA Retired members and other retired public employees in the Commonwealth would not have been eligible for the \$250 payments because Massachusetts is one of 15 states in which public employees do not participate in the Social Security system.

When the bill was being negotiated by a joint House-Senate conference committee, Kerry continued his fight for retirees.

Members who earned Social Security benefits from jobs covered by Social Security will receive the one-time payment by June 4. The money will be delivered the same way that each retiree's Social Security benefit is currently delivered.

Members who do not receive Social Security benefits may need to file a 2009 tax return to collect the benefit. This process is still being formulated.



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New higher ed contracts feature gains in some areas

Continued from Page 9

with three years of service to buy back a week of unused vacation time. The MSCA was able to secure money to correct and increase the lower salaries of some senior faculty members. The contract negotiated by MSP-Lowell includes increased stipends for unit members teaching continuing education classes and progress in the amount paid to graduate coordinators.

"It's been a long time coming,"

CSU President Shauna Manning said. "We are really looking forward to putting our energies into other areas. We've been negotiating contracts in higher ed continuously since 2004, and it takes time away from organizing and professional development — things that will help to build our union."

Thanks to the work of the Professional Staff Union, all of the UMass contracts negotiated by the MTA include an improved tuition waiver benefit that allows the families

of UMass employees to take classes at a rate that will remain frozen until 2012.

"I'm pleased with the work of the bargaining team, which held firm in these difficult economic times," said PSU Co-President Kathy Rhines.

The agreements reached by the MTA affiliates were divided into two parts: a one-year extension of the current contract and a three-year contract that will begin on July 1.

In related news, the MTA has launched efforts to beat back legislation

to increase the amount that state employees, including those working in public higher education, pay for health insurance. The MTA is organizing a lobbying campaign to defeat a proposal for a three-tier system for paying health insurance premiums that would require most MTA higher ed members to take cuts in pay.

Visit the MTA Web site, www.massteacher.org, for updates on contract talks involving higher education units.

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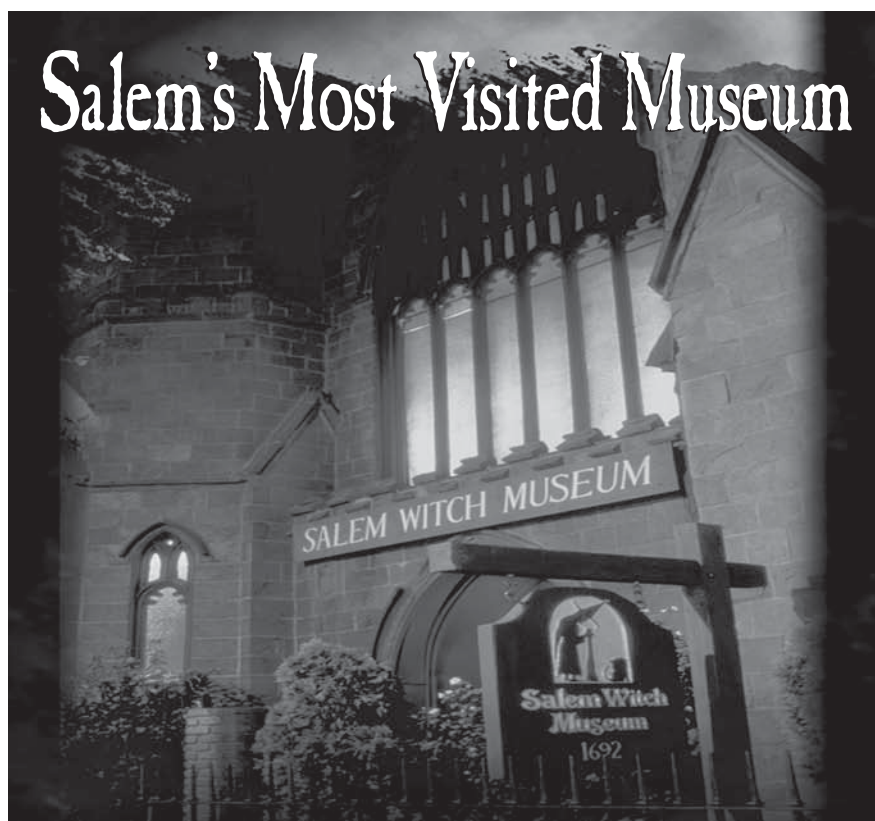
Summer Session II: July 6 – August 7

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Delegates to vote on budget and proposals for organizing

By Meg Secatore

More than 1,100 MTA members are expected to pick up delegate credentials for MTA's 164th Annual Meeting, which will be held May 1-2 in Boston.

They will represent locals and chapters across the state, as well as retired and student members. There are 12 new seats this year for college student members of the Student Education Association of Massachusetts, following a vote of the delegates to the 2008 meeting.

Preconvention meetings, one in each of MTA's five regions, were held in April to brief elected delegates on budgetary, business and parliamentary items that will be considered.

The session on Friday, May 1, opens at 12:30 p.m. with several business items and a forum titled "The Union's Role in Education Innovation." Adam Urbanski, president of the Rochester, N.Y., Teachers Association and a vice president of the AFT, will speak at the beginning of the forum. Urbanski is a founder of TURN — the Teacher Urban Reform Network — which describes itself as "a union-led effort to restructure teachers' unions to help promote the kinds of reforms that will eventually lead to better learning and higher achievement for all students." A prolific commentator and writer on public education issues, Urbanski most recently co-wrote an article called "Partnering with Teacher Unions for School Improvement" for *The Whole-Faculty Study Groups Fieldbook*.

Also on Friday, delegates will debate and vote on several proposed resolutions.

Bylaw changes to be considered by the delegates include a proposal to enroll employees of "private

The Saturday business meeting will open with two award presentations. George Watson, the 2008-2009 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, will be recognized. Watson, a Spanish teacher and head of the Department of Foreign Languages at Walpole High School, will talk about his Teacher of the Year experiences. The MTA Friend of Education Award will be presented to Norma Shapiro, legislative director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts.

employers engaged in early childhood education" and charter school employees. Other proposed Bylaw revisions would add an ESP member to the Executive Committee and change the terms of office of MTA officers. Leadership reports will be delivered by President Anne Wass and Vice President Paul Toner. Executive Director-Treasurer David A. Borer will give his first Annual Meeting report.

The Saturday business meeting opens with two award presentations. George Watson, the 2008-2009 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, will be recognized. Watson, a Spanish teacher and head of the Department of Foreign Languages at Walpole High School, will talk about his Teacher of the Year experiences. The MTA Friend of Education Award will be presented to Norma Shapiro, legislative director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts.

As a lobbyist, Shapiro has worked on a range of issues, including public education funding and school safety. She is president of the Council for Fair School Finance and has presided over

the council's work on the landmark school funding court cases *McDuffy v. Secretary of Education* and *Hancock v. Commissioner of Education*.

The Saturday business session will take up the proposed budget, as well as new business items. The MTA Board of Directors, following recommendations by the Executive Committee and the Advisory Budget Committee, will propose annual dues of \$424 — a \$27 increase — for full-time members. The recommended dues increase will be partially offset by a recommended \$10 decrease in the annual assessment for the Public Relations/Organizing Campaign budget, producing a net increase of \$17. Recommended dues for secretaries, clerks and custodians would be \$255; dues for aides, food service and others would be \$128.

The Annual Meeting Exposition — a floor full of booths offering goods and services of interest to educators — may be the last of its size. The budget to be voted on by the delegates includes the elimination of commercial exhibits at the Annual Meeting — one of many budget cuts proposed to save money.

The 2009 Expo will be open from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Friday.

As in years past, the Human and Civil Rights Awards Banquet will kick off the events surrounding the Annual Meeting. The banquet will be held on Thursday, April 30.



Adam Urbanski



George Watson



Norma Shapiro

In this issue:

- ✓ **Pages 25-26**
Information on candidates for Board, Exec Committee
- ✓ **Pages 27-28**
Information on proposals to amend MTA Resolutions
- ✓ **Pages 29-31**
Information on proposals to amend Standing Rules, Bylaws
- ✓ **Page 32**
Annual Report of the Executive Director-Treasurer

The Human and Civil Rights Committee will honor Horace Seldon with the Louise Gaskins Lifetime Civil Rights Award and the Creative Leadership in Human Rights Award. Seldon is a civil rights activist and a professor and founder of Community Change Inc. The Creative Leadership in Human Rights Award will be presented to MTA member Jacqueline M. Coogan, a retired teacher from Everett. Coogan will be recognized for her work with youth in Everett and her efforts to ensure health care for children in her region.

The Massachusetts Child will present its Exemplary Benefactor Award to Alan Jacobson, a past president of the MTA-sponsored charity and a guidance counselor at Waltham High School. The Boston Gay Men's Chorus, which was the winner of an HCR award in 2008, will provide entertainment.

The photo of Norma Shapiro appears courtesy of Marilyn Humphries.

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164th Annual Meeting of Delegates Convention and Exposition

APRIL 30 - MAY 2, 2009

HYNES CONVENTION CENTER
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



Connecting 2009

Pursuing Excellence for All

Exposition Opportunities

Friday, May 1
8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Pre-Retirement Consultations: Schedule an individual consultation with one of MTA's pre-retirement consultants on the important issues facing everyone who is considering retiring (such as pensions, Social Security and group health benefits programs).

Innovative Educational Exhibitors: Access to the latest technology, services and information.

Networking: Say "hello" again, or perhaps for the first time, as we share ideas. Let's remember that we already share something that is most important of all: our dedication to quality public education.

New This Year! **Sponsor Passport:** Each attendee will have the opportunity to earn a Prudential Center lunch voucher, an \$8.50 value, by stopping by each sponsor's booth and having a "Sponsor Passport" card stamped.

Online
Event Registration
www.massteacher.org/am2009

Event Overview

The 164th Annual Meeting of Delegates Convention and Exposition will feature three exciting days of events and activities, certain to interest all members and delegates alike.

★ Thursday, April 30

~ The Annual MTA Human & Civil Rights Awards Dinner.

★ Friday, May 1

~ Exposition – Evaluate the latest tools, trends and technologies.
~ Annual Meeting Business Session – See your association at work.

★ Saturday, May 2

~ Presentation of Awards – MTA Special Recognition Award for Massachusetts Teacher of the Year and MTA Friend of Education Award.
~ Candidate Elections.
~ Annual Meeting Business Session.



Human & Civil Rights Awards Dinner

Thursday, April 30

Sheraton Boston Hotel and Towers
Republic Ballroom, 2nd Floor

6:30 p.m. ~ Cocktail Reception

7:30 p.m. ~ Dinner

8:30 p.m. ~ Awards

\$50 per person

No telephone reservations will be accepted.
Register online until April 27th at
www.massteacher.org/am2009



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

THURSDAY, APRIL 30

Noon – 5 p.m. Hynes Hall A, 1st Floor
Exhibitor Registration for Exposition

5:30 – 7 p.m. Sheraton Boston Hotel, Back Bay Ballroom D, 2nd Floor
Board of Directors' Special Meeting

6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Sheraton Boston Hotel, Republic Ballroom, 2nd Floor
Human and Civil Rights Awards Cocktail Reception

7 – 8:30 p.m. Sheraton Boston Hotel, Hampton Room, 3rd Floor
Credentials and Ballot Committee Meeting

7:30 – 10 p.m. Sheraton Boston Hotel, Republic Ballroom, 2nd Floor
Human and Civil Rights Awards Dinner and Recognition of Local Presidents

FRIDAY, MAY 1

6:30 – 7:30 a.m. Hynes Hall A, 1st Floor
Exhibitor Registration for Exposition

7:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. Hynes Plaza Level, Main Lobby
Emergency Medical Technician

7:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. Hynes Ballroom Reception Area, 3rd Floor
Information Booth and Message Center

7:45 a.m. – 6 p.m. Hynes Rooms 304-306
Delegate and Non-Delegate Registration

8 – 10 a.m. Hynes Hall A, 1st Floor
Coffee and Baked Goods

8 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Hynes Hall A, 1st Floor
Exposition

8 a.m. – 6 p.m. Hynes Ballroom Reception Area, 3rd Floor
Boston Concierge Service Desk

10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Hynes Rooms 101, 102, 103, 104
Caucus Rooms

11 a.m. Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor
Business Session Doors Open

11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Hynes Ballroom (Bylaws and Rules Committee Table)
Final Deadline: Submit Proposed Amendments to the Standing Rules

