



MTA RECOMMENDS
REPRESENTATIVE MIKE CAPUANO FOR U.S. SENATE
'A CHAMPION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION'

— SEE PAGES 4 AND 7



MTA Today

*A publication of the Massachusetts Teachers Association
Volume 40, No. 2/October-November-December 2009*

#1 – AGAIN!

State keeps top spot on 'Nation's Report Card'



20 MTA SUMMER CONFERENCE

Request for Proposals MTA 2010 SUMMER CONFERENCE

THE MTA WILL HOLD ITS 2010 SUMMER CONFERENCE AT WILLIAMS COLLEGE
IN WILLIAMSTOWN FROM SUNDAY, AUGUST 8, THROUGH THURSDAY, AUGUST 12.

*Pre-conference workshops will commence
on Sunday and will be limited to Emerging
Leaders, New Presidents, Experienced
Presidents and New Members.*

The MTA is seeking proposals in the following
general categories:

- ◆ **Building Stronger Locals — Bargaining,
Representation, Leadership Development
and Organizing**
- ◆ **The Professional Educator: Education Policy
and Instructional Practice**
- ◆ **Personal Growth and Lifestyle Enhancement**

Each presenter submitting a proposal should state
how the workshop will apply to the curriculum for
use in the classroom.

All proposals must be submitted electronically,
along with logistical requests. For further details
and to access the Request for Proposals forms,
go to: www.massteacher.org/rfps

**PROPOSALS MUST BE RECEIVED *BY*
JANUARY 8 TO BE CONSIDERED.**
SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL ONLINE AT:
www.massteacher.org/rfps

MTA Today

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**This issue of MTA Today also includes
the fall edition 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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On the cover

Massachusetts students are
ranked first once again on "The
Nation's Report Card." Their
performance points to the
success of
collaborative
efforts such
as those at
the Arthur
T. Talmadge
Elementary
School in
Springfield,
where
fifth grade
teacher



Sandi Rovelli is shown giving
a high-five to student Haley
Leger-Hurst. Rovelli believes that
high expectations and teamwork
are crucial for inspiring students
to learn. For coverage, please
see page 5. Meanwhile, on
the political front, the MTA is
recommending Representative
Mike Capuano for the U.S.
Senate. For more information,
turn to pages 4 and 7.

Cover photo by Christine Peterson

Quote-Unquote

*"We went from a system that valued producing good citizens for a
democracy to one that worshiped at the temple of high test scores.
We should be asking, 'What were we thinking?'"*

— Education commentator Gerald Bracey, who died October 20 at the
age of 69, quoted in an obituary published in The Boston Globe

Board members focus on key issues

A Q&A with Harneen Chernow and Ruth Kaplan on challenges and opportunities

Although the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education was expanded from nine members to 11 in 2008, state law still prohibits teachers or school administrators from serving because the board regulates their profession. Fortunately, several members of the BESE represent constituencies of interest to MTA members, most notably labor and parents. These representatives often seek out the views of educators when debating and voting on public policies.

Harneen Chernow, vice president of the board, is the labor appointee. Nominated by the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, she has served since 2004. Chernow directs the Massachusetts Division of the 1199SEIU Training and Upgrading Fund. She has two children, one a preschooler and one enrolled in a Boston public school.

Ruth Kaplan, the parent representative, was nominated by the Massachusetts Parent Teacher Association. This position remained vacant under the Romney administration but was finally filled in 2007. Kaplan works for Combined Jewish Philanthropies. Her two daughters both attended and graduated from the public schools in Brookline.

In October, Laura Barrett of the MTA Communications Division interviewed Chernow and Kaplan about some of the issues affecting MTA members that are being dealt with by the board. Some of their answers are edited for brevity.

Q: *What are some of the biggest issues facing educators and the board right now?*

Kaplan: One is how the federal Race to the Top funding is going to impact policies regarding teachers. I am concerned about the top-down nature of federal policy as applied to our state. Part of my role is to make sure we're not giving up the kind of culture of cooperation and collaboration that we value in order to chase federal dollars.

I continue to be a proponent of educating the whole child. This includes trying to provide the kinds of supports kids need to be successful — trying to remove emotional and social barriers to learning. What are we actually doing in terms of public policy to make those kinds of choices?

Chernow: What feels hard for me is that we have come at the issue of school reform and transformation from many different places, but nobody really has a plan for how to move schools that are struggling to a place where the kids, the teachers and the leadership are all getting what they need to do the best that they can do. NCLB still feels very punitive. Teachers in low-performing urban areas experience it as blame. Maybe "blame" is too strong because I do feel it has gotten better. But I don't feel like the board has been successful in providing the necessary supports or helping to create an environment that allows schools or districts to create meaningful change.

As a parent of an urban school student, I feel like the issue of equity is huge. I don't know how we move beyond that. The differences in what kids get based on their ZIP codes has been one of the most overwhelming things I've seen. I've visited many schools during my time on the board. Some have so many resources and clubs and technology and art and the opportunities are amazing. Then you go to other schools and you see few electives and opportunities. Their focus is on the basic education.

A couple of years ago, we went to Randolph and met a student who said she couldn't fill her whole schedule with classes because there weren't enough for her to take at Randolph High School. And she was the president of their National Honor Society.

You compare that with Sharon, which is right next door, and there's no comparison. How are you going to be able to be the best that you can be? And what are we doing to create equitable opportunities for all children in the Commonwealth?

Q: *Do you support lifting the cap on charter schools?*

Chernow: I have a problem with public dollars being used to create a two-tiered educational system that allows some kids to enroll in schools that have some characteristics of private schools and puts everyone else into public schools.

A number of years ago we had a Boston charter school up for renewal. It had zero students who were limited English proficient. I asked how it could be that they didn't have any LEP students when in Boston that's about 20 percent of the population. The headmaster of the school responded that they really only accepted kids in kindergarten, so by the time they've been in his school for a couple of years, they're no longer LEP.

When I asked how it was that they only accept students in kindergarten, he said that they really didn't want to bring in kids in any other year because their culture is so important to maintain that if the kids don't start with them at the beginning they don't want to add them into the school. That sounds like a great educational experience, but is that public? How can we fund a closed system for some kids and then put all the kids who are transient or changing schools in the regular public schools?

Kaplan: I came onto the board of education with no particular bias on charter schools. To this day, however, I have seen very little evidence of innovation in the charter school proposals that have come before us, though that was supposed to be a major rationale for creating charter schools. Also, I do think that the funding formula is a huge problem for districts. I'm not in favor of shifting resources from under-resourced public schools to charter schools.

Also, regardless of how it happens, charter schools clearly do not reflect the demographics of their sending districts. I'm not necessarily blaming them for that, but that has been the result. Whenever we are comparing them with district schools, we're comparing apples with oranges. I'm not in favor of lifting the cap at this point. I am disappointed that the federal policy has moved in that direction.

Chernow: Charter school outcomes in Massachusetts are all over the map — some are better, some are worse, some are comparable — but we haven't seen a demonstrable difference that would lead me to say that lifting the cap is going to improve education in the Commonwealth.

On the other hand, we have a situation where some parents are so anxious about where their kids are going to school that they'll try anything. How do we deal with that? I know a number of parents whose kids are in charter schools because the parents feel that they don't have a choice.

Q: *What are some alternative strategies for promoting innovation and school improvement?*

Kaplan: I am a very concrete thinker. Rather than applying top-down notions and jargon about standards and accountability, I'd like to see us as a state show better leadership about really understanding which schools are succeeding by soliciting more grassroots input and sharing best practices.

For example, there was a recent article about the Holliston schools. They made a conscious decision to create a French immersion program knowing it was going to affect their literacy scores on MCAS in the early years. (The school offers all parents three choices for their elementary school children: French immersion, Montessori and a traditional program.) That was a very telling article. That showed a lot of courage to take an enriching and innovative approach to education even though it would affect MCAS scores for a few years.

Chernow: One challenge in education is the issue of leadership in schools and districts. We've seen a lot of examples of strong leaders, but in underperforming schools we've seen a high degree of turnover. It makes me wonder about the organizational cohesiveness of a school if you have a revolving door at the top. I think the question of how we recruit strong leaders and prepare them is critical.