12:30 – 4 p.m. Hynes Hall A, 1st Floor
Dismantling of Exhibits

12:30 p.m. Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor
Business Session Convenes

4 p.m. on Sheraton, Back Bay Hilton, Colonnade, Embassy Suites Logan
Hotel Registration for Local Presidents

Prior to Recess Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor (ABC Table)
Friday Deadline: New Business Items WITHOUT Budgetary Implications

Prior to Recess Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor (ABC Table)
Final Deadline: New Business Items WITH Budgetary Implications

Prior to Recess Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor (Resolutions Committee Table)
Final Deadline: Proposed Resolutions

6 p.m. (Approximately) Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor
Business Session Recesses

6 p.m. on Sheraton, Back Bay Hilton, Colonnade, Embassy Suites Logan
Hotel Check-in for Delegates

6 – 7 p.m. Hynes Rooms 304-306
Credentials and Ballot Committee Debriefing

6 – 7 p.m. Hynes Room 102
Resolutions Committee Meeting

6 – 8 p.m. Hynes Room 101
New Business Review Meeting

6:15 – 7 p.m. Hynes Rooms 107, 108, 109, 110
Candidate Speeches for Contested Seats

Board District 7B: Hynes Room 108

Board District 10B: Hynes Room 109

Board District 44H: Hynes Room 110

Retired Members Committee: Hynes Room 107

7 p.m. on Boston Restaurants and Cultural Venues
Dinner and Evening Events (On Your Own)

9 p.m. on Kings Lanes~Lounge~Billiards (Across the Street from the Sheraton)
Late Night Hangout at Kings

SATURDAY, MAY 2

8 a.m. Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor
Business Session Doors Open

8 – 11 a.m. Hynes Rooms 304-306
Delegate and Non-Delegate Registration

8 – 11 a.m. Hynes Room 311
Election: Polls Open

8 a.m. – Noon Hynes Ballroom Reception Area, 3rd Floor
Information Booth and Message Center

8 a.m. – Noon Hynes Ballroom Reception Area, 3rd Floor
Boston Concierge Service Desk

8 a.m. – Adjournment Hynes Rooms 101, 102, 103, 104
Caucus Rooms

8 a.m. – Adjournment Hynes Plaza Level, Main Lobby
Emergency Medical Technician

9 a.m. Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor
Business Session Reconvenes

9 – 9:30 a.m. Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor
Presentation of Awards

10 a.m. (Approximately) Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor (Podium)
Saturday Final Deadline: New Business Items WITHOUT Budgetary Implications

10:55 a.m. Hynes Room 311
Admittance/Briefing of Observers

11 a.m. Hynes Room 311
Election: Polls Close

11 a.m. Sheraton, Back Bay Hilton, Colonnade, Embassy Suites Logan
Hotel Checkout

11 a.m. – Noon Hynes Room 311
Election Tabulation

11:15 a.m. – Adjournment Hynes Ballroom Reception Area, 3rd Floor
Non-Delegate Registration

11:15 a.m. – Adjournment Hynes Ballroom Reception Area, 3rd Floor
Late Delegate Seating

12:15 p.m. (Approximately) Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor (Podium)
Election Results Announced

1 – 1:30 p.m. Hynes Room 311
Runoff Election: Polls Reopen (If Necessary)

1:25 p.m. Hynes Room 311
Admittance of Observers (If Necessary)

1:30 – 2 p.m. Hynes Room 311
Runoff Election Tabulation (If Necessary)

2 p.m. Hynes Ballroom, 3rd Floor (Podium)
Runoff Election Results Announced (If Necessary)

BUSINESS SESSION ADJOURNS



BUSINESS SESSION AGENDA

FRIDAY, MAY 1

12:30 P.M. TO APPROXIMATELY 6 P.M.

1. Call to Order
Anne Wass, President, Presiding
2. Pledge of Allegiance
Paul Toner, Vice President
3. The Star-Spangled Banner
Anthony DeCicco, Leominster High School Student;
Musical Accompaniment by Robert Landry,
Leominster Teachers Association
4. Moment of Remembrance
5. Announcements
Anne Wass, President
6. Adopt the Preliminary Credentials Report (Quorum)
Maurice Bracken, Chair, Credentials and Ballot Committee
7. Adopt the Order of Business
8. Act on Proposed Amendments to the MTA Standing Rules
Chrissy Reeder, Chair, Bylaws and Rules Committee
9. Report on Certified Candidates
Maurice Bracken, Chair, Credentials and Ballot Committee
10. Annual Meeting Video
11. MTA Leadership Report
Anne Wass, President, and Paul Toner, Vice President
12. Greetings
Tom Gosnell, President, AFT Massachusetts
13. Act on Proposed Amendments to the MTA Bylaws
Chrissy Reeder, Chair, Bylaws and Rules Committee
14. Issues Forum — The Union's Role in Education Innovation
Adam Urbanski, President, Rochester (N.Y.) Teachers Assn.
15. Act on Proposed Resolutions
Ted Kempinski, Chair, Resolutions Committee
16. Report of the Executive Director-Treasurer
David A. Borer, Executive Director-Treasurer
17. Grants to MTA for the MTA Red Sox Reading Game and the MTA Boston Celtics Honor Roll Program
18. Act on Proposed New Business Items
19. Report on Public Relations/Organizing Campaign
Paul Toner, Vice President and Co-Chair of the Public Relations/Organizing Campaign Committee
20. Adopt the Supplemental Credentials Report
Maurice Bracken, Chair, Credentials and Ballot Committee
21. Statewide Candidate Speech
22. Recess

SATURDAY, MAY 2

9 A.M. TO ADJOURNMENT (NO LUNCH BREAK)

23. Call to Order
24. Announcements
Anne Wass, President
25. Adopt the Supplemental Credentials Report
Maurice Bracken, Chair, Credentials and Ballot Committee
26. Presentation of MTA Special Recognition Award for the Recipient of the 2009 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Award
George Watson, Walpole Teachers Association
27. Presentation of MTA Friend of Education Award
Norma Shapiro, Legislative Director, American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts
28. Act on Proposed New Business Items
WITH Budgetary Implications
29. Recommendations of the MTA Board of Directors on the Annual Budget in Two Parts from Which the Annual Dues Will Be Determined for FY 2009-2010
Paul Toner, Vice President, and Chair of the Advisory Budget Committee
 - a. Presentation and Discussion on the Recommended Operating Budget
 - b. Act on the Annual Operating Budget
 - c. Presentation and Discussion on the Public Relations/Organizing Campaign Budget
 - d. Act on the Proposed Public Relations/Organizing Campaign Budget
Article IV, Section 1C of the MTA Bylaws: The adoption of the budget will automatically determine the annual dues for active members rounded to the next higher dollar amount.
30. Adopt the Results of the Election
Maurice Bracken, Chair, Credentials and Ballot Committee
31. Adopt the Results of Any Runoff Election (If Necessary)
Maurice Bracken, Chair, Credentials and Ballot Committee
32. Adopt the Final Credentials Report
Maurice Bracken, Chair, Credentials and Ballot Committee
33. Act on Proposed New Business Items WITHOUT Budgetary Implications
34. Act on Additional Proposed Resolutions (If Necessary)
Ted Kempinski, Chair, Resolutions Committee
35. Announcements and Points of Personal Privilege
36. VOTE Giveaway
37. Adjournment



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Sharon M. DeCicco



Bernadette Marso

CONTEST FOR DISTRICT 7B

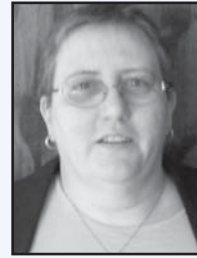


Leonard A. Zalauskas



Cheryl DelSignore

CONTEST FOR DISTRICT 10B



Sharron L. Gillies



Margaret Wong

CONTEST FOR DISTRICT 44H

Three contests emerge for Board seats

Many candidates declared elected

All candidates for the MTA Executive Committee and many candidates for the Board of Directors have been declared elected under the association's election waiver, but the Annual Meeting will feature two-way contests for Board seats in District 7B, 10B and 44H.

In District 7B, the contest is between Sharon M. DeCicco of the Ashburnham-Westminster Teachers Association and Bernadette Marso of the Leominster Education Association.

In District 10B, the contest is between Leonard A. Zalauskas and Cheryl DelSignore, both members of the Educational Association of Worcester.

In District 44H, the contest is between Sharron L. Gillies and Margaret Wong, both members of the Massachusetts Community College Council.

The election waiver provides that if there is only one candidate for an open position, the candidate will be declared elected. The candidates declared elected because of the election waiver included in the MTA Bylaws include the following:



Susan D. Baker



Robert Becker



Russell Brandwein



Rosemary Jebari



Kathleen Meltsakos

BOARD OF DIRECTORS DECLARED ELECTED



Kerry A. Costello



Mary J. Gilmore



Gerard Ruane



Beth Stafford

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE DECLARED ELECTED

Not Pictured: Dorothy O'Donnell Verdy, Katherine Swanson, Dorothy Scally, Stephen G. Olbrys Gencarella and Richard McDermott

Executive Committee — Region C, Beth Stafford, Whitman-Hanson; Region F, Kerry A. Costello, Andover; Region G, Gerard Ruane, Malden; and Statewide Retired Region, Mary J. Gilmore, Retired. There is no candidate in Region A. Stafford, Costello, Ruane and Gilmore will serve two-year terms that begin July 1.

Board of Directors — At-Large Director to Represent Ethnic Minority

Membership, Susan D. Baker, Falmouth; District 9B, Robert Becker, Wachusett Regional; District 14D, Rosemary Jebari, Framingham; District 28D, Dorothy O'Donnell Verdy, Millis; District 30E, Katherine Swanson, Canton; District 23F, Kathleen Meltsakos, Pentucket; District 25F, Russell Brandwein, Saugus; District 19G, Dorothy Scally, Somerville; District 46H, Stephen G. Olbrys

Gencarella, MSP/FSU; and District 47H, Richard McDermott, APA.

There are no candidates in Districts 1A, 35C, 42C and 32D. The new Board terms begin July 1 and last for three years.

Candidates who supplied photos are pictured with this article. The biographical statements of candidates who supplied them appear on this page and Page 26.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REGION C

Beth Stafford, Whitman-Hanson

I am running for Executive Committee representing Region C. I am currently on the Board of Directors, where I am on the Board Bargaining Team and Retirement Plan Committee. I also serve as chair of the Task Force for State Revenue Enhancement. I am a social studies teacher and chair of the negotiating team at Whitman-Hanson. I am a former selectman and school committee member. These are critical times for MTA members, and I will work to make sure that we are at the forefront of legislative issues and decisions. We must work together to assure that our voices are heard. Thank you.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REGION G

Gerard Ruane, Malden

I have been honored to represent you for the last two years. This has been a difficult yet exciting time for education. I ask for your vote and support so I may continue representing you for the next three years. Thank you.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REGION F

Kerry A. Costello, Andover

As your Executive Committee member for Region F, I will continue to advocate for your needs and to bring your concerns forward at the governance level. Public education is the foundation upon which the Republic stands. Let us stand together with pride and without apology. I appreciate the privilege of continuing to serve as your elected representative.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

STATEWIDE RETIRED REGION

Mary J. Gilmore, MTA Retired

Thank you for allowing me to represent you on the MTA Executive Committee for the last two years. I am asking for your vote to continue representing you. I share your commitment to advancing the agenda of the MTA and MTA Retired. Our efforts on Question 1 did not go unnoticed. Together we can achieve anything!