Q: *What do you say to those who think collective bargaining is the problem?*

Chernow: My sense of the board is that people do talk about the importance of the culture of schools and how teachers are treated, but that there is a lack of awareness of the role of organized labor in schools. There's a lot of mythology and sound bites. "The union won't let me ... The union makes it hard to ..."

One sound bite I'm very concerned about is, "You need to be able to offer merit pay," or other comparable practices, even though the research shows these strategies haven't led to student and school improvement. I think unpacking a lot of that is something that we've never done. There are some interesting examples of how labor-management partnerships have worked to transform a work environment in a positive way. We need to bring those out more. Even what the MTA does around professional development. I mentioned this to a couple of board members a couple of years ago and they had no idea.

It was always interesting that (former Commissioner David) Driscoll would say, "These contracts didn't just come out of thin air." Because he had been a superintendent, he knew that contracts came out of a long, historic process. There was a reason for them.

Kaplan: It would be very helpful for union leadership to educate the board about the reality of collective bargaining. I do not believe most board members really understand union contracts or the process by which they're developed.

Extended excerpts from this Q&A are posted on the MTA Web site, www.massteacher.org. The conversation will also continue in the next issue of MTA Today.



Harneen Chernow



Ruth Kaplan

Many reasons to like Mike Capuano

U.S. Representative Michael Capuano, the MTA-recommended candidate for the open Massachusetts U.S. Senate seat, has a new button with the slogan “I like Mike.” That really expresses how I feel about Mike Capuano.



Anne Wass
MTA President

I like that he is very straightforward. He answers questions directly and doesn't say one thing to one audience and something else to another. That is refreshing in a politician.

I like that he is down to earth. He grew up in Somerville and has never forgotten where he came from. He has the courage to stand up for what he believes in even when it may be unpopular.

He takes no guff. He

left Somerville for the Ivy League, graduating from Dartmouth College and Boston College Law School. I guess you could say he has a good combination of street smarts and book smarts. That's an excellent mix of skills to take to Washington, D.C., where passing laws is part contact sport and part knowhow.

I like that he has a long track record of voting in favor of public education and other programs and

I like that he is down to earth. He grew up in Somerville and has never forgotten where he came from. He has the courage to stand up for what he believes in even when it may be unpopular.

services that help kids, college students and families. In fact, he has a very impressive cumulative 96 percent rating from the NEA on our issues.

Mike Capuano:

- Co-sponsored “Teachers at the Table” — a bill that will give teachers a greater voice in public policy.
- Fought for and delivered millions of dollars in education funding.
- Helped make college a reality for students by increasing access to Pell Grants.
- Co-sponsored legislation to repeal the Government Pension Offset and Windfall

Elimination Provision, which unfairly reduce or eliminate our Social Security benefits.

■ Advocates for giving teachers and education support professionals a living wage.

■ Supported increased S-CHIP funding to expand health care for thousands of children and is a strong supporter of President Obama's national health care reform proposals.

■ Voted “no” on the No Child Left Behind law because he opposed the unrealistic and unfunded mandates in it. He is continuing to work to change that law.

■ Has fought for public education both in our nation's capital as a member of Congress and at the local level as the mayor of Somerville.

We are fortunate to have several pro-education candidates for the Senate seat. MTA's elected members on the Candidate Recommendation Committee interviewed all who accepted our invitation, reviewed their records and studied their responses to our survey about education issues. In the end, the CRC voted to recommend Mike Capuano for U.S. Senate.

His proven leadership ability will make him a superb senator, and his passion and enthusiasm will make him an effective champion of public education — both for our students and our members.

Please consider Mike Capuano and give him your vote in the primary election on Tuesday, December 8.

Letters to the Editor

Article did not reflect DCE contract situation

To the Editor:

Your article on our higher ed union contracts in the August-September 2009 *MTA Today* disappointed me. Your statement that MCCC members “are scheduled to vote soon on ratification of their contract” was misleading.

As I write to you on Sept. 14, only the day contract has been sent to the members for ratification. After more than a year of negotiations, the DCE bargaining team, representing more than two-thirds of the MCCC faculty members, has not reached a tentative agreement with management.

Perhaps by the time the next edition of *MTA Today* comes out, we will have a ratified contract, but

for now, we are waiting for a response to our latest proposal, submitted over two weeks ago.

While I am hopeful that we will be sending a tentative agreement to our membership sometime soon, there is no guarantee that this will actually happen.

Please be aware that I am writing as an individual. I have not consulted with the other team members before responding to your article.

Betsy Smith

Adjunct Professor of ESL

Cape Cod Community College

MCCC DCE Contract Bargaining Team Member

Editor's note: Since this letter was written, a proposed contract covering DCE members has been prepared for sending to the members for a mail-in

ratification vote. The contract is covered in a story on Page 14 of this edition of *MTA Today*.

Letters policy

MTA Today welcomes letters to the editor from MTA members. Letters should be no longer than 200 words. Each letter submitted for publication must address a topic covered in *MTA Today*, must be signed and must include the writer's telephone number for confirmation purposes. Opinions must be clearly identified as belonging to the letter-writer. We reserve the right to edit for length, clarity and style. To submit a letter, mail it to MTA Today, 20 Ashburton Place, 8th floor, Boston, MA 02108 or e-mail it to mtatodayletters@massteacher.org. For additional information, please refer to the guidelines posted at www.massteacher.org/news/mta_today.

MTA members are urged to choose whether they want to get *MTA Today* in print or receive a link by e-mail when the magazine is posted on the MTA Web site

MTA Today provides important news about your association, as well as vital information on leadership opportunities, professional development, member benefits, politics, policies that affect your school or campus, and much, much more.

As the result of a vote by the delegates to the 2009 MTA Annual Meeting, you are being asked to decide whether you want to receive hard copies or be notified by e-mail when the magazine is posted on the Web.

Making your selection is simple, so please do not delay.

And don't worry! You can change your mind at any time about whether you want to receive printed issues or be notified by e-mail when *MTA Today* is posted on the Web site.

To sign up, you will need your MTA membership card or an issue of *MTA Today* that was mailed to you as a member. Once you have either your card or your *MTA Today* at your fingertips, take the following easy steps:

1. Go online to: www.massteacher.org/mymtatoday

A Web form will come up that requests your membership number and your ZIP code. Your MTA member ID number can be found in two places:

- On the front of your MTA card in the box marked Individual ID#.
- On the back page of this edition of *MTA Today* or any other issue that was mailed to you as a member. Just look in the blue and white box for the number directly above your name.

2. Once you have filled in the requested information, click **CONTINUE**.

3. Another form will come up that shows the name, address and e-mail address that MTA has on file for you. You should examine the information, correct anything that needs updating and make sure it is complete.

4. Once your information is correct, click **SUBMIT**.

Bay State again leads nation on key progress assessment

By Laura Barrett

Readiness Schools. Charter schools. Growth models. Tougher accountability systems. Merit pay. With the flurry of activity on the “education reform” front, the public might believe that Massachusetts schools are in crisis and that a key solution is to weaken the influence of unions in education.

It is important, therefore, to take stock of the fact that Massachusetts, one of the most highly unionized states in the country, once again ranks first in the nation by almost every measure, including a test known as “The Nation’s Report Card.”

The state announced on Oct. 14 that — for the third time in a row — Massachusetts students ranked or tied for first on the National Assessment of Educational Progress mathematics exam in grades four and eight, the two grades tested. Bay State students also outscore the country on the NAEP reading test in those grades. In addition, Massachusetts students have one of the highest college attendance rates and some of the highest SAT scores among states with high participation rates on that exam.

“Our members should be extremely proud of their accomplishments,” said MTA President Anne Wass. “The success can be attributed to many factors, but none is as important as the hard work of teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators and, of course, students. Parents who encourage their children to do their homework and show up to school on time also deserve credit.”

The NAEP results show that Massachusetts, like every other state in the country, still has achievement gaps. But in Massachusetts, the gaps are narrower in 2009 than they were 17 years ago, when the tests were first administered.