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 7B

Sharon M. DeCicco, Ashburnham-Westminster

I will offer fresh ideas and perspectives while embracing successful past practices. During my eight years of teaching, I've been active in MTA activities and education reform. I pledge to work diligently to protect the advancements we have made as a union. It would be an honor to represent you.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 7B

Bernadette Marso, Leominster

I have been president of the Leominster Education Association for six years, and workshops, meetings, trainings and leadership conferences have been integral to my presidency. I currently serve on the 2009 Advisory Budget Committee and GLBT committee. Leadership excellence and achievement exemplify my guiding principles.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 10B

Leonard A. Zalauskas, Worcester

I would like to continue to represent you on the MTA Board. I have the experience to work for you on such issues as finding ways to cut MTA expenses in order to lower our dues. I would be able to give my full attention to giving Worcester top service.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 10B

Cheryl DeSignore, Worcester

I am running for MTA Board of Directors and am asking for your vote. I will be a strong voice for Worcester educators. Now more than ever we need a strong union. I will represent you and your interests at the state level. Thank you.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 44H

Sharron L. Gillies, MCCC

Professor, coordinator of Energy Utilities Technology Department at QCC; chair of MCCC Nominations and Elections; member of QCC Bylaws; graduate of MTA leadership academy; attended MCCC, MTA and most NEA annual meetings since 1991; proud community college graduate.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 44H

Margaret Wong, MCCC

I am on several MTA committees, participate regularly in MTA leadership events, served three years as MCCC director, am currently chapter president at QCC, and have worked closely with MSCA and UMass leaders through PHENOM. I will bring capable and informed MCCC and higher education representation to the MTA BOD.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AT-LARGE ETHNIC MINORITY SEAT

Susan D. Baker, Falmouth

I am Susan Baker, Falmouth teacher. As the current chair of the Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee, I am running for At-Large Director to Represent Ethnic-Minority Membership. My goal is to serve the membership of the MTA while encouraging and empowering minorities to be active members of our union.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 9B

Robert Becker, Wachusett Regional

As a classroom teacher for 20-plus years and as an active member of my local association for much of that time, including being president, I feel that I have both the experience and the knowledge to continue to represent 9B. I would very much appreciate your consideration. Thank you.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 28D

Dorothy O'Donnell Verdy, Millis

I currently represent Region 28D on the Board of Directors and am finishing my first full term. I have enjoyed serving on the Board and look forward to continuing my representation of my region. Locally, I serve as president of the Millis Teachers Association. Thank you for your support.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 30E

Katherine Swanson, Canton

I am currently serving as the district director for 30E. I have been very active in my local, serving as president, vice president and a member of various committees. I enjoy the work on the MTA Board of Directors and, with your support, I look forward to continuing to serve.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 23F

Kathleen Meltsakos, Pentucket

My local union activities include building rep., Executive Board member and contract negotiations. State-level involvement includes MTA ESP Committee and Strategic Action Committee. The members of 23F need a powerful and committed voice at the state level; with your support and vote, I will be that voice. Thank you.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 25F

Russell Brandwein, Saugus

I am Russ Brandwein, running for re-election as District 25F director. I have been a union activist at local and MTA levels for years. Our strength is the activism of the rank and file, most often triggered by the dedicated work of local presidents. I endorse and support them unequivocally.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 47H

Richard McDermott, APA

I currently serve as president of the Association of Professional Administrators (APA). As an MTA Board member, I serve on the Retirement Committee and the Building Task Force. It is an honor to do so. I would greatly appreciate your support and your vote. Thank you.



Amendments to resolutions are recommended

The primary focus of MTA's Resolutions Committee this year has been bringing older resolutions up to date. The committee met once in the fall and again for two days in February to discuss the resolutions, propose amendments and vote on which changes to recommend.

On March 20, the MTA Board of Directors recommended adoption of the committee's proposed changes, with the exception that the board recommended additional editorial changes and the following two substantive amendments.

■ Proposed amendment to F-10: Change the title to "Equal Employment Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities."

■ Proposed amendment to F-20: Change paragraph b. to read: "b. The right to be notified of any addition to an employee's personnel records prior to placement of those materials in the personnel records."

The proposed resolutions will be voted on at MTA's Annual Meeting of Delegates.

In addition, delegates may submit new proposed resolutions at the Annual Meeting until the close of business on Friday, May 1.

Any proposals submitted will be considered by the committee on Friday and, if recommended by the committee, will be placed before the delegates the following day.

A copy of the current resolutions is available on the MTA Web site, www.massteacher.org.

The members of the committee are Chairman Theodore Kempinski, Janet Johnson, Teresa Barut, Kathleen Comer, Dorothy Scally, Diana Marcus and Sandra Moriarty. Laura Barrett is the staff consultant, and Janice Morrissey is the staff assistant.

The resolutions to which amendments are proposed are printed below and on Page 28. In instances where the proposal is to amend an existing resolution, the current version is shown first, followed by the modified version. Sections with lines through them are proposed for elimination, while underlined sections represent proposed additions.

Current Resolution C-7

C-7 Administration of Medication and Nursing Procedures

The Massachusetts Teachers Association urges all school committees to establish policies and procedures for students who must use prescribed and/or over-the-counter medication or who need other nursing services during school hours.

The MTA believes that only registered nurses should administer such medication or perform such nursing services.

The MTA further believes that school personnel have the right to refuse without fear of disciplinary repercussions to administer or to delegate to others the administration of medications and/or other nursing services.

The MTA also urges the Massachusetts Legislature to enact into law appropriate legislation that will protect school personnel from all liability when the adopted procedure is followed and if school personnel refuse to administer medication under any other circumstances. (89, 94)

Proposed new C-7

C-7 Administration of Medication and Nursing Procedures

The Massachusetts Teachers Association urges all school committees to establish policies and procedures for students who must use prescribed and/or over-the-counter medication or who need other nursing services during school hours.

The MTA believes that only registered nurses or other properly trained and authorized staff should administer such medication or perform such nursing services.

The MTA further believes that non-nursing school personnel have the right to refuse, without fear of disciplinary repercussions, to administer or to delegate to others the administration of medications and/or other nursing services in non-emergency situations.

The MTA also urges the Massachusetts Legislature to enact into law appropriate legislation that will protect school personnel from all liability when the adopted procedure is followed and if school personnel refuse to administer medication under any other circumstances. (89, 94, 09)

Current Resolution D-5

D-5 Qualified Person in Every Professional Position

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that all educational professionals must have the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their duties. Therefore, the MTA insists that every professional position, including specialized positions, must be filled by an educator holding the appropriate credentials. (77, 81, 93)

Proposed New D-5

D-5 Qualified Person in Every Professional Position

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that all educational professionals must have the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their duties. Therefore, the MTA insists that every professional position, including specialized positions, must be filled by an educator holding the appropriate credentials.

The MTA also believes in the importance of employing licensed teachers to fulfill the critical role of substitute teachers, especially for long-term absences. Long-term absences for licensed specialists, such as librarians, counselors, nurses and music specialists, must be filled by substitutes who hold the required specialty licenses. [This paragraph moved from F-2] (77, 81, 93, 09)

Current Resolution D-6

D-6 Code of Ethics

The Massachusetts Teachers Association reaffirms the responsibility of all members of the education profession to become knowledgeable about the *Code of Ethics of the Education Profession* and the existing procedures for its enforcement, and to adhere to its principles. (73, 76)

Proposed New D-6

D-6 Code of Ethics

The Massachusetts Teachers Association reaffirms the responsibility of all members of the education profession to become knowledgeable about its support for the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession and the existing procedures for its enforcement; and urges members to familiarize themselves with the code and adhere to its principles. (73, 76, 09)

Current D-15

D-15 Teacher Licensure

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts alone has the authority to award or deny teacher licensure. (00)

Proposed New D-15

D-15 Teacher Licensure

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

Current F-2

F-2 Education Professionals, Substitutes and Education Support Professionals: Compensation and Working Conditions

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that substitutes and education support professionals perform a vital function in the continuity of daily education, are essential to the maintenance of daily operations, and should be accorded the same rights and respect as all other members of the teaching staff.

The MTA recognizes that current levels of compensation and existing working conditions for education professionals, substitutes, and education support professionals are inadequate, unrealistic, and often demeaning. Therefore, the MTA strongly urges the adoption of competitive salary levels and appropriate working conditions for all education professionals, substitutes and education support professionals.

The MTA also believes in the importance of employing certified teachers to fulfill the critical role of substitute teachers, especially for long-term absences. Long-term absences for certified specialists, such as librarians, counselors, nurses, music specialists, etc. must be filled by substitutes who hold the required specialty licenses. (88, 93, 02)

Proposed New F-2

F-2 Education Professionals, Substitutes and Education Support Professionals: Compensation and Working Conditions

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that substitutes and education support professionals perform a vital function in the continuity of daily education, are essential to the maintenance of daily operations, and should be accorded the same rights and respect as all other members of the teaching staff.

The MTA recognizes that current levels of compensation and existing working conditions for many education professionals, substitutes, and education support professionals are inadequate, unrealistic, and often demeaning. Therefore, the MTA strongly urges the adoption of competitive salary levels and appropriate working conditions for all education professionals, substitutes and education support professionals.

The MTA also believes in the importance of employing certified teachers to fulfill the critical role of substitute teachers, especially for long-term absences. Long-term absences for certified specialists, such as librarians, counselors, nurses, music specialists, etc. must be filled by substitutes who hold the required specialty licenses. [This paragraph moved to D-5.]

Salaries for the lowest paid school personnel should, at a minimum, be sufficient to provide them with a living wage. A

living wage is the lowest salary level required to enable a family to be economically self-sufficient based on the cost of living in the community. (88, 93, 02, 09)

Current F-6

F-6 Reorganization and Reduction in Force

The Massachusetts Teachers Association strongly condemns those school committees and boards of trustees in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts which, under the guise of economy, are jeopardizing the education of young people and adults by unilaterally and arbitrarily reducing staff, resulting in increasing class size and decreasing or eliminating relevant educational programs.

The MTA insists that no plan for the regionalization or reorganization of any public educational system, including colleges and universities, should be put into effect unless the plan has had the full participation of the faculty and Association of the institutions affected. Furthermore, the MTA condemns any plan which is designed to eliminate personnel or positions.

Additionally, the MTA recognizes that many educational personnel who are not of an age or inclination to apply for early retirement continue to hold positions as teachers primarily because they believe changing careers to be impractical or impossible. When reduction in force occurs, the MTA believes that state and local authorities should provide programs that assist personnel to develop new careers. (78, 79, 81, 84, 86, 88, 91)

Proposed New F-6

F-6 Reorganization and Reduction in Force

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The MTA insists that no plan for the regionalization or reorganization of any public educational system, including colleges and universities, should be put into effect unless the plan has had the full participation of the faculty and Association of the institutions affected. Furthermore, the MTA condemns any plan which is designed to eliminate personnel or positions.

Additionally, the MTA recognizes that many educational personnel who are not of an age or inclination to apply for early retirement continue to hold positions as teachers primarily because they believe changing careers to be impractical or impossible. When reductions in force occurs, the MTA believes that state and local authorities should provide programs that assist personnel to develop new careers. (78, 79, 81, 84, 86, 88, 91, 09)

Current F-10

F-10 Equal Employment Opportunities for Physically Challenged Personnel

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that discrimination against personnel who are physically challenged should be eliminated. The right to equal employment opportunity in the education profession should be available to all certified educational personnel. (75, 85, 86)

Proposed New F-10

F-10 Equal Employment Opportunities for Physically Challenged Personnel

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that discrimination against personnel who are physically challenged should be eliminated supports the Americans with Disabilities Act and other related laws and regulations that outlaw employment discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. The right to equal employment opportunity in the education profession should be available to all certified licensed educational personnel. (75, 85, 86, 09)



Amendments to resolutions are recommended

Continued from Page 27

Current F-11

F-11 Retirement

The Massachusetts Teachers Association shall continue to seek improvement in the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System including increased payment, lowered retirement age, and lowered length of service.

The MTA strongly disapproves of any action by the state Legislature or by the Congress of the United States which would reduce retirement rights and benefits currently accruing to educational personnel under the present Massachusetts retirement system.

The MTA supports a retirement system that provides for:

- autonomous board of trustees, the majority of whom are elected by and from the membership;
- automatic cost-of-living increases to retirees and beneficiaries;
- purchase of credit for all approved leaves as well as for unused sick leave;
- eligibility for full payment of benefits at age 55 with 30 years of service; and
- full funding of the pension liability by the state.

The MTA believes that provisions must be made for comprehensive health insurance for all retired education employees and their spouses or domestic partners and that the state and/or local community contribute at least 50 percent of the premium costs.

The MTA further believes that domestic partners should have available to them the same retirement benefit options as are available to married individuals. (90, 99, 01)

Proposed New F-11

F-11 Retirement

The Massachusetts Teachers Association shall continue to seek improvement in the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System including increased payment, lowered retirement age, and lowered length of service and ~~The MTA strongly disapproves of any action by the state Legislature or by the Congress of the United States which would reduce retirement rights and benefits currently accruing to educational personnel under the present Massachusetts retirement system of Massachusetts educators.~~

The MTA supports a retirement system that provides for:

- autonomous board of trustees, the majority of whom are elected by and from the membership;
- automatic cost-of-living increases adjustments for to retirees and beneficiaries that reflect actual increases in the cost of living;
- purchase of credit for all approved leaves; as well as for unused sick leave;
- eligibility for full payment of benefits at age 55 with 30 years of service; and
- full funding of the pension liability by the state.