The results suggest that policymakers, instead of always asking what our schools are doing wrong, should also be asking what our teachers and schools are doing right.

MTA Today recently visited a fifth grade class at the Arthur T. Talmadge Elementary School in Springfield to ask two teachers and the principal that question. The Talmadge enrolls about 270 students in prekindergarten through grade five. Thirty percent are black, 33 percent are Hispanic and 26 percent are white. More than three-quarters — 77 percent — are low-income.

The Talmadge was selected because it is one of several Springfield schools identified in a recent study as performing well on MCAS relative to other schools with similar demographics. In addition, the school made Adequate Yearly Progress last year, had largely favorable Teaching, Learning and Leading Survey results, and is



Photo by Christine Peterson

Sandi Rovelli works with students Taylor Mickens, left, and Kaylyn Fountain at the Arthur T. Talmadge Elementary School in Springfield, where collaboration and dedication have inspired students to achieve.

sought out by parents in Springfield under the school choice law. Not all successful schools follow the same path, though there are some common themes, particularly in the areas of high expectations for students and good communication among staff members.

Sandi Rovelli, who taught in parochial schools for 25 years and has worked in public schools for the past 10, was enthusiastic about teaching at the Talmadge, where she is in her fourth year.

Her classroom walls are covered with colorful posters with educational themes. Her fifth-graders waited patiently outside the door and then filed in quietly and politely when allowed in. For part of the class they sat in rows and for part they worked in small groups. During group instruction, Rovelli asked them to define the term “teamwork.” Many hands shot in the air, and the students appeared engaged and alert.

When asked to read on their own while Rovelli worked with two of their classmates, the students all moved quickly into pairs or small groups and read to themselves — though out loud — so there was a low murmur throughout the room, like a hum of bees in an active hive. In short, it looked like an orderly and happy classroom anywhere.

As Rovelli acknowledged, there are no magic bullets for creating good schools, but there are some strategies that work.

First on her list: “We’re all on the same team at the Talmadge. We all have very high expectations for our students, and we push to raise the bar. We have a saying posted out front: ‘Success is the only option.’”

Rovelli also credits good communication and the fact that the school

staff is both stable and experienced. “One advantage is our small size,” she said. “We also do a lot of parent outreach. All the research tells you if you have good home-school communication, the child is going to do better.”

Fellow fifth grade teacher Camille Twining stopped by with coffee. Asked the same questions, her answers were almost identical. “Every teacher has high expectations,” she said. “Also, we review, review, review. And we make that connection with parents.”

They both agreed that the new school uniform policy in Springfield is a plus in their school. Students must wear solid tops and slacks, and the color choices are limited. Twining admitted that she is very “individualistic” and didn’t expect to like uniforms, but said she found that they reduce the distractions that had been caused by girls wearing revealing clothes and boys wearing low-slung pants. “Even in fifth grade, their hormones are raging,” Twining said. “It was distracting.”

Before-school tutoring from 8 to 8:40 a.m. is also helpful, said Rovelli. At-risk students are asked to attend, and about half the students participate.

The school’s curriculum is aligned with the state curriculum frameworks, which in turn are spelled out in district lesson plans. Rovelli said the lesson plans are used, but experienced teachers modify them to fit the needs of their particular students.

There is a lot of emphasis on MCAS, along with other school and district assessments. “We are very data driven,” Rovelli said. She acknowledged that social studies, in particular, is sometimes neglected so that more

The NAEP results suggest that policymakers, instead of always asking what our schools are doing wrong, should also be asking what our teachers and schools are doing right.

time can be spent on math and English language arts.

Rovelli said educators at the Talmadge don’t pick sides in the so-called math and reading wars, but instead use a balanced approach and “whatever works.” For math, for example, they have a traditional text that emphasizes facts and standard algorithms, but they also have adopted the “Investigations” series, which requires students to solve problems in their own way to help them develop number sense and problem-solving skills.

They use homogenous grouping for some subjects. Although not all successful schools take this approach, Rovelli said she believes the strategy is helpful at the Talmadge. For English language arts, for example, the two fifth grade classes are combined and the students are grouped by ability. Struggling students are in the smallest group and get the most individual attention, while more advanced students can move ahead at their own pace. The two teachers and Principal Beth Crowley had similar views on why their school works. Crowley noted that the staff is not only experienced, but highly skilled and dedicated.

“Our teachers are killing themselves to get the job done,” she said. “Many are here by 7 a.m. and then work at home until God knows what hour.”

The Talmadge would benefit from more resources, she added. The kindergarten and first grade classes have upwards of 30 students, and the school has no general education paraprofessionals after kindergarten. “We could certainly use another set of hands in our classrooms, particular in those large classes,” Crowley said.

There is no ESL teacher in the whole school, and there is no specialist in technology instruction. The computers are aging. The Talmadge offers art but not music. The before-school tutoring program is paid for with grants from private businesses that Crowley has to obtain, not by the district.

Despite these limitations, the educators on the Talmadge staff make do with what they have and seem to especially value the sense that they are all in it together. Collegiality is key. That could explain why none of the

Please turn to **Principal**/Page 25

Attrition rates high at charters

CEPP report reveals exclusionary practices at 'high-performing' schools

By Laura Barrett

Quiz of the day: What kind of school does the following list describe?

- The discipline code is very strict, resulting in large numbers of students being subject to in-school or out-of-school suspension.
- Parents must agree to certain requirements in order for their children to attend.
- Students are enrolled in the lowest grade — and in an effort to make sure all students are on board with the school culture, mission and rules, no new students are admitted in later years. Enrollment is also limited to keep class sizes small.
- Academic and behavior standards are set at levels that strongly discourage students with learning, behavior or English language problems from attending.
- Teachers are employees at will and often work exceptionally long hours. They do not have to be licensed for the subjects they teach.

You may have guessed this school is private or parochial, but a high percentage of Commonwealth charter schools in Massachusetts fit these particulars.

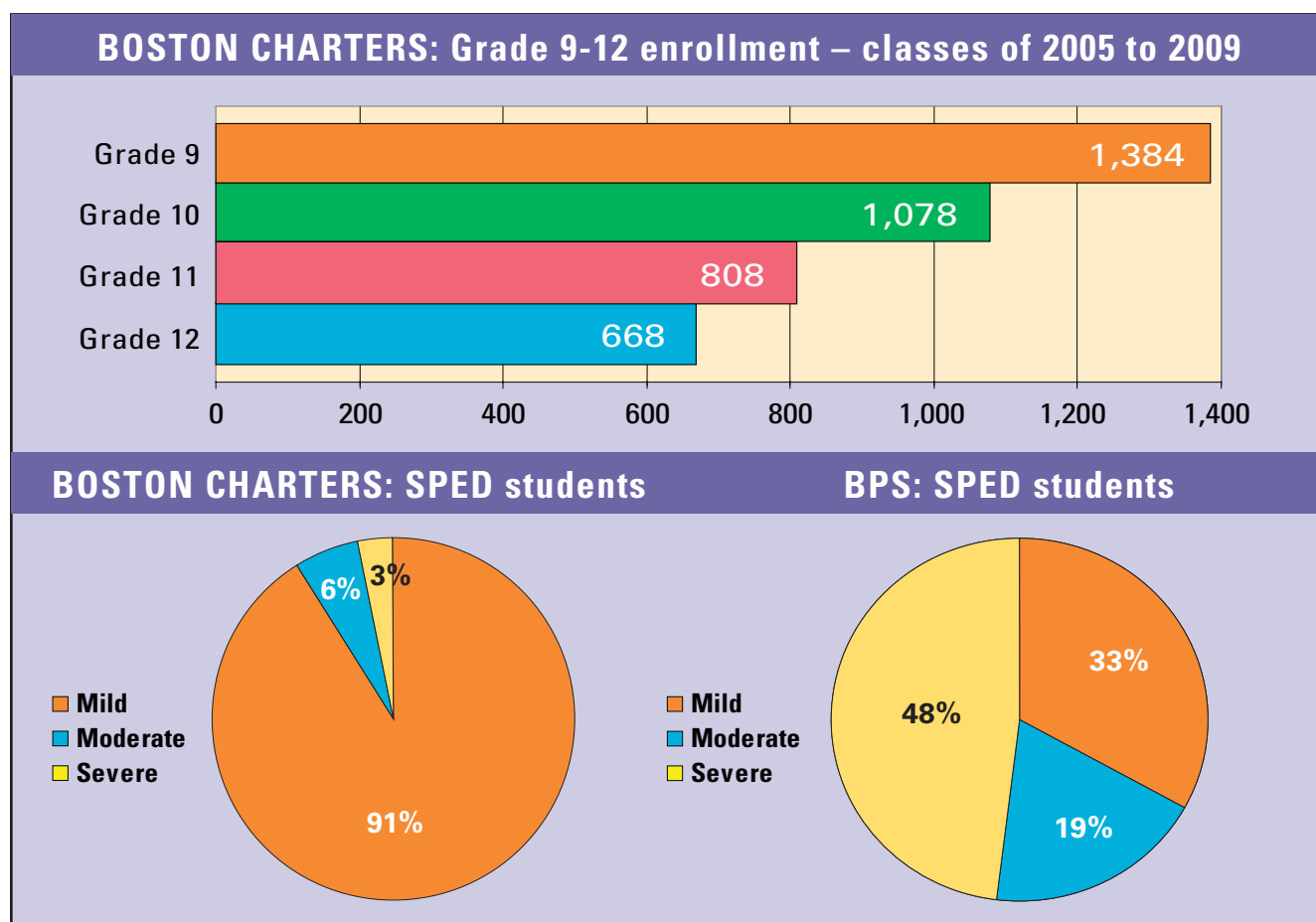
MTA's Center for Education Policy and Practice highlighted some of the characteristics of charter schools in Boston in a recent report titled *Charter School Success or Selective Out-Migration of Low-Achievers?* The report was released on Sept. 16, on the eve of a legislative hearing on lifting the cap on charter schools. Since then, it has generated much discussion on Beacon Hill and in education policy circles.