The MTA believes that provisions must be made for comprehensive health insurance for all retired education employees and their spouses or domestic partners and that the state and/or local community should contribute at least 50 percent of the premium costs.

The MTA further believes that domestic partners should have available to them the same retirement benefit options as are available to married individuals. (90, 99, 01, 09)

Current F-16

F-16 Administrator Rights

The Massachusetts Teachers Association supports the contractual and statutory rights of school administrators and will continue to assume a leadership role in providing and protecting the contractual and statutory rights of school administrators. (77, 97)

Proposed New F-16

F-16 Administrator Rights

The Massachusetts Teachers Association supports the contractual and statutory rights of school administrators represented in collective bargaining and will continue to assume a leadership role in providing and protecting the contractual and statutory rights of school administrators and advancing these rights. (77, 97, 09)

Current F-17

F-17 Testing Prospective Teachers

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes prospective teachers should be knowledgeable in their fields, have strong literacy and communication skills and be well trained in teaching methods.

The MTA supports requiring prospective teachers to pass a fair, valid and reliable test in content, literacy and communication in order to become certified.

The MTA believes higher education institutions should assess literacy and communication skills of students enrolled in teacher preparation programs early enough so that those students who need support receive it.

The MTA further believes ongoing evaluation of the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure by independent assessment

experts is essential to ensure that this and/or any other licensure test meets these criteria. (00)

Proposed New F-17

F-17 Testing Prospective Teachers

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes prospective teachers should be knowledgeable in their fields, have strong literacy and communication skills and be well trained in teaching methods.

The MTA supports requiring prospective teachers to pass a fair, valid and reliable test in content, literacy and communication in order to become licensed. Independent assessment experts should periodically evaluate whether the tests used in Massachusetts meet these criteria.

The MTA further believes that preference should be given to prospective teacher tests that are administered in multiple states to increase the supply of potential teacher applicants in Massachusetts.

The MTA also believes higher education, institutions district-based and independent teacher preparation programs should assess literacy and communication skills of students enrolled in teacher preparation programs early enough so that those students who need support receive it.

The MTA further believes ongoing evaluation of the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure by independent assessment experts is essential to ensure that this and/or any other licensure test meets these criteria. (00, 09)

Current F-18

F-18 Residency Requirements

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that all educational personnel shall have the right to live in the community of their choice. The MTA deplors the practice of residency requirement as a condition of employment and/or promotion. (85)

Proposed Change: Strike F-18 and renumber remainder of section F

F-18 Residency Requirements

~~The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that all educational personnel shall have the right to live in the community of their choice. The MTA deplors the practice of residency requirement as a condition of employment and/or promotion. (85)~~

Current F-20

F-20 Right to Privacy

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that all educational personnel must be guaranteed rights of privacy at least equivalent to those afforded students and parents under state and federal legislation. The MTA urges its members, affiliates, school committees, and the governing boards of higher education to adhere to rights that include the following:

- a. The right of access to materials in personnel files, which includes being provided a list of all records maintained by an educational institution, being able to inspect and review such records, and obtaining copies of records, explanations, and interpretations of such records, and a record of past accesses.
- b. The right to be notified within ten working days of any placement of materials in an individual file.
- c. The right to access records, to respond to any record, and to challenge records through formal or informal hearings.
- d. The right to provide or withhold consent on the release of such records, including the right to receive copies of released materials and to purge inaccurate, misleading, and distorted materials.
- e. The right to notification and enforcement of these rights by educational institutions.
- f. The right to be guaranteed the existence of only one personnel file per employee.
- g. The right to confidentiality of medical records.
- h. The right to refuse any type of test for drugs.
- i. The right to refuse any type of test for HIV/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)/sexually-transmitted disease.
- j. The right to be free from fingerprinting as a condition of employment.
- k. The right to refuse any type of polygraph or lie detector test.
- l. The right to refuse any recording, video, or electronic surveillance. (88, 89, 90)

Proposed New F-20

F-20 Right to Privacy and Access

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that all educational personnel must be guaranteed rights of privacy at least equivalent to those afforded students and parents under state and federal legislation. The MTA urges its members, affiliates, school committees, and the governing boards of higher education institutions to adhere respect and advance to rights that include the following:

- a. The right of an employee to access to materials in his or her own personnel records personnel files, which includes being provided a list of all records maintained by an educational institution, being able to inspect and review such records, and obtaining cop-

ies of records, explanations, and interpretations of such records, and a record of past accesses.

- b. The right to be notified within ten working days of any placement of materials in an individual file additions to an employee's personnel records.
- c. The right to access records, respond to any record and to challenge inaccurate, misleading or distorted records through formal or informal hearings.
- d. The right to provide or withhold consent on the release of such records, including the right to receive copies of released materials and to purge inaccurate, misleading, and distorted materials.
- e. The right to be notified notification and enforcement of these rights by educational institutions.
- f. The right to be guaranteed the existence of only one personnel file per employee.
- g. The right to confidentiality of medical records.
- h. The right to refuse any type of test for drugs.
- i. The right to refuse any type of test for HIV/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)/sexually-transmitted disease.
- j. The right to be free from fingerprinting as a condition of employment.
- k. The right to refuse any type of polygraph or lie detector test.
- l. The right to refuse any recording, video, or electronic surveillance bargain over the employer's use of any electronic surveillance technologies, including computer monitoring software. (88, 89, 90, 09)

Current F-21

F-21 Electronic Communication Privacy

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that all electronic communications, including e-mail, should remain confidential and privileged and that messages should not be intercepted and used by the school system against its educators as grounds for discipline.

Therefore, the MTA strongly urges that all school systems take immediate steps to enter into collective bargaining in the area of electronic communications, including e-mail privacy, and any collective bargaining agreements should include a grievance-arbitration procedure, especially in cases of discipline of employees for e-mail related abuses. (99)

Proposed New F-21

F-21 Electronic Communication Privacy

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that all electronic communications, including e-mail, should remain confidential and privileged and that messages should not be intercepted and used by the school system against its educators as grounds for discipline.

Therefore, the MTA strongly urges that all school systems take immediate steps to enter into collective bargaining in the area of electronic communications, including e-mail privacy, and any collective bargaining agreements should include a grievance-arbitration procedure, especially in cases of discipline of employees for e-mail related abuses.

The Massachusetts Teachers Association strongly urges all school districts and public higher education bargaining agents to engage in collective bargaining with local affiliates over electronic communications, including addressing acceptable use policies for school and higher education e-mail systems and Internet access using school district and public higher education servers. Any collective bargaining agreements should include a grievance-arbitration procedure, especially in cases of discipline of employees for electronic communications-related abuses. (99, 09)

Current F-23

F-23 Employee Rights Pending Court Action

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that when criminal charges or civil lawsuits are filed against school employees, the right of due process must be guaranteed.

If an employee is removed from student contact or suspended from a position due to pending court action, all employment rights of the employee shall remain in force, including full compensation and job security.

The MTA urges locals to negotiate contract provisions covering procedures to be followed until final disposition of the case. (89)

Proposed New F-23

F-23 Employee Rights Pending Court Action

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that when criminal charges or civil lawsuits are filed against school employees, the right of due process must be guaranteed the right of due process is a cornerstone of a free society and a just education system.

If an employee is removed from student contact or suspended from a position due to pending court action, all legally mandated employment rights of the employee shall remain in force, including full compensation and job security the right to be reinstated with back pay if the employee is exonerated.

The MTA urges locals associations to negotiate contract provisions covering procedures to be followed until final disposition of the case. (89, 09)



PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MTA STANDING RULES

PRESENT TEXT

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
Bold and Italic Portions Only

1. Proposal to Change the First Item of Business at the Annual Meeting

RULE #6
Section 2

The first item of business of the meeting(s) of delegates shall be the Order of Business.

RULE #6
Section 2

The first item of business of the meeting(s) of delegates shall be the Preliminary Credentials Report.

DELETE: Order of Business

SUBMITTED BY:
Kerry Costello, Andover Education Association

MTA BYLAWS AND RULES COMMITTEE:
Recommends Adoption (8-0)

MTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Recommends Adoption (47-0)

IMPACT STATEMENT:
This amendment (which our Parliamentarian has suggested) would shift the adoption of the preliminary credentials report from the second business item on the agenda to the first, in order to reflect the function of the credentials report, which is to establish the legitimacy of the meeting before any votes are taken.

PRESENT TEXT

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
Bold and Italic Portions Only

2. Proposal to Delete a Redundant Rule for a Teller Count

RULE #6
Sections 9 and 10

Section 9. A motion for a teller count on a bylaw amendment shall require a standing vote by one-third of delegates present.

Section 10. The Presiding Officer may require a teller count. A motion by the delegates for a teller count shall require a one-third vote of the delegates present.

DELETE:
RENUMBER REMAINING SECTIONS

NO CHANGE

SUBMITTED BY:
Sheila Hanley, Randolph Education Association
Paul Phillips, Quincy Education Association

MTA BYLAWS AND RULES COMMITTEE:
Recommends Adoption (8-0)

MTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Recommends Adoption (46-0)

IMPACT STATEMENT:
This is an editorial amendment that our Parliamentarian advised us to adopt because the rule governing teller counts on bylaw amendments in Section 9 is redundant in light of the general rule governing teller counts which appears in Section 10.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MTA BYLAWS

PRESENT TEXT

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
Bold and Italic Portions Only

1. Proposal to Permit Employees of Private Employers Engaged in Early Childhood Education to Join MTA as Active Members

ARTICLE III
Membership

Section 2.
Individual Membership — Active

A. Eligibility

Active membership is available to:

(1) Persons who are:

a. employed in work of a professional nature in the field of education.

who, as new applicants for membership after August 31, 1965, hold a baccalaureate degree or higher; and who hold a certificate, or are eligible to hold same, from a proper certifying authority where such is required, or

who are appropriately licensed, or

who are qualified and approved as teachers by the Division of Occupational Education in the Department of Education, or

who are school nurses.

b. educational support employees of school committees or other governing boards of educational institutions.

ARTICLE III
Membership

Section 2.
Individual Membership — Active

A. Eligibility

Active membership is available to:

(1) Persons who are:

a. employed in work of a professional nature in the field of education, including employment in public schools, in institutions of public higher education, and by public and private employers providing early childhood education.

NO CHANGE

NO CHANGE

NO CHANGE

NO CHANGE

b. educational support employees employed in public schools, in institutions of public higher education, and by public and private employers providing early childhood education.

PRESENT TEXT

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
Bold and Italic Portions Only

1. Proposal to Permit Employees of Private Employers Engaged in Early Childhood Education to Join MTA as Active Members (Continued)

ARTICLE III
Membership

Section 3.
Individual Membership — Additional Categories

A. Categories

(1) Associate members are those persons interested in the advancement of the cause of education, who are not eligible for active membership.

Individual employees of charter schools and private schools shall be eligible for only associate membership unless otherwise determined by the Board of Directors.

Application for said membership shall be made to the Executive Committee in writing.

ARTICLE III
Membership

Section 3.
Individual Membership — Additional Categories

A. Categories

(1) NO CHANGE

Individual employees of charter schools and private schools other than employees of private employers providing early childhood education shall be eligible only for associate membership unless otherwise determined by the Board of Directors.

NO CHANGE

SUBMITTED BY:
Anne Wass, President, MTA
Paul Toner, Vice President, MTA

MTA BYLAWS AND RULES COMMITTEE:
Recommends Adoption (8-0)

MTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Recommends Adoption (50-2)

IMPACT STATEMENT:
Currently, individual active membership is available to employees in public education (pre-k, elementary, secondary and higher education). This amendment would make individual active membership available to pre-k educators and education support professionals employed in the private sector. It would leave unchanged the current provisions allowing employees of charter schools, private elementary and secondary schools, and private higher education to join MTA only as associate members, unless the Board of Directors determines otherwise.

See pages 30-31
for more proposed amendments
to the MTA Bylaws



PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MTA BYLAWS

PRESENT TEXT

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
Bold and Italic Portions Only

2. Proposal to Permit Charter School Employees to Join MTA as Active Members

ARTICLE III
Membership

ARTICLE III
Membership

Section 2.
Individual Membership — Active

Section 2.
Individual Membership — Active

A. Eligibility

A. Eligibility

Active membership is available to:

Active membership is available to:

(1) Persons who are:

(1) Persons who are:

a. employed in work of a professional nature in the field of education.

a. employed in work of a professional nature in the field of education, including employment in public schools, public charter schools, and in institutions of public higher education.

who, as new applicants for membership after August 31, 1965, hold a baccalaureate degree or higher; and who hold a certificate, or are eligible to hold same, from a proper certifying authority where such is required, or

NO CHANGE

who are appropriately licensed, or

NO CHANGE

who are qualified and approved as teachers by the Division of Occupational Education in the Department of Education, or

NO CHANGE

who are school nurses.