"Far too many charter schools have established enrollment and exclusion practices that have winnowed out students with greater needs," said CEPP Director Kathleen Skinner, the report's primary author. "By law, public schools are supposed to serve all students in the Commonwealth. In practice, charter schools do not fulfill that mission. We need to face this reality as the Legislature and the public debate whether to increase the number of charter schools in this state."

The MTA is seeking amendments to the governor's proposal on lifting the cap on charter schools to address these concerns and others.

The CEPP report focuses on charter schools identified as "high-performing" in studies that claim they are doing a better job of educating students than the Boston Public Schools. Recent national studies, in contrast, continue to find that most charter schools perform the same or worse than comparable district schools.

The CEPP report documents that the high-performing charter high schools lose about half of their



'If we are to have charter schools paid for with public dollars, they should serve all students. They should be accountable to their communities. And they should be funded in a way that does not hurt the quality of education provided to students who remain in the district schools.'

—MTA President Anne Wass

students between grades nine and 12, a far higher rate of attrition than is found in the Boston Public Schools.

In the aggregate, there were 1,384 students enrolled in Boston's five charter high schools in grade nine for the classes of 2005 to 2009. By grade 12, that number had dropped to 668.

That scenario plays out in school after school. For example, the MATCH charter high school is often cited as a success story because the school claims that 99 percent of its graduates are accepted by four-year colleges. However, that is 99 percent of a greatly diminished pool of students. For the class of 2009, 72 students were enrolled in grade nine, but only 34 were enrolled by grade 12.

"If a school district's public high school lost half of its students over four years, that would be on the front page of the newspaper," Skinner said.

The report also documents several ways in which charter schools enroll students who have fewer academic challenges. Most notable are differences in English language ability, severity of special needs and income levels.

English language learners: ELL students comprise one in five

BPS students — 19 percent — but only about one in 200 students in Boston's high-performing charter schools. In addition, a recent report by Multicultural Education, Training & Advocacy Inc. found that ELL students who are enrolled in charter schools have typically been in the country far longer than ELL students enrolled in the public schools.

Special needs students: Twenty percent of BPS students have special learning needs, compared to 15 percent in the charters. More significant, however, is that the charter school students on Individual Education Plans have milder special needs.

Special needs students are classified by levels: full inclusion (mostly educated in the general education classroom), partial inclusion (in the middle), and substantially separate (mainly or exclusively taught outside the general education classroom). Students with the most severe needs are placed outside of their districts.

Nine out of 10 (91 percent) of the special needs students in Boston's charter schools are full inclusion, compared to only one-third (33 percent) of BPS students. Nearly half (48 percent)

of BPS special needs students are either taught in substantially separate classrooms or placed out of district, compared to only 3 percent in the charter schools.

Low-income students: Boston charters serve nearly the same number of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunches as the BPS system: 71 percent versus 74 percent. But a closer look reveals that they serve fewer very low-income students.

The family income limits to qualify for a free lunch are significantly lower than those for a reduced-price lunch. Two-thirds (65 percent) of BPS students qualify for a free lunch, while only half (52 percent) of Boston's charter school students do.

MTA President Anne Wass said that charter schools were first established to be laboratories of experimentation. "Over time," Wass said, "they have changed into something else — essentially a state-managed system of publicly funded private schools." She noted that many are opened by the state over the objections of the local residents and taxpayers who must fund them.

"If we are to have charter schools paid for with public dollars, they should serve all students," Wass said. "They should be accountable to their communities. And they should be funded in a way that does not hurt the quality of education provided to students who remain in the district schools."

To download the charter school report from the MTA Web site, go to www.massteacher.org/news/headlines/charterschools0909.pdf.

MTA recommends Capuano for Senate

The MTA is recommending that its members support Congressman Michael Capuano to fill the state's open U.S. Senate seat.

Support for Capuano by MTA's member-elected Candidate Recommendation Committee was based on the congressman's voting record, experience and positions on key education issues.

"Mike Capuano has long been a champion of public education, and he will make a superb senator," said MTA President Anne Wass. "He has a strong pro-education track record along with a deep understanding of the challenges facing urban public schools," she continued, noting that Capuano was the mayor of Somerville for eight years before he was elected to Congress.

The MTA is the state affiliate of the National Education Association. The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, the NEA's political action committee, also voted to recommend Capuano in the upcoming special election.

Capuano has voted for pro-education positions supported by the NEA 96 percent of the time, among the highest of any member of Congress. These include votes for more than



'Mike Capuano has long been a champion of public education, and he will make a superb senator.'

— Anne Wass
MTA President

\$100 billion in education funding and state fiscal relief over two years under the economic recovery bill, for children's health legislation (S-CHIP), and for additional funding for Pell grants for low-income college students, community colleges and early childhood education.

Capuano informed the MTA that one of his education priorities is to

ensure that "any achievement standards are thoughtful, based on clear goals, and flexible enough to recognize the abilities and limitations of all students." He also favors increased federal funding for Head Start, educating students with special needs and school construction, among other measures.

"My first priority for public education: that our schools make the

American Dream a reality for every boy and girl," he wrote to the MTA.

The MTA will inform its 107,000 members of the recommendation via phone calls, mailings and other means. The Democratic primary will be held on Dec. 8, 2009, and the final election will be held on Jan. 19, 2010.

For more information, please visit massteacher.org or mikecapuano.com.

QuEST for lifelong learning helps unite members of MTA and AFT

By Kerry Costello

Three MTA members had a great opportunity not long ago to continue forging relationships with colleagues from AFT Massachusetts while taking part in thought-provoking workshops and engaging plenary sessions.

Thanks to MTA President Anne Wass, I was one of the members who got to attend the AFT national professional development conference known as QuEST. The other two were Deb Kozik of Sutton and Bonnie Page of Malden.

The Quality Educational Standards in Teaching event is held every two years and is open to any member of the AFT. The MTA and the NEA have sponsored attendees for the past six years as a component of our partnership with our sister union.

This year's gathering was held in Washington, D.C., in mid-July. The theme was "Children — Collaboration — Community — Curriculum."

A key focus of the conference was the message "With us not to us." This motto, which refers to the need for change to stem from collaboration with educators and not be forced from the top down, was prominently displayed on all conference materials, including the name badges and buttons.

Following U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan's address to the delegation, AFT President Randi Weingarten presented him with a button that read "With you not to you" to reflect that spirit.

Between the three of us, we managed to cover almost every workshop offered. The sessions that related to charter schools were of particular note, given that the AFT organizes charter school employees. The first Massachusetts site in Brighton had recently completed bargaining its first contract, and a staff member from that school was on one of the panels.

Delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting may recall the vigorous debate on this issue and the action to refer it to a committee that will report back to our 2010 Annual Meeting. As such, it was very interesting to hear about the experiences of AFT in this area.



MTA members Deb Kozik, Bonnie Page and Kerry Costello, left to right, joined AFT Massachusetts President Tom Gosnell at the QuEST conference in July. The event was held in Washington, D.C.

The president of AFT Massachusetts, Tom Gosnell, was a gracious host who made us feel welcome as he introduced us to our colleagues from the Bay State. We all engaged in spirited conversations on education and politics. Not surprisingly, there was much common ground, and there were virtually no areas of major disagreement, though there are some clear cultural differences between the two unions.

As the conference drew to a conclusion, Tom asked each of us to reflect on an experience at the conference that left an impression, either positive or negative. Bonnie commented on the level of energy that permeated the workshops. Deb remarked that the conference had broadened her perspective by giving her a chance to view issues through the AFT lens.

I offered the thought that listening to Duncan and education policy expert Linda Darling-Hammond, both of whom also spoke at the NEA RA in San Diego, was a stark reminder of the challenges facing both of our unions.

The consensus was that educators are always on a quest for knowledge and lifelong learning that transcends any philosophical differences.

Overall, the experiences we had at QuEST reminded us yet again that history tends to repeat itself and that some universal tenets continue to apply. In the words of Aristotle, "The one exclusive sign of a thorough knowledge is the power of teaching."

Costello, a school psychologist in Andover, is a member of the MTA Executive Committee.

MTA wins key changes in education bill

As the clock ticked toward the close of the 2009 legislative session, the MTA succeeded in winning key battles to protect collective bargaining and ensure a fair process for turning around underperforming schools.

A complicated education bill containing several provisions strongly opposed by the association emerged on the floor of the state Senate on Nov. 16. But thanks to the work of key senators and Governor Deval Patrick's willingness to support important changes, the bill was significantly improved by the time it passed a day later on a vote of 28 to 11.

The legislation was then sent to the House of Representatives, where Speaker Robert DeLeo (D-Winthrop) said that insufficient time remained to consider it. DeLeo said the House plans to take up the bill, currently called the Education Reform Act of 2009, when the Legislature resumes formal deliberations in January.

"That means this is far from over," said MTA President Anne Wass. "We will need to remain vigilant and make sure the final legislation contains the provisions passed in the Senate."

Wass hailed the efforts of MTA lobbyists and the many members and leaders who went to the State House to meet with legislators as the debate

'We can't let up now.'

— Anne Wass
MTA President

unfolded. "The MTA supports innovative solutions to the problems facing students in underperforming schools, and we made that crystal clear," Wass said. "We also made a real difference in helping legislators understand that educators are part of the solution — not the problem."

The association's face-to-face lobbying was complemented by a flood of more than 7,000 e-mails and numerous phone calls, Wass noted. She summed up her message to members as: "Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!"

"Educators in the Commonwealth have helped to make Massachusetts schools the best in the nation," she said. "Now we have helped our students in another way by increasing the odds of a successful process for assisting underperforming schools."

The legislation that passed the Senate combines and modifies two measures filed months ago by the governor, one establishing "Readiness Schools" and the other lifting the cap on Commonwealth charter schools. The Senate-passed bill would lift the cap on charter schools and, as the governor proposed, require them to

make a genuine effort to serve diverse types of students. The legislation provides important new oversight and accountability rules. It also calls for the creation of "Innovation Schools" that would be designed to help close the achievement gap.

While the Patrick administration says the legislation is important for the state to have in place as it seeks to qualify for federal Race to the Top money, the MTA and others believe that the state could qualify for the funds without the legislation.

The association's main focus during the Senate debate was on the need for teachers in underperforming schools to have meaningful input in turnaround planning and not be treated punitively. When the bill came to the floor, it provided an unreasonable amount of power for superintendents, allowing them to abrogate contracts, dismiss teachers without cause and implement so-called "last best offers." The association warned that such provisions, along with sections providing unilateral authority for the state education commissioner, would drive good teachers away from the high-poverty schools where they are most needed.

One extremely important amendment to the bill was introduced by Senator Ken Donnelly (D-Arlington).

It says that if a change is proposed in a collective bargaining contract as part of a turnaround strategy for an underperforming school, the local union and school committee must bargain for 30 days. If no agreement is reached, an expedited final and binding arbitration process is required. That amendment passed 35 to 4.

Another vital amendment, introduced by Senator Gale Candaras (D-Wilbraham), prevents teachers in underperforming schools from being fired at will. The provision, passed on a voice vote, would protect due process rights.

Wass applauded the legislators who helped pass the amendments and praised the governor for "recognizing the necessity of going beyond the school building to work with parents and the community to create the supportive and healthy environment that is crucial to help students learn."

She noted, however, that obstacles remain, including a possible ballot initiative that would entirely lift the cap on charter schools. She also reiterated that MTA members will have to continue to work hard for a positive outcome when the House takes up the education bill in the new year.

"We can't let up now," she said.

Visit www.massteacher.org for updates.

Sarah and Greg Scranton

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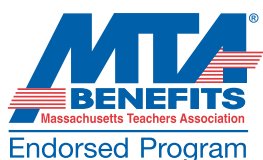


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Sarah is a teacher at Triton Regional High School in Byfield.

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Partnerships inspire students to succeed

The MTA's fall and winter student achievement programs are off to a great start. SBLI, a partner of MTA Benefits, has taken over as the sponsor of the MTA Boston Celtics Honor Roll program. A full-color promotional poster — pictured at right — is now available for downloading in two sizes at www.readingmatters.org.

Public school students who maintain a B average or have perfect attendance records are eligible for the MTA Boston Celtics Honor Roll. Honor roll members are selected by their school principals.

They have the chance to purchase discounted tickets to select games — and a few lucky students are selected to greet the Celts as they take the court. For further information, contact Celtics representative Chris Sargent by calling 617.854.8060 or e-mailing csargent@celtics.com.

Meanwhile, the Bruins I.C.E. School program has taken to the ice for a new season.

The I.C.E. School program — the letters stand for “I Can Excel” — provides students and teachers in kindergarten through grade five with curriculum materials that incorporate



hockey and the Bruins into lesson plans tied to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Students receive certificates of completion signed by Bruins players. Educators can win prizes and school appearances by Blades, the Bruins' mascot.

Further information is available at <http://bruins.nhl.com/club/page.htm?id=41489> or by contacting team representative Liz Serpico at 617.624.1923 or lserpico@bostonbruins.com.

The programs — like the MTA Red Sox Reading Game, which recently celebrated the end of its 10th season — are operated through Reading Matters, a nonprofit corporation founded by the MTA.

New MTA fund promotes single-payer health care

By Sarah Nathan

MTA members can now contribute to a special fund established to provide financial backing for Mass-Care, a statewide coalition advocating for a single-payer health care system.

The MTA has long supported efforts to create a single-payer financing system that provides everyone in the Commonwealth with equal access to comprehensive health care. With that goal in mind, delegates to the association's 2009 Annual Meeting passed a new business item creating a special fund through which members can make voluntary contributions to Mass-Care.

Single-payer health insurance is a kind of publicly managed health insurance typically administered by a public or quasi-public agency charged with organizing, financing and delivery of near-universal or universal health care services to residents. The term “single-payer” describes the funding mechanism — meaning that health care is paid for by a single body from a single fund — and is not related to the actual act of providing health care services.