NO CHANGE

b. educational support employees of school committees or other governing boards of educational institutions.

b. educational support employees employed in public schools, public charter schools, and in institutions of public higher education.

Section 3.
Individual Membership — Additional Categories

Section 3.
Individual Membership — Additional Categories

A. Categories

A. Categories

(1) Associate members are those persons interested in the advancement of the cause of education, who are not eligible for active membership.

(1) NO CHANGE

Individual employees of charter schools and private schools shall be eligible only for associate membership unless otherwise determined by the Board of Directors.

Individual employees of charter schools and private schools shall be eligible only for associate membership unless otherwise determined by the Board of Directors.

DELETE: charter schools and

Application for said membership shall be made to the Executive Committee in writing.

NO CHANGE

SUBMITTED BY:

Anne Wass, President, MTA
Paul Toner, Vice President, MTA

MTA BYLAWS AND RULES COMMITTEE:
Recommends Rejection (8-0)

MTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Recommends Adoption (42-7)

IMPACT STATEMENT:

Currently, individual active membership is available to employees in public education (pre-k, elementary, secondary and higher education). Employees of Horace Mann charter schools are eligible for active membership, but employees of Commonwealth charter schools are not. This amendment would make individual active membership available to educators and education support professionals in Commonwealth charter schools. It would leave unchanged the current provisions allowing employees of private pre-k, elementary and secondary schools and private higher education to join MTA only as associate members, unless the Board of Directors determines otherwise.

PRESENT TEXT

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
Bold and Italic Portions Only

3. Proposal to Establish an At-Large ESP Position on the MTA Executive Committee

ARTICLE VI

Governance: Executive Committee and Board of Directors

ARTICLE VI

Governance: Executive Committee and Board of Directors

Section 1.
Executive Committee

Section 1.
Executive Committee

A. Composition

A. Composition

(1) The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, the Vice President, the Executive Director-Treasurer, eight (8) Regional Executive Committee members and one (1) Statewide Retired Region Executive Committee member.

(1) The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, the Vice President, the Executive Director-Treasurer, eight (8) Regional Executive Committee members, and one (1) Statewide Retired Region Executive Committee member, and one (1) At-Large ESP Executive Committee member.

Section 2.
Board of Directors

Section 2.
Board of Directors

A. Composition

A. Composition

(1) The Board of Directors, hereinafter called the Board, shall consist of the President, Vice President, Executive Director-Treasurer, district directors, one At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals, one At-large Director for Ethnic-Minority Membership, Statewide Retired District Director(s), Regional Executive Committee members, and the National Education Association Director(s) and non-voting members consisting of any NEA Student Director(s) attending school in Massachusetts and any NEA Executive Officers, NEA Executive Committee Member, NEA Retired Director, and any At-large NEA Director who is also a member of the Association.

(1) The Board of Directors, hereinafter called the Board, shall consist of the President, Vice President, Executive Director-Treasurer, district directors, one At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals, one At-large Director for Ethnic-Minority Membership, Regional Executive Committee members, and the National Education Association Director(s) and non-voting members consisting of any NEA Student Director(s) attending school in Massachusetts and any NEA Executive Officers, NEA Executive Committee Member, NEA Retired Director, and any At-large NEA Director who is also a member of the Association.

DELETE: Regional

ARTICLE VII

Nominations, Elections and Terms of Office

ARTICLE VII

Nominations, Elections and Terms of Office

Section 3.
Regional and Statewide Retired Executive Committee Members

Section 3.
Regional, and Statewide Retired, and At-Large ESP Executive Committee Members

G. NO PRESENT TEXT

G. At-Large ESP Executive Committee Member

(1) NO PRESENT TEXT

(1) Eligibility
Any active member who is an Education Support employee is eligible to be a candidate for At-Large ESP Executive Committee member.

(2) NO PRESENT TEXT

(2) Nomination Process
(a) Nomination papers may be obtained:
* in person or in writing
* from the Executive Director-Treasurer
* any time after July 1.
Requests must specify the office sought. The Executive Director-Treasurer shall forthwith provide nomination papers, stating the candidate's name and office sought.
(b) Nomination papers must be signed by 200 active Association members:
* no more than 50 of those signatures may be obtained from any local affiliate.
* no more than 100 of those signatures may be obtained from any one electoral district.

(3) NO PRESENT TEXT

(3) Election
(a) The only candidates shall be those nominated in accordance with Section G(2) Nomination Process above.

Continued on next page



PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MTA BYLAWS

PRESENT TEXT

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
Bold and Italic Portions Only

3. Proposal to Establish an At-Large ESP Position
on the MTA Executive Committee (Continued)

ARTICLE VII
Nominations, Elections
and Terms of Office

ARTICLE VII
Nominations, Elections
and Terms of Office

(3) Election
(Continued)
NO PRESENT TEXT

(3) Election
(b) The At-Large ESP Executive Committee member shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates by all delegates.
(c) If there is only one (1) candidate for an open position, the election shall be waived, and the candidate declared elected.

(4) NO PRESENT TEXT

(4) Term of Office
(a) The term of office for At-Large ESP Executive Committee member shall be for three years or until their successor has been chosen.
(b) An At-Large ESP Executive Committee member shall be eligible for not more than two consecutive terms.
(c) If a member has filled an At-Large Executive Committee unexpired term, he/she shall be eligible for election to two full terms, provided, however, that the consecutive years served do not exceed nine.
(d) The term of office shall commence on July 1.
(e) After one year out of office, a member is again eligible to be a candidate for At-Large ESP Executive Committee member.

(5) NO PRESENT TEXT

(5) Vacancies
(a) The position of At-Large ESP Executive Committee member shall be declared vacant in the event:
* a member is absent for two consecutive Executive Committee or Board meetings without prior notice to the President, or
* a member dies or resigns, or
* a member is elected to become an officer, or NEA Director, or
* a member loses eligibility to serve as At-Large ESP Executive Committee member due to a change in employment status, including a leave of absence requested to serve in a position outside any MTA bargaining unit if said leave exceeds 90 calendar days, or
* no member files papers to be a candidate or all candidates withdraw prior to the election or
* the annual election for this office does not take place.
(b) Eligible members shall be notified of the vacancy and the election process.
(c) The vacancy shall be filled by a mail balloting to the appropriate registered delegates to the previous Annual Meeting, provided such delegates continue to qualify for delegate status.
(d) If there is only one (1) candidate for the position, the election shall be waived and the candidate declared elected.
(e) The At-Large ESP Executive Committee member thus elected shall take office immediately upon election unless otherwise specified and shall complete the unexpired term.

PRESENT TEXT

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
Bold and Italic Portions Only

3. Proposal to Establish an At-Large ESP Position
on the MTA Executive Committee (Continued)

ARTICLE IX
Delegate Meetings

ARTICLE IX
Delegate Meetings

G. Duties
The delegates to the Annual Meeting shall in accordance with the procedures set forth in these Bylaws:

G. Duties
NO CHANGE

(3) Elect the President, Vice President, Regional Executive Committee members, Board of Directors, the At-Large Director for Ethnic-Minority Membership, the At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals, the Statewide Retired District Director(s), and the members of the Candidate Recommendation Committee as is provided in these Bylaws.

(3) Elect the President, Vice President, Regional Executive Committee members, Board of Directors, the At-Large Director for Ethnic-Minority Membership, the At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals, the Statewide Retired District Director(s), and the members of the Candidate Recommendation Committee as is provided in these Bylaws.

DELETE: Regional

(4) Fill interim vacancies that have occurred in the positions of Vice President, Regional Executive Committee members, Board of Directors, in accordance with Article VII, Sections 2F, 3E and 4E.

(4) Fill interim vacancies that have occurred in the positions of Vice President, Regional Executive Committee members, Board of Directors, in accordance with Article VII, Sections 2F, 3E and 4E.

DELETE: Regional

SUBMITTED BY:

The MTA ESP Committee:
Donna Johnson, University Staff Association
Millie Ficara, Weymouth Teachers Association
Kathy Meltsakos, Pentucket Association of Teachers
Mary Peterson, Greenfield Education Association
Beverly Saccoccia, Bridgewater-Raynham Ed. Association
Sylvia Snape, University Staff Association
Robert V. Travers, Jr., Cambridge Teachers Association

MTA BYLAWS AND RULES COMMITTEE:
Recommends Adoption (7-1)

MTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Recommends Adoption (31-17)

IMPACT STATEMENT:

This amendment would increase the number of Executive Committee members by one to include an At-Large ESP Executive Committee seat.

4. Proposal to Change the Term of Office of the MTA Officers

ARTICLE VII
Nominations, Elections
and Terms of Office

ARTICLE VII
Nominations, Elections
and Terms of Office

Section 2.
President and Vice President

Section 2.
President and Vice President

D. Term of Office

D. Term of Office

(1) The term of office shall be two years or until their successors have been chosen.
(2) The officers shall be eligible for an additional two-year term in the same office.
(3) If an officer has filled an unexpired term, he/she shall be eligible for election for two full terms.
(4) The President and Vice President will serve co-terminously.
(5) The term of office of the President and Vice President shall commence on July 15.

(1) The term of office shall be three years or until their successors have been chosen.
(2) The officers shall be eligible for an additional three-year term in the same office.
(3) NO CHANGE
(4) NO CHANGE
(5) NO CHANGE

Effective Date: July 1, 2010

SUBMITTED BY:

Ryan Hoyt, Waltham Educators Association
John McGuinness, Nantucket Teachers Association
Marc Lewis, Acton Education Association
Tim Sheehan, Amherst-Pelham Education Association
Julia Monteiro Johnson, Dennis-Yarmouth Ed.Assn.
Cheryl DelSignore, Educational Assn. of Worcester

MTA BYLAWS AND RULES COMMITTEE:
Recommends Adoption (7-1)

MTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Recommends Adoption (30-22)

IMPACT STATEMENT:

This amendment would change the term of office of the President and Vice President from two two-year terms totaling four years to two three-year terms totaling six years, effective July 1, 2010.

Nine candidates seek seats on Retired Members Committee

Four vacancies – two-year terms commencing July 1, 2009. Numbers reflect ballot lottery order.

- 1. Robert A. Lague
2. Louise A. Russell
3. Josephine A. Crowe
4. Eileen Cleary
5. Nancy Mickunas
6. Barbara A. Blanchard
7. Robert W. Keough
8. Kathryn M. Rogers
9. Gladys W. Durant

*Annual Report of the Executive Director-Treasurer*

MTA is standing strong for members

It's been a year of challenges for MTA. Our union and our members are in the midst of one of the toughest economic environments since the Great Depression. In this difficult time, MTA is standing strong for our members. As we prepare for the Annual Meeting of Delegates, it makes sense to recap some of the key developments and look ahead at challenges still to come.

I joined the MTA staff as your new executive director-treasurer in July, just as the campaign to defeat the Income Tax Repeal Initiative was heating up.

MTA played the leading role in the successful fight to defeat Question 1, as the initiative became known.

Working closely with our partners in the Coalition for Our Communities, we intensified our efforts throughout the fall, gradually shifting voter sentiment against this destructive proposal.

The ground campaign began with a series of rallies and events that earned good media coverage. These were followed by a massive effort to distribute yard signs, bumper stickers, buttons, fliers and other materials to raise the visibility of the Vote No campaign. We also conducted an extensive TV, radio and Internet advertising campaign, along with direct mail efforts that targeted not only members, but also swing voters. The ads were paid for largely with funds from the MTA's Public Relations/Organizing Campaign, supplemented by generous assistance from the NEA. In addition, the MTA provided communications training for Vote No advocates who then addressed community meetings, gave media interviews and appeared at numerous events around the state.

The most heartening aspect of the effort was that hundreds of our local associations took an active role in the campaign, many for the first time on this scale. From opening-day events in the schools to 10-minute meetings, our local leaders spread the message to our members about the importance of a



David A. Borer
Executive Director-Treasurer

strong "no" vote. Members responded in countless effective ways. They volunteered for phone banks and conducted standouts in high-traffic areas. They talked to friends, family members, colleagues and neighbors. They showed up early and stayed late, conducting marathon visibility activities at polling places on Election Day.