While the current debate in Washington, D.C., over health care

A universal health care system would be extremely beneficial to educators, their families and their students.

reform is focused on expanding access to health care to all American citizens, no proposal currently in play goes as far as to establish a national single-payer system. The term “public option” refers to varying proposals to create a government-run insurance plan or nonprofit insurance cooperatives to compete with private insurers.

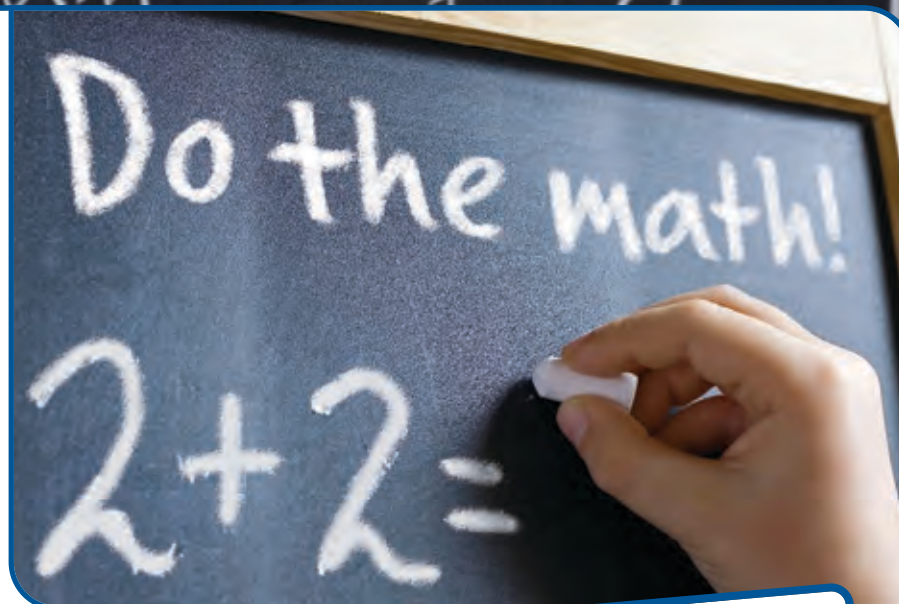
A universal health care system would be extremely beneficial to educators, their families and their students, especially those who miss a lot of school or struggle in school due to health issues that have not been addressed because of financial obstacles or lack of insurance coverage.

Members can support the Massachusetts campaign for single-payer health care by sending contributions to the MTA, 20 Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108. Checks should be made payable to the MTA and sent to the attention of MTA Finance and Accounting Director Kathleen Conway/Mass-Care. For more information on Mass-Care, visit <http://masscare.org>.

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SEAM conference builds skills, confidence

By Bob Duffy

Three years ago, Bridgewater State College did not even have a chapter of the Student Education Association of Massachusetts. Now it is home to a vibrant one — a chapter so active that the campus recently hosted the MTA's ninth annual Conference for Future Teachers.

The growth of the Bridgewater State chapter is an illustration of the MTA's success in connecting with the educators of the future. It also shows how one good thing can lead to another.

The chapter was created following the participation in a future teachers' conference by a group of BSC students. There are now SEAM chapters on the Bridgewater State, Fitchburg State, Framingham State, Westfield State and Worcester State campuses. There is also one at Nichols College.

Kim Auger, a co-chair of the MTA's Student Membership Committee, said that many pre-service teachers are not aware of the association, the services it offers and the key role it plays in public education. The committee is determined to change that, she said.

"If we continue to make the commitment to develop student affiliates to educate future members before they enter the profession, we can help create a whole generation of teachers entering the profession who are ready to become active members of the MTA," Auger said.

This year's conference was held on Oct. 17, attracting an enthusiastic crowd of undergraduate students in education programs across Massachusetts. Those who attended left the event with a range of tools and strategies to use during their first full-time teaching positions.

Studies have found that the attrition rate for new teachers is about 40 percent during their first five years in the classroom. The conference seeks to help prepare students to make the difficult transition into the profession. It also provides an opportunity to network with other students who are in similar situations.

"They primarily learn a lot of classroom leadership skills, and the networking is the frosting on the cake," said Sydne Martins, co-advisor to the Bridgewater State SEAM chapter. "In addition to the workshops, this conference allows them to meet with other students, current and retired teachers and even administrators from around the state."

Workshops focused on a variety of topics, including classroom leadership, teaching English language learners and designing and using rubrics. Participants had the chance to do mock interviews and get information on what they should include in their portfolios.

Many conference attendees were eager to begin their careers, yet worried about the short-term future.



Photo by Bob Duffy

Dr. David A. Almeida, an associate professor of special education at Bridgewater State College, shares a light moment with SEAM conference participants during a workshop on classroom leadership.

They talked about the possible lack of teaching jobs when they graduate and their ability to get jobs in the difficult economic climate. But there was also plenty of optimism.

"Conferences like these are really important," said Jaclyn Blute, president of the BSC SEAM chapter. "They provide a lot of practical hands-on classroom leadership skills, new ideas and tips to use in the classroom."

Blute said the experience helped ease her apprehension about having her

own classroom. The MTA's outreach to students is vital, she added, because it provides student educators with an understanding of the importance of the association on the local, state and national levels. "Before I joined SEAM, I did not really know very much about the MTA and the NEA," Blute said.

Dr. Dana Mohler-Faria, the president of BSC, addressed the conference crowd during a luncheon between the morning and afternoon sessions. Mohler-Faria talked about

how education opened the doors of opportunity to him, leading him to become a college president and Governor Deval Patrick's special advisor on education.

"It's great to be around so many people who are dedicated to the profession," Mohler-Faria said. "It's a profession that is about more than just transferring knowledge; it's about social justice, it's about fairness, it's about transforming lives. You have the opportunity to engage your students and lead them to their potential."

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Schools and colleges fight spread of flu

By Bob Duffy and Sarah Nathan

School nurses and public health officials around the state are now facing a two-front battle as the seasonal flu ramps up while efforts continue to stem the spread of the H1N1 strain.

"Flu of one sort or another is going to be an ongoing factor," said Mimi Stamer, president of the Massachusetts School Nurses Organization. "Most schools in Massachusetts are already dealing with increasing cases of H1N1, and the seasonal flu typically does not begin until December."

Stamer said that during the holidays, when people are traveling and visiting friends and family, it's vital for the entire school team to work in partnership with everyone in the community to keep students healthy.

H1N1, which was first recognized in April, has the potential to spread rapidly because people have no natural immunities to animal strains of the flu that have migrated to humans.

Health officials say it is too soon to tell how long the current H1N1 pandemic will last or how severe cases will be. They say, however, that the widely reported vaccine shortages are beginning to ease.

Massachusetts is one of 46 states considered to have widespread flu activity at this point.

"Most schools in Massachusetts are dealing with mild but increasing cases of H1N1," Stamer noted.

Health officials say that although there has been a lot of attention surrounding H1N1 — often called swine flu — it is still important to get a seasonal flu shot. Both types have the ability to cause illness that can be serious and potentially fatal.

School officials are advised that any student running a fever should be kept at home until at least 24 hours after his or her temperature has returned to normal without medication. In addition, everyone with a flu-like illness is being urged to "self-isolate" to prevent illnesses from spreading.

Last spring, more than 40 schools closed in an effort to stem the transmission of H1N1. The current guidance from health officials is to keep schools open as usual when possible. Still, some schools have closed because the extent of illness has made it difficult to keep functioning. So far this fall, there have been closings in Illinois, Wisconsin, New York and Florida, as well as in Massachusetts.

The Meadow Brook Elementary School in East Longmeadow and

Grafton High School both recently shut down for several days due to swine flu fears. At Grafton High School, more than half of the staff got sick, along with many students.

"Ideally we would have preferred to keep the school open," said Christopher Underwood, the president of the Grafton Teachers Association. "It was a safety issue because there was not an adequate number of faculty and staff to maintain a safe learning environment."

Many parents were keeping their children home to avoid having them catch the flu, he told *MTA Today*. Following the school's reopening, he added, flu rates are "back to normal."

Underwood said that members of the GHS staff are persistent in urging social isolation for any students with the flu.

"We encourage kids who are sick not to get together and hang out at the mall or go to the movies," he said. "It's a constant encouragement. We reiterate it every day."

There are many seasonal and H1N1 vaccination models being tried around Massachusetts this flu season, depending on the capacity of local

public health departments. Most seasonal flu vaccinations are being provided by traditional outlets when they are available. But several communities' H1N1 vaccination plans involve using school facilities after hours.

Meanwhile, on higher education campuses across the state, MTA leaders are closely involved in H1N1 prevention efforts.

Massachusetts State College Association President C.J. O'Donnell is regularly in touch with campus administrators, and Massachusetts Community College Council President Joseph LeBlanc has prepared a one-page fact sheet on the H1N1 virus for chapter presidents.

"The idea is to give chapter presidents the information that they need to address possible problems in keeping with our collective bargaining rights," LeBlanc said.

At the Boston campus of the University of Massachusetts, the administration has revised sick-day guidelines and updated its leave policy to emphasize the need for employees who are sick to stay home.

On the UMass Amherst campus, however, the policy currently in place is not sufficiently progressive, according to University Staff Association President Donna Johnson. Johnson, who is lobbying for a more flexible policy, fears that employees who work in administrative roles and aren't given the option of working off-site while recovering from an illness will either come to work sick or quickly use up their leave and be forced to go off the payroll.

"We don't have the same opportunities to work at home that are given to faculty and professional staff," Johnson said. "I want the university to recognize this and allow my members to utilize the sick leave bank in the event of a major health threat."

Johnson noted that administrators must be especially vigilant about prevention efforts on the Amherst campus, where thousands of students live in close proximity to one another in UMass-run dormitories.

Paul Morse, who is project director of The New England Consortium, a worker health and safety training organization housed at UMass Lowell, said that while he is encouraged by the prep work that is being done, he has concerns about how recent budget cuts, coupled with a spike in student enrollment, will affect plans if a major outbreak occurs.

"We are all forced to do more with less, and that's scary when we are talking about something that has the potential to be a major health crisis," said Morse, a member of the Grant and Contract Funded Employees Association who also serves as co-chairman of the MTA's Environmental Health and Safety Committee.

For links to flu resources, please visit www.massteacher.org/flu.



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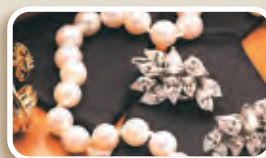
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- A registration form posted on the MTA Web site, www.massteacher.org, can be printed and returned by mail.
- Districts may register groups by providing group members with a purchase order number and directing them to www.massteacher.org or by calling 800.392.6175, ext. 8300.
- **Prior registration is required.** On-site check-in is from 8 to 9 a.m. There are exhibits and "good stuff free" during check-in. Workshops begin promptly at 9 a.m. Afternoon workshops conclude by 3 p.m.

MORNING SESSIONS: PARTICIPANTS WILL ATTEND ONE

AM1 – Classroom Management – Managing the Inspired Classroom – Elementary/MS

This workshop will use a case-study approach and focus on the kinds of self-control students must master in order to work effectively in a high-stakes environment.

AM2 – Classroom Management – Managing the Inspired Classroom – MS/HS

This workshop will use a case-study approach and focus on the kinds of self-control students must master in order to work effectively in a high-stakes environment.

AM3 – Differentiating Instruction – Every Child Can Learn – Elementary/MS

This workshop will provide information on differentiating instruction, especially to address specific learning styles, academic readiness and common special needs, such as ADHD.

AM4 – Differentiating Instruction – Every Child Can Learn – MS/HS

This workshop will provide information on differentiating instruction, especially to address specific learning styles, academic readiness and common special needs, such as ADHD.

AM5 – Assessing Student Progress – All Levels

We will examine a wide range of strategies to assess student progress, not only *after* we've taught a lesson or unit, but *as* we teach. The goal is to use assessment as continuous feedback, to know when and why a student didn't "get it," to intervene appropriately, *and* to do all this fairly and equitably.

AM6 – "Visualize" a Great Lesson

Visual communication is an important skill for teachers and presenters. Research suggests we educate best when we use pictures and text. Participants in this workshop will explore new whole-brain approaches to using tools such as PowerPoint in more powerful and effective ways in their classrooms.

AM7 – Creating Balance and Wellness

The first few years of being a new teacher can be stressful. Just as there are strategies for classroom management, there are also strategies for self management that new teachers can use to create balance and wellness in their personal lives. Acquire new habits in relaxation, exercise and nutrition that will translate into better living and better teaching.

AFTERNOON SESSIONS: PARTICIPANTS WILL ATTEND ONE

PM1 – Licensure and "Highly Qualified"

This session will review Massachusetts' educator licensure requirements and procedures, as well as the federal "Highly Qualified" requirement.

PM2 – Legal Basics for New Teachers

This workshop will explore how the many informal roles required of teachers, from surrogate parent to counselor, affect our obligations and liabilities.

PM3 – English Language Learners (ELLs) – for non ESL/ELL Licensed Teachers

Do you have English Language Learners in your school? Your classroom? This informational session for non ESL/ELL teachers will review legal requirements and discuss where to turn to become an effective teacher for your ELLs.

PM4 – Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

This session is informational (not skill-building). We will review the wide range of student behaviors encompassed by the broad term ASD that you are likely to encounter in your classroom.

PM5 – What Would You Do?

A student is going to miss the big game because he failed your class. Your students are "evaluating" you on the Internet. These occurrences may sound like the stuff of education's urban legends, but they really do happen. Participants in this workshop will consider a number of "What do I do now?" scenarios and learn the right answers to that question.

PM6 – Keep Them Engaged

Many traditional classroom practices engage one student at a time and risk the inattention of others. We'll share easy-to-use tips and tricks for keeping *all* of your students engaged *all* of the time. Leave with ideas to use in your classroom tomorrow and in the future.

PM7 – IEPs and 504s – for Regular Education Teachers

This informational session for regular education teachers will explain what IEPs and 504s are and are not. You'll leave knowing the basic requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and will be equipped to be a more effective teacher for students with special needs and medical conditions.

PM8 – Working with Parents – All Levels

Student learning needs to be the focus of home-school communication. This workshop will use case studies to present solutions to common challenges. With the first round of open houses and grades behind us, participants will reassess their interactions with parents and guardians and leave with new strategies for immediate use.

LUNCHEON SPEAKER: MICHAEL B. FLYNN, 2008 MASSACHUSETTS TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Michael B. Flynn teaches second grade at the William E. Norris Elementary School in Southampton. He is an innovative teacher and an

active member of his community. In 2008, he served as the Massachusetts Teacher of the Year. He also won a 2009 Horace Mann Award for Teaching Excellence and worked last year as the Teacher in Residence at Westfield State College, teaching future teachers. As a teacher leader, he provides professional development throughout the country on topics ranging from television production to mathematics to storytelling. As a community activist, he serves on local boards and commissions, including the Northampton School Committee. Most important, Mike is an extraordinary teacher. His students engage in authentic learning experiences such as raising salmon to release into a local river, designing rockets that are launched by air pressure and developing segments for a television show that is shared throughout his school and with families.

THE DAY AT A GLANCE

8 – 9 a.m. On-Site Check-In

Prior Registration Required

Exhibits and "Good Stuff Free"

9 a.m. – Noon Morning Sessions

Noon – 1:30 p.m. Luncheon and Speaker

1:30 – 3 p.m. Afternoon Sessions



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Gathering boosts retiree liaison effort

By Meg Secatore

Although he has been retired only a few months, Peter Matrow recently attended his first MTA Retired Gathering.

Matrow, a middle school math and science teacher, left the classroom and the office of Monson Teachers Association president last summer. He was at the gathering to train for a new role — serving as a liaison between his local's active and retired members.

Matrow was one of 28 liaisons who were trained in a special track. The volunteers are part of a program established in 2004 by the MTA Retired Members Committee with the help of an NEA grant. There are 40 locals participating, according to Jo Ann Fitzgerald, MTA retired members service specialist. The goal is to have a liaison in each of the association's locals.