In the end, our 70-30 victory exceeded what anyone thought possible. That success was a tribute to everyone who participated in the campaign, in roles large and small. It confirmed that we made the right decision when we started this effort and that we stayed focused and executed well right up until the votes were counted.

By the time we defeated Question 1, the economy was in a tailspin. The downturn has caused a massive state budget shortfall, which in turn has led to budget cuts and threatened layoffs.

Partly as a result of lobbying by the MTA, the first round of state budget cuts largely spared preK-12 funding from severe reductions, although higher ed has borne some of the burden. At the national level, NEA lobbyists fought hard throughout the legislative battle over the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, also known as the stimulus package. Thanks in large measure to NEA's work, as well as to repeated waves of phone calls from MTA members and other advocates to key legislators, opponents failed in their efforts to strip all education funding from the bill. The ARRA was signed into law by President Barack Obama, and funds have already begun to flow to the states. It's not enough to eliminate the entire budget shortfall, but it will help to cushion the impact.

In the year ahead, we will undoubtedly continue to focus on the fallout from the economy and its impact on our negotiations, jobs and revenues. We will also be tackling other big projects.

First, we will be working with the Building Task Force to evaluate our current MTA headquarters and options for offices that will enable us to meet the needs of our members for years to come. Our current headquarters is over 40 years old. The aging structure and the systems within its walls are in need of a major overhaul. Rather than simply spend millions to fix the various systems and update the building, we have begun a comprehensive evaluation of our options for remodeling, rebuilding or moving to a different location. One thing is certain: The deteriorating state of our building will not allow us to stand still. After completing its work, the task force

We are working closely together every day to build MTA and to improve public education.

will make its recommendations to the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors.

The other big project in the coming year is the next phase of the Strategic Action Initiative. This program had been the object of extensive work and discussion within the union for a number of years as the leadership and staff sought to develop a more effective approach to building MTA's clout through grassroots mobilization. The initiative went through several phases over the years preceding my arrival, but had been put on hold by early 2008 during the transition between executive director-treasurers.

As someone who got his start in the labor movement as an organizer and has run large-scale organizing campaigns and innovative grassroots contract campaigns, I could not agree more with the ideas and goals of the Strategic Action Initiative. A lot of good work went into the development phase of the initiative; now it's time to make this a real, everyday part of our union and the way we represent our members.

In closing, I want to thank all of you for the opportunity to serve MTA as your executive director-treasurer. I have worked with many of you already, and I look forward to working with all of you in the future. It is an honor to join such a dedicated and talented group of elected leaders, members and staff.

I also want to honor Ed Sullivan, who spent over 20 years in this position. His was an era of growth and accomplishment for MTA, fueled by his dedication and vision.

Finally, I must express special gratitude to President Anne Wass and Vice President Paul Toner for their role in giving me the opportunity to help lead this great union. We are working closely together every day to build MTA and to improve public education.

A longer version of the Annual Report of the Executive Director-Treasurer, including sections on the work of each MTA division and department, is included in the 2009 Delegate Handbook. The report is also posted on the MTA Web site at www.massteacher.org/members/governance.

Guidelines for caucuses, admittance, new business items and reaching delegates

Caucus rooms will be available on Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in Hynes 101, 102, 103 and 104. On Saturday, rooms will be available from 8 a.m. to the end of the Business Session. Signup sheets will be available at each room. Reservations must be made in advance for peak hours, which are Friday from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and Saturday from 8 to 9 a.m. For information, contact Ann-Marie Noonan by calling 617.878.8220 or e-mailing amnoonan@massteacher.org.

New business items submitted to the president in the MTA Boston office by 5 p.m. on Monday, April 27, will be distributed to the delegates at registration and commence to be considered at the Friday session. New business items with budgetary implications should be submitted either by the Monday prior to the Annual Meeting (April 27) or prior to the conclusion of business on Friday, May 1, at the Annual Meeting so that they may be acted upon prior to adoption of the annual budget and the dues for FY 2009-2010, which will occur Saturday morning. A new business item with budgetary implications is defined as any activity or action that would result in an additional expenditure of more than \$1,000 by the MTA. New business items with budgetary implications will be considered in the order in which they are received, but before other

new business items without budgetary implications. Other new business items without budgetary implications may be submitted up to the end of the first hour on Saturday morning (by approximately 10 a.m. on May 2). These may be considered during the meeting in the order in which they are received. The cooperation of the delegates in observing these timelines would be appreciated. For information, contact Mary Ann Alfond by calling 617.878.8213 or e-mailing malfond@massteacher.org.

Messages for delegates who are hotel guests should be left with the proper hotel: the Sheraton Boston, 617.236.2000; the Back Bay Hilton, 617.236.1100; the Colonnade, 617.424.7000; or the Embassy Suites Logan Airport, 617.567.5000. The special line for use by families to contact delegates during Business Session hours for medical emergencies only is the Hynes medical emergency line: 617.954.2111.

The Business Session doors in the Hynes Ballroom, third floor, will open at 11 a.m. on Friday and at 8 a.m. on Saturday. Admittance at all times requires a proper badge. Admittance to the Exposition requires an MTA delegate badge, a non-delegate badge or an MTA membership card.

••• REGIONAL RETIREMENT CONSULTATIONS AVAILABLE •••

The MTA conducts 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. In the event of inclement weather, it is advisable to call consultants in advance.

ASHBURNHAM — Robert Zbikowski: second Thursday of each month (**walk in**), 4 to 8 p.m., Overlook Middle School library, front entrance, 10 Oakmont Dr., Ashburnham; 978.827.1425, or at home, 978.297.0123; e-mail: zibstar702@verizon.net.

AUBURN — Louise Gaskins: first and second Saturdays of each month (**walk in**), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Central Office, 48 Sword St., Auburn; 508.791.2121, or at home, 978.448.5351.

BOSTON — Harold Crowley: Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (**by appointment only**), 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., MTA, 20 Ashburton Place, Boston; 617.742.7950, ext. 8240, or 800.392.6175, ext. 8240.

BRAINTREE — Mary Hanna: second Saturday of each month (**walk in**), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Metropolitan Office, 100 Grandview Road, Braintree; 781.380.1410, or at home, 781.545.2069.

CAPE COD — Lawrence Abbruzzi: second Saturday of each month (**walk in**), 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.

HOLYOKE — Dennis O'Connor: third Saturday of each month (**walk in**), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Western Office, 55 Bobala Road, Suite 3, Holyoke; 413.535.2415, or at home, 413.737.7509.

LYNNFIELD — Mary Parry: third and fourth Saturdays of each month (**walk in**), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Northeast Office, 50 Salem St., Building B, Lynnfield; 781.246.9779, or at home, 978.372.2031; fax, 978.372.2035.

NORTHAMPTON — Dennis O'Connor: second Saturday of each month (**walk in**), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., 38 Gothic St., Northampton; 413.584.8313, or at home, 413.737.7509.

PITTSFIELD — Ward F. Johnson: second Saturday of each month (**walk in**), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Berkshire Office, 740 Williams St., Williams St. Plaza, Pittsfield; 413.499.0257, or at home, 413.443.1722; e-mail: wardman33@aol.com.

RAYNHAM — Sandra Stephenson: third Saturday of each month (**walk in**), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Southeast Office, 90 New State Highway (Rte. 44), Raynham; 508.822.5371, or at home, 508.747.2234; e-mail: rockowl@aol.com. Edward Nelson: fourth Saturday of each month (**walk in**), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Southeast Office, 90 New State Highway (Rte. 44), Raynham; 508.822.5371, or at home, 508.853.5769.

HIGHER ED AT-LARGE — Edward McCourt, Massachusetts Bay Community College, Wellesley; 781.239.2207; e-mail: emccourt.mccc@gmail.com.

Note: If you or your association would like to have 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 does not have a record of your service, so members are advised to bring that information along to meetings.

Becky Lepow

RAVING FAN OF GREENPARK MORTGAGE



Becky Lepow, Framingham Teachers Association

Greenpark Mortgage gave first-time homebuyer Becky Lepow a great mortgage and outstanding service. No wonder she's a "raving fan."

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Classifieds

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CURRICULUM ENRICHMENT

IN-SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS — Hands-on Geography (K-2nd, *Introduction to Maps and Globes* and *Habitats*; 3rd, *Massachusetts*; 4th and 5th, *United States Regions*; 6th, *World*). Also: *American History — Colonial or Pioneers*; *Ancient History — Ancient China or Ancient Greece*, *Archaeology of Ancient Civilizations*. For more information, visit www.nowvoyagereducation.com on the Web, call Carol Cohen at 781.784.5197 or e-mail carolcohen@verizon.net.

EDUCATION/LICENSURE

QUICK, AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE & PRACTICAL! Hampshire Educational Collaborative offers Initial licensure programs in convenient locations statewide. PDPs, graduate credit and master's programs available. Programs include: *Teacher of Moderate Disabilities*, *English as a Second Language*, *Middle and High School Math and Sciences*, *Reading Specialist* and *Administration*. For more information, please visit www.teachinmass.org

ADMINISTRATOR LICENSURE PROGRAM — If you are looking for a district-based, cost-effective program for licensure as an administrator, consult the Web site of The Education Cooperative (TEC), www.tec-coop.org, and click on "Professional Development and Licensure." Courses are offered in Dedham in cooperation with Boston University.

READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP? Obtain a master's degree while becoming licensed as a school administrator through our one-year, MDESE-approved program. The Leadership Licensure Program (LLP) prepares you for educational leadership, in partnership with Endicott College. Sponsored by: MSSAA, Teachers²¹ and MASCD. Interested? Call 508.541.7997 or visit: <http://www.mssaa.org/LLPhomepage.PDF>.

TEACHER LICENSURE PROGRAM — If you have Preliminary licensure at the secondary level and are seeking Initial licensure, The Education Cooperative (TEC) has a program for you. Go to www.tec-coop.org and click on "Professional Development and Licensure." Courses offered on weekends and during the summer at our Dedham site.

ELEMENTARY PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE PROGRAM — If you are seeking a Professional license for grades 1-6 in elementary, mathematics or Special Education, consult the Web site of The Education Cooperative, www.tec-coop.org, and click on

"Professional Development and Licensure." The district-based program is offered in Dedham with Framingham State College.

JOIN THE NEXT GENERATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS — K-12 Principal/Asst. Principal, Supervisor/Director. The *Leadership Licensure Program* (LLP) is a high-quality, one-year, MDESE-approved licensure program supported by three professional organizations: MSSAA, Teachers²¹ and MASCD. Program information is available at <http://www.mssaa.org/LLPhomepage.PDF> or 508.541.7997.

EMPLOYMENT

COTTAGE PARK YACHT CLUB'S YOUTH SAILING PROGRAM is looking for an experienced sailor to run its program and instruct sailors ages 8 to 16. The program consists of about 75 sailors divided by experience into three groups. We regularly sail and compete in Opti's, N-10's, Lasers and 420's. Please contact bahoey1@msn.com.

PAID INTERNSHIPS — From museum education and exhibition planning to marketing and public relations, the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Mass., offers a dynamic, semester-long, paid internship program for high school and college students. Call 978.745.9500, ext. 3217, or visit pem.org/support/employment for more information.

TEACHERS — DO YOU NEED ADDITIONAL SUMMER INCOME? Could you accommodate, provide 3 meals per day and teach English to a foreign student in your own home in the greater Boston-North area? Rates from \$550 per student per week with 15 hours of tutoring. For more information, e-mail Mia.Corinha@yahoo.com or call 781.581.5933.

RETIRING OR RECENTLY RETIRED? Become a Boston tour guide. You're a teacher so you have the skills. We train in July and August. The work is seasonal in September and October. It's fun! And if you speak a foreign language, that will be great. Especially German! E-mail Norman@pitcairtours@mail.com.

THE MUSEUM OF SCIENCE Overnight Program is a sleepover program that inspires children to discover science in a fun and educational way. To learn about the museum's part-time instructor (evenings only) and overnight staff positions, available for the 2009-2010 school year, go to www.mos.org/jobs. Interviews starting now!

FIELD TRIPS

PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM, SALEM, MASS. — Bring your students to one of the nation's leading art museums! Choose from many preschool and K-12 programs on art, culture and language arts, all based on Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Also, get your Professional Development Points

with our unique programs. Call 978.745.9500 or visit pem.org.

HISTORY FIELD TRIP — Grade 3 & up. Pilgrim history, garden. Trade, barter, money concepts. Native American canoe, tools, culture. Saltworks. Aptucxet Trading Post Museum, Bourne, Mass. 508.759.5990.

FOR SALE

WYNDEMERE CC, NAPLES, FLORIDA — 3BR, 2B 1st-floor furnished condo. Amenities include golf, tennis, fitness center, pool, three restaurants, walking trails, gated 24/7. Appx. 1,450 sq. ft. Close to beaches. Voted Best Naples community 2008. \$189,000. Call Michelle at 239.435.3530 or e-mail devincent-naples@comcast.net.

FRIENDS OF THE NORFOLK LIBRARY BOOK SALE — Saturday, April 25, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The small town with the very BIG book sale! For more information visit <http://www.norfolkbooksale.com>.

PD

SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS! Want resources, opportunities, professional development? Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies. Visit www.masscouncil.org.

SUMMER STORYTELLING INSTITUTE RETREAT IN THE ROLLING HILLS OF WESTERN MASS. — June 28-July 2, with international storyteller and certified teacher Rona Leventhal. Learn the art of storytelling and why it's such a successful tool for motivating kids and promoting language and learning. Learn a lot, laugh a lot! Small group! 34 PDPs PROVIDED! 413.586.0624/www.ronatales.com.

CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS: Interdisciplinary Curriculum. Refresh your spirit, design meaningful and exciting art/cultural experiences. 30 miles to sea at Nantucket School of Design's Seaview Farm Studios. Harbor cottage living. For experience, credit or PDPs. Instructor: Kathy Kelm. NISDA.org: slideshow, information, application. NISDA@nantucket.net. 508.325.6659.

GEOGRAPHY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM Workshop for Educators. June 2009. For teachers grades 1-6. 15 PDPs. The workshop is available to be brought to individual schools throughout the school year. Credit option available. Tours: New York City, one day; Eastern Canada, one week. Visit www.nowvoyagereducation.com for more information. Contact Carol Cohen at Now Voyager Education by calling 781.784.5197 or e-mailing carolcohen@verizon.net.

TRAVEL

BIOLOGY TEACHERS: Thought you were left out of the touring option with your biology students? Why not travel with C-tours to Puerto Rico and see the exotic natural wonders and wildlife? Call us at 877.595.6027 or e-mail info@c-toursinc.com.

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TRAVEL/STUDY

SEMINAR: EDUCATION IN IRELAND (6 Graduate Credits) — July 2-25, National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland. Study aspects of the Irish education system and history, literature and culture of Ireland. Write Barney Keenan, coordinator, 127 Glen Road, Gorham, NH 03581; call 603.466.2972 or e-mail Lilytsky@ncia.net. The Trip of a Lifetime!

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LOON MT. LUXURY CONDO — 3 bedrooms, 3 baths. Sleeps 8-12. All amenities: linens, pool, Jacuzzi, saunas, health club, gas fireplace, and central air. Award-winning winter and summer resort. In the heart of the White Mountain National Forest and Franconia Notch. Call Bob @ 978.686.1568 or e-mail bobnynex@comcast.net.

SEABROOK, NEW HAMPSHIRE — Two 3-bedroom houses. Steps to the ocean, fully furnished. AC, gas grills, plenty of parking. Summer attractions include arcades/amusements, deep-sea fishing, great restaurants, the "Hampton Beach Casino," Kittery Trading Post and outlet shopping. Sorry, no pets. Call Bob at 978.686.1568 or e-mail bobnynex@comcast.net.

CAPE COD WEST YARMOUTH — Colonial Acres Resort on Nantucket Sound. Sleeps 4, 8/1-8/8, 8/8-8/15. Call for price and details 781.335.6849.

MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA — Beautiful 3BR, 2BA oceanfront condo in a gated community w/many amenities. Photos available. Please e-mail teach422@gmail.com or call 508.942.4166 for rates/availability.

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EAST FALMOUTH — Sunny 3-bedroom, 1-bath Cape. Cathedral ceilings w/deck, outside shower, washer/dryer. Stroll to secluded bay beach, picturesque walkway & public boat landing. Less than a mile to Bristol & Falmouth Heights beaches. Close to shopping. \$1,000 weekly. 508.872.5870.

CAPE COD, OCEAN EDGE RESORT, Brewster, Mass. — Perfect vacation resort setting. Spacious, nicely appointed villa, spiral staircase to large loft; 2 baths, sleeps 6. Excellent location within resort, steps from indoor/outdoor pools, tennis. Nearby beaches, shopping, bike trails and more. Owned/offered by MTA member; summer weekly, off-season weeks or weekends. Call 413.594.4056 or e-mail dr_jim_c@hotmail.com.

Continued on next page

Classifieds

Continued from previous page

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, CANADA: Incredible ocean-view cottage sleeps 6-plus. Walk to the beach, fishing, golf, restaurants, shopping. Web site and pictures available. Only \$775/wk. Call Jay at 813.767.3537 or e-mail jaygcp@tampabay.rr.com.

VERMONT LAKE COTTAGE. Two bedrooms with additional bedroom/studio out-building and dock. Boat rental, hiking trails and Stowe nearby. \$600 week. feiccolo@comcast.net. 781.848.7582.

DEER ISLE, MAINE — Sunlit house near the sea, 1½ acres, sleeps six. Sparkling clean, three bedrooms, two baths, walk to beach and boat landing. Hardwood floors, fieldstone fireplace, spacious interiors, fully equipped country kitchen, decks, picnic table, grill. Dogs welcome. \$900-\$1,050/week. More details at www.hardyshillhouse.com. Phone: 978.283.3738. E-mail hardyshillhouse@verizon.net.

NOVA SCOTIA, SOUTH SHORE. Retired teachers offer fully furnished, equipped summer home. Utilities

included. \$450 week. 203.393.2037. 201 Bear Hill Road, Bethany, CT 06524.

NANTUCKET ISLAND TOWNHOUSE — Fully furnished, including linens. 2 decks, 2 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, full kitchen, sleeps 6. Short walk to beautiful beaches. Near bus route, bike paths, tennis courts. Ideal for small family. By the week June through September. Brochure available. Call 978.256.5044 or e-mail wtam@aol.com.

MARBLEHEAD, MASS. — First-floor furnished condo in historic

home available June through early August. 2BR, 1 BA, ideal for couple or individual. Cozy, with piano and patio. In Old Town. Walk to water and shops. \$1,400/month, utilities included. Call 781.775.7635.

MARTHA'S VINEYARD APARTMENT — Above artist studio. Walk to harbor, beach, shops and restaurants. \$500/wk. Call 508.693.9054.

FAIRHAVEN, MASS. — 2BR elevated cottage. Short walk to beach. Large deck. \$700 per week. Negotiable for season. Families only. No pets, no smoking. 508.650.6960.

CAPE COD, ONSET — 3-BEDROOM COTTAGE. \$750/WK. Large enclosed porch and backyard. Call 978.855.8886 or e-mail dndavan@comcast.net.

HILTON HEAD, S.C. — 2BR, 2.5BA villa. Outstanding location: gated community, golf view, near ocean. Free tennis at VanDerMeer. E-mail seeryushhi@aol.com or call 508.678.0898 for details.

DEER ISLE, MAINE — New house. E-mail for slide show. \$975 per week. Call 508.543.3043 or e-mail moonpenny@yahoo.com.

CAPE COD, SO. DENNIS — Family house, \$1,000/WK. Contact Nancy at 413.259.1403.



Spring Ahead with Great Savings and New Options on Home, Condo and Renters Insurance

Thinking spring or even summer? It'll be hot soon. But let's talk about something that's really hot now—preferred home and condo insurance rates for MTAB members through our partner carrier.

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It's easy to get great MTA member rates. Just visit www.mtabenefits.com for an easy quote. With your no-obligation quote, get a free \$5 Borders® gift card.

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Thousands face June deadline for license renewal

All educators holding Professional educator licenses that were recertified on June 18, 2004, are required to renew those licenses again by June 18, 2009.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education estimates that about 30,000 of the 80,000 educators among that group have left active service or will not renew for some other reasons, so the total number needing to renew is around 50,000.

All educators should look at their licenses, check the expiration dates and take the appropriate steps for renewal. Professional licenses must be renewed every five years.

The MTA Center for Education Policy and Practice will provide license renewal workshops at the request of local association presidents. Members who are unsure of the requirements should approach their local leaders and request such workshops.

A review of the requirements for Professional license renewal is also available on the MTA Web site at www.massteacher.org/renew.



MTA members can now choose to stop receiving the printed edition of *MTA Today* and *instead* be notified by e-mail when the magazine is posted in PDF form on the MTA Web site. To take this step, please visit: www.massteacher.org/emtatoday

A time for baseball and books

New season begins for MTA Boston Red Sox Reading Game

By Bob Duffy

The MTA, the Boston Red Sox and The Hanover Insurance Group Foundation are taking the field for another winning season of books, baseball and student achievement.

Beginning in early May, schools across Massachusetts will receive posters, bookmarks and entry forms for the MTA Boston Red Sox Reading Game, which inspires thousands of children in kindergarten through eighth grade to read hundreds of thousands of books each summer.

Springtime also marks the start of the Most Valuable Educator program, through which high school students can nominate teachers, ESPs and other school staff for recognition during home games at Fenway Park.

Both the reading contest — which gives students the chance to win tickets to Fenway and other prizes — and the MVE program are funded by a grant from Hanover.

“The MTA Red Sox Reading Game and the Most Valuable Educator awards are two fun and exciting educational programs that positively impact local youth, helping them achieve continued academic success while recognizing the outstanding dedication and commitment of our teachers,” said Hanover Insurance Group Foundation President Linda McGowan.

The kickoff for the 10th edition of the reading and recognition campaign is set for April 25, prior to a game between the Red Sox and the New York Yankees. Again this year, Sox catcher Jason Varitek will serve as the spokesman for the program. He will appear on the posters and entry forms along with Wally the Green Monster, the team’s mascot.

“Jason’s willingness to play a leading role in the MTA’s efforts to promote literacy sends the right message to our students,” said MTA President Anne Wass. “He helps us make the point that reading is not only essential for success, but also an enjoyable activity during the summer and throughout the year.”

The featured book for 2009 is “Pitching with the Papelbons,” which



Photo by Rick Friedman

Reading Game spokesman Jason Varitek, joined by his friend Wally the Green Monster, shows off a copy of “Pitching with the Papelbons.”

tells a story about Red Sox closer Jonathan Papelbon and his brothers Jeremy and Joshua playing in a Little League game in Mississippi when they were younger. Proceeds from the sale of the illustrated children’s book benefit C² Mission, a nonprofit organization that helps New England families affected by cerebral palsy and cystic fibrosis.

The deadline for students to have their reading game entries filled out, signed by a parent and postmarked is July 17. In early August, 100 entries will be picked, and the students who sent them in, along with their teachers, will win pairs of tickets to a game at Fenway on Labor Day weekend.

In addition, five students — one from each region of the state — will be chosen as grand prize winners. Each will take part in a behind-the-scenes tour of the ballpark, have the chance to go on the field for a pre-game

ceremony, and receive a \$100 book gift card, an autographed baseball and a school visit from Wally.

One of the grand prize winners in 2008 was in Marilyn McBride’s second-grade class at the Daniel Webster School in Marshfield. McBride, who encourages her students to make books part of their daily routine all year long, is a big fan of the reading game.

“Having a contest like this during the summer continues the philosophy we as teachers try to promote,” McBride said. “The reward of Red Sox tickets fuels kids’ motivation and helps them understand that reading doesn’t just happen in school.”

She added that because of Wally’s visit to her school last fall, interest in the program reached a fever pitch.

“So many of my students said, ‘I am definitely going to read my books next summer so I can hopefully go to

Fenway Park to see a Red Sox game,’” McBride said.

Diane Salvi, who teaches at the Page Hilltop Elementary School in Ayer, also had a grand prize winner in her class last year.

“I am an avid Red Sox fan, and the contest blends my two loves: the Red Sox and reading,” Salvi said.

As the new reading game season begins, students in the upper grades are gearing up to participate in the MVE program, which invites them to write 500-word essays highlighting an educator’s contributions to his or her community. The winning educators are selected based on the essays and are recognized during on-field ceremonies at Fenway, along with the students who nominate them.

And there’s more.

Even as the 2009 spring and summer student achievement programs get under way, planning is already being conducted for the 2009-2010 school year. The MTA, in addition to teaming up with the Red Sox, has student achievement partnerships with the Boston Celtics, the Boston Bruins and classical radio station WCRB FM. In recent months, hundreds of students have attended basketball or hockey games or had the chance to see live performances by orchestra players who have visited their schools.

Through the MTA Boston Celtics Honor Roll program, students have gotten discounts on tickets and received T-shirts and bumper stickers for keeping their grades up or having excellent attendance records. On April 10, five grand prize honor roll winners and their teachers got to sit in a luxury box at the TD Banknorth Garden and watch the Celtics defeat the Miami Heat 105-98.

Now, SBLI has signed on to sponsor the program next fall, setting the stage for another great season at the Garden for students and educators alike.

The reading game and the other student achievement programs are operated under the umbrella of Reading Matters, an MTA nonprofit. For information, entry forms and other materials, visit www.readingmatters.org.

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

MTA Vacation Center growing in popularity

Visits to www.mtavacations.com have more than doubled since fall

“I am thrilled with the MTA Vacation Center and my recent trip to Bermuda,” said Kate Raffile, a member of the Randolph Education Association. “I have already checked out the site’s cruises and vacations in the Caribbean for future trips.”

Raffile is just one of many MTA members who has discovered substantial savings on trips throughout the world that are available through the MTA Vacation Center Web site. Top destinations? Aruba, Punta Cana, Mexico’s Riviera and Jamaica are favorites, with Italy and other European countries also in demand. And new this year are American Heritage Tours with seven itineraries to U.S. destinations.

For information about trips, discounts and last-minute specials, or to request a free catalog, visit www.mtavacations.com. Use promotion code MTA when booking a trip.



Kate Raffile, a member of the Randolph Education Association, touring a cave in Bermuda.

New this year are American Heritage Tours with seven itineraries to U.S. destinations.



Be a star!



If you’re a delegate to the MTA Annual Meeting on May 1, have your photo taken at the MTA Benefits booth. You’ll get a special gift and other prizes, plus you could be a star in upcoming MTAB publications or on www.mtabenefits.com. We look forward to seeing you!



MTA members are our brightest stars.

An MTA member since 1993



PAULA HIGGINS ~ Another fan of MTA Benefits

PROFESSION: Education support professional at the Beebe School, Malden
A MEMBER OF: Malden Education Association

What she enjoys about her profession: “I work with seventh-grade students who have learning disabilities. It gives me great satisfaction to help these children reach their goals, whether it’s completing a reading lesson or learning to solve a math problem. It’s wonderful to see their victories – large and small.”

How she uses MTA Benefits: “I use my MTA credit card all the time. I also frequently visit museums such as the Museum of Science and

the Children’s Museum in Boston, which both offer free admission to MTA members. Last summer my husband and I explored Battleship Cove – especially fascinating for him because of his interest in World War II – and again there was no entrance charge for me.”

What she likes about MTA Benefits: “MTAB offers so many opportunities for members to save significant amounts of money, which is especially important in this economy.”



MTAB Board member spotlight Timothy Sheehan

In addition to serving on the board of MTA Benefits, Tim Sheehan is president of the Amherst-Pelham Education Association and a member of the MTA Board of Directors. He explained in a recent interview why he considers MTAB such an important asset for members.

Q: What makes you a fan of MTAB?

A: MTAB service is exceptional! The customer service representatives will go out of their way to make sure that every question is answered and that every savings opportunity is explored. It is also clear that MTAB always keeps in mind that its clients are educators and it designs programs with our unique needs in mind.

Q: Do you participate personally in MTAB programs?

A: I used Greenpark Mortgage to buy my condo. Greenpark's service truly lived up to the high standard set by MTAB for all of its programs. Buying a first home is complicated, to say the least, and my mortgage representative walked me through the process every step of the way. He was even available for evening phone calls, which is important in the life of a



Tim Sheehan, a member of MTA Benefits Board of Directors and president of the Amherst-Pelham Education Association.

teacher! I also have a long-term disability insurance plan through MTAB. The rates are very reasonable, and it provides the peace of mind that if I were ever out of work for an extended period of time, I could still pay my bills.

Q: Do you use the Discount Directory?

A: I use it whenever I can. I have saved countless dollars through free or reduced-price museum admissions and other discounts provided by various retailers in Massachusetts. It is probably the most extensive collection of discounts I have ever seen.

Q: What is special about MTAB service?

A: It is designed for educators. The programs and services are tailored to meet the needs of teachers, paraprofessionals and other school employees, which is very important. We do not have large amounts of disposable income, so MTAB programs help us stretch our hard-earned dollars.

Q: What advice do you have for MTA members about taking advantage of MTAB?

A: Simply that everyone should do it! I always go to MTAB first when looking for an insurance program or discount. The Web site is user-friendly and available 24 hours a day, and the call center staff is very helpful.

Q: How do you make your members aware of MTAB programs and discounts?

A: As a local president, I try to remind members about the availability of MTAB programs through word of mouth and our newsletter. I always publicize the programs heavily to new staff members at orientation so they can find ways to stretch those beginning teacher salaries and get in the habit of using MTAB for their financial needs.

For information on MTAB programs and services, call 800.336.0990 or visit www.mtabenefits.com.

New! Discount Directory Specials

Lookout Farm hosts MTA Appreciation Weekends

Enjoy all the fun for half the price during MTA Appreciation Weekends at Belkin Family Lookout Farm in South Natick. Appreciation Weekends are May 23-25 (Memorial Day weekend) and May 30-31. Tickets for you and your guests are just \$4 each instead of the regular \$8 cost.



Dating back to 1651, Lookout Farm is one of the oldest continuously working farms in the United States. During your visit, you can see the farm from aboard a train, climb the hay pyramid, find your

way through the burlap maze, experience a moon bounce and take in all the other weekend activities. E-mail a photo of yourself taken at the farm to eab@mtabenefits.com and we'll send you back a gift. The photo may be used in MTAB publications or on the Web site.

Also stop by the farm's information booth and ask about special group prices if you sign up for a field trip by Sept. 18. Learn more about the farm at www.lookoutfarm.com.

The easy way to zip around cities

Zipcar offers new, self-service cars by the hour or day in 13 cities in the U.S. (including Boston), Canada and Europe. To use Zipcar, simply join at zipcar.com/mta and reserve your vehicle online. When your reservation time arrives, walk right to the vehicle, unlock it with your Zipcard (the keys are already



inside) and drive away! For a walk-through of the reservation system, visit www.zipcar.com/demo. MTA discounted weekday rates are from \$8.75 an hour, \$66 a day and \$56 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Weekend hourly rates are from \$10.25 an hour, and daily rates are from \$79. MTA members pay only \$25 a year for membership and never pay an application fee. Each reservation includes gas, insurance, 180 miles of free driving and designated parking. For more information and to become a Zipcar member, fill out the easy online application at www.zipcar.com/mta.



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

The Tip Sheet

Spring is all about renewal

Here are some ways to rejuvenate your health, happiness and well-being – at an MTA discount.

Get in the exercise groove

Go for a walk. Work out at a fitness center. Play a sport. Whichever activity you choose, you're sure to get a physical and mental boost. For optimum results, exercise often – daily or several times a week. The **MTA Discount Directory** lists dozens of places under **Fitness** – from the Boston Fitness Center to Jazzercise – offering MTA discounts. For savings on athletic attire and sports equipment, look under the directory's **Retail** section.



Soothe away stress

By lowering your stress level, you can help lower your blood pressure and reduce emotional and physical pain. One stress-reducing technique is to listen to music that calms you. (Consider the lifelike sounds of **Bose®** music systems – available at an MTA discount by calling 800.905.1538.) Other techniques include taking deep, slow breaths and talking about your feelings with a close friend.



Eat deliciously

Stock up on farm-fresh fruits and vegetables and eat at least 50 percent of them raw, when they contain the most nutrients. You can find an abundance of produce at **Allandale Farm** (www.allandalefarm.com) at a 10 percent MTA discount.

Whenever possible, avoid fried foods, which are high in saturated fat, and processed foods, which are usually poor in quality.



Relax in the country

Meander along country roads and marvel at the quiet beauty – fences of stones and wood, historic homes, serene lakes and undisturbed forests. Breathe in the fresh, clear air. What better way to escape the pressures of your busy everyday world? Plan a country weekend using the **MTA Hotel Discount Directory**, where you'll find hotels, inns and B&Bs that offer discounts of 10 percent and more.

Color your world bright

Fill your home with flowers, creating cascades of color and an array of lovely fragrances to stimulate your senses and brighten your life. You can find a profusion of seasonal bouquets and other flower selections at an MTA discount from places listed under **Flowers & Greenhouses** in the Discount Directory.



Indulge yourself

Pamper yourself at a spa with restorative massages, creative wraps and other luxurious treatments. You can find spas in the **Fitness** section of the Discount Directory and in resorts, hotels and inns that offer spa amenities (such as **The Inns and Spa at Mill Falls** in the Hotel Discount Directory and at www.millfalls.com).

For more information on items listed in The Tip Sheet, look in the **MTA Discount Directory** and the **MTA Hotel Discount Directory**. They're available online at www.mtabenefits.com or by calling 800.336.0990.



The Currier Museum of Art: INSPIRED AND INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED

"Nydia, the Blind Flower Girl of Pompeii," a marble statue sculpted in 1863.

With its galaxy of works by internationally acclaimed artists and artisans, the Currier Museum of Art in Manchester, N.H., is a regional museum that rivals many metropolitan museums. Creatively staged collections include European and American paintings, decorative arts, photography and sculpture. Picasso, Monet, Wyeth, Parrish and O'Keefe are among the luminaries whose art is displayed. The Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Zimmerman House, part of the museum's collection, presents visitors with the art of architecture.

The most striking space in the museum is the new south addition, with its massive expanses of glass and brown terra cotta tiles that harmonize with the original 1929

building and 1980s pavilions. Visitors will find two works of art that were selected specifically for the new building. "Origins," a 35-foot-high sculpture by Mark di Suvero, stands as the centerpiece of the outdoor court. Inside the Winter Garden Café, a dramatic wall drawing by Sol LeWitt commissioned by the Currier captures the look of the mosaics on the original 1929 entrance.

MTA members get \$2 off the admission to the museum. For information about collections, upcoming exhibitions and programs, call 603.669.6144 or visit www.currier.org. Tours of the Zimmerman House, available April through December, are at an additional cost and by reservation only.



Photos by Jose Martinez, courtesy of the Currier Museum of Art

Picasso, Monet, Wyeth, Parrish and O'Keefe are among the luminaries whose art is displayed.

Look at this!

STARTING MAY 1

The faster, friendlier and more exciting www.mtabenefits.com

Click on to the enhanced MTA Benefits Web site, which offers these new features:

- **Find it fast**, a search capability that gets you information in seconds.
- **Members Only** section where you can sign up for giveaways and special offers.
- **Polling and survey** sites where you can give us your opinions on important issues.
- **Automatic notification** of giveaways.
- New feature for **family members** to see benefits available to them – at a glance.



Visit www.mtabenefits.com today!

You say you've never won anything?

Free Giveaways Members Only



Enter the spring online quarterly giveaway between May 7 and May 14 and you may win a \$100 Macy's gift card. Three winners will be selected. Click on the Free Giveaways box on www.mtabenefits.com and register. The winner will be posted on May 15 under "What's New."



Taking advantage of MTA Benefits



Jack Marshall, a member of the Wachusett Regional Education Association, and his wife recently bought a second home in Hampton, N.H., through the MTA Home Mortgage Program and its partner, Greenpark Mortgage.

"The process was made easier by Chris Cowher, our Greenpark mortgage specialist, who was extremely helpful in a back-and-forth situation with a home we considered buying and in securing a mortgage for the home we ended up buying," said Marshall. "Chris was available 24/7 to answer our questions and provided a smooth transition to the underwriter when we were ready to close. We also appreciated the \$770 in MTA member savings we realized at the closing."

An urgent message for local presidents

AN IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBER PROTECTION

Disability insurance is one of the programs most frequently requested by MTA members. Yet **only about 25 percent of members have access to the MTA Disability Plan** because very few schools have designated payroll slots for this program. If members of your association do not have an employer-sponsored program or the MTA program, call Bob Wills, insurance manager for

MTA Benefits, at 617.557.6605. He can discuss with you the process of implementing the MTA group disability program for your local membership.



Brenda DeNinno, a member of the Wakefield Education Association, is pleased with the service and security association members have enjoyed since the MTA Disability Insurance Plan was implemented.

All program and pricing information was current at the time of publication (April 2009) and is subject to change without notice. To find out what may have changed, please call MTA Benefits at 800.336.0990, ext. 5226.