"I saw the liaison job as a way to maintain some common interest with the teachers and the retirees, who know how to organize, to be active and who can do things behind the scenes," Matrow said. In the last years of his active career, he saw the power of an organized retired membership when the town of Monson proposed changes to retiree health coverage.

"The retirees organized their own little club and they started attending selectmen's meetings," he recalled.



Photo by Meg Secatore

Mary J. Gilmore, a member of the Executive Committee and the Retired Members Committee, is applauded during the MTA Retired Gathering.

Town leaders took notice. "Being as organized as they were was a positive for the local," said Matrow.

Gladys Durant, a former fourth grade teacher who was one of the veteran liaisons in the training, has worked with three Attleboro Education Association presidents.

"I help the president in any way I can," she said. "And I'm always reminding people to join MTA Retired while they are still actively teaching!"

In addition to the liaison participants, about 200 retirees enjoyed general workshop sessions during the annual gathering, which was held Sept. 30 in Marlborough. They focused on a wide variety of topics, from politics to pensions. NEA Social Security Cadre members Margaret Kane of

Wilmington and Nancy Mickunas of Hanover spoke about their work in Washington, D.C., to repeal the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision, which penalize some public servants and their families. MTA Governmental Services Consultant Catherine Fichtner provided an update about retiree issues on Beacon Hill.

Former MTA president Steve Gorrie of Andover shared his expertise with a workshop titled *Intro to Effectively Using Parliamentary Procedure*. Robert Brousseau, a retired Wareham teacher and representative on the state Pension Reserves Investment Management Board, provided a pension system update in another workshop. MTA attorney Sandra Quinn presented

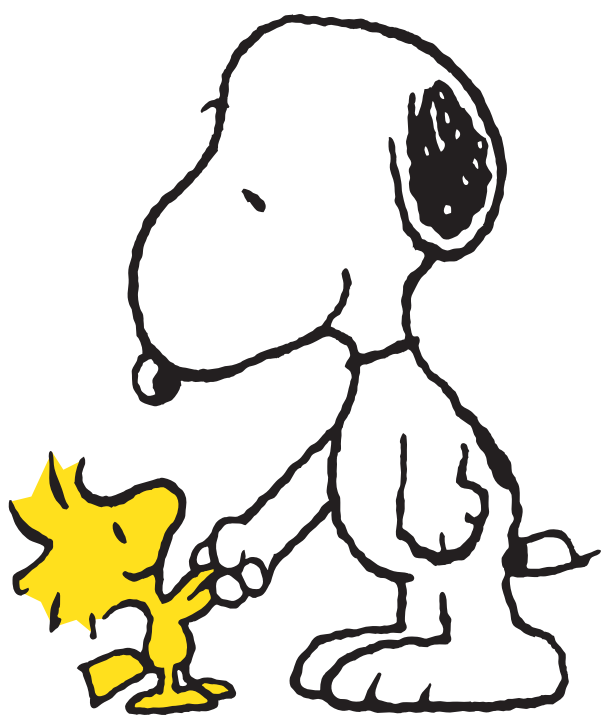
a workshop on retiree health insurance, while private practice attorney Deborah Blum-Shore spoke about elder law.

Health and lifestyle topics were a big draw, with workshops such as *Am I Having Fun Yet? Taking Care of Yourself*, with Patricia Griffin-Carty of Griffin-Carty Communications. Travel tips from Betsy Sheeran were shared in a workshop titled *There's a Whole World Out There!*

Beth Oleson, an instructor/trainer on health care topics, demonstrated choke-save techniques and shared other safety tips. Workshops provided by Health Promotion Affiliates looked at food safety and caring for caregivers. The Health Promotion staff also offered blood pressure checks and seated massages during the morning registration period. Also on hand to meet members at registration were representatives of MTA Benefits and the MTA Vacation Center, as well as Greenpark Mortgage.

Participants were welcomed during a morning plenary session by MTA Retired Members Committee Co-chairs Richard Liston of Everett and Kathleen Roberts of Raynham. President Anne Wass and Vice President Paul Toner each urged retired members to use their influence as respected members of their communities

Please turn to **Retirees**/Page 15



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Retirees honor 'incredibly involved' contest winner

Paula Verrier, former president of the Bedford Education Association, was honored during the recent MTA Retired Gathering as the winner of the MTA Retired Members Committee's 2009 "Looking to Honor One of Our Own" award.

Verrier was nominated by Christopher Zellner, current president of the BEA.



Paula Verrier

"When I was a senior at Bedford High School in 1989, Paula Verrier was my class advisor," Zellner wrote. "Then I only knew her as a caring social studies teacher who was incredibly involved with students inside and outside the classroom."

"When I returned to BHS in 2005 as a teacher, I got to know Paula as a professional. In that capacity I learned that my perceptions of Paula as a teacher were right. I also learned that the time she dedicated to improving our school community was greater. And not only as a teacher — she ran the National Honor Society and our community service program, she coached teams, and she was local association president."



MetLife offers various products and services to MTA members through the MTA Benefits program. MTA Benefits receives a sponsorship fee from MetLife in connection with its endorsement of its products and services. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company [MLIC], New York, NY 10166. MetLife Resources is a division of MLIC MLR19000565019 L1208010322[exp1209][MA] 0708-5490 PEANUTS © UFS

Higher ed conference to spotlight key issues

MTA members will have an opportunity to network, learn about the issues facing public higher education and plan for the future at a two-day conference being hosted by the MTA and the Higher Education Leadership Council in December.

The 2009 MTA Higher Education Conference will be held on Friday, Dec. 4, and Saturday, Dec. 5, at the Sheraton Framingham Hotel & Conference Center. A mix of workshops and plenary sessions will focus on the theme "Professional Issues in Massachusetts Public Higher Education."

The conference opens Friday evening with dinner and a discussion with MTA President Anne Wass and Jim Rice, a Quinsigamond Community College professor who heads the National Council for Higher Education, the higher ed caucus of the NEA. A forum with NEA President Dennis Van Roekel opens the second day.

"It is my hope that people in higher ed who have never been involved in anything before will take this opportunity to learn not just about the issues facing public higher education, but also what the MTA is about," said Donna Johnson, chairwoman of HELC and president of the University Staff Association at the Amherst campus of the University of Massachusetts. "We've made a real effort to build in time for dialogue and discussion — we want to hear from higher ed members and learn more about their needs and priorities."

A range of 90-minute workshops will be offered on Saturday. They include: *Political Organizing the Wellstone Way*, presented by MTA Training and Organizing Coordinator George Luse and MCCC-North Shore Community College Chapter President Tiffany Magnolia; *Social Media: Job-Related Legal Concerns*, presented by MTA staff attorney Will Evans; *Workplace Bullying: Recognition and Prevention*, presented by bullying and violence prevention expert Michael Dreiblat; *ESP Living Wage Campaigns by the NEA*, presented by NEA Organizational Specialist Valerie Wilk; *Workplace Health and Safety*, presented by attorney Sarah Gibson; *Staffing and Financial Trends in Public Higher Education*, presented by higher education policy research expert John Lee; and *What's Happening in Congress: A Legislative Update*, presented by NEA Senior Policy Analyst Mark Smith.

The conference will conclude on Saturday afternoon after a session on state issues affecting public higher education led by MTA Higher Education Director Arthur Pippo.

The deadline for registration has been extended and is now Dec. 1. The fee for the conference is \$25. To register and to reserve a hotel room, visit www.massteacher.org/highered. For further information, contact the MTA Higher Education Division at 800.392.6175, ext. 8236.



Photo by Sarah Nathan

Higher Education Commissioner Richard Freeland, left, and MCCC President Joseph LeBlanc sign a contract covering full-time faculty and some part-time faculty at the community colleges, as well as professional staff. Looking on, from left to right, are Middlesex Community College Chapter President and MCCC Bargaining Team Chairman Rick Doud, Bristol Community College President John Sbrega, MTA Consultant Katie D'Urso, Mount Wachusett Community College President Daniel Asquino and Board of Higher Education Deputy Commissioner of Employee Relations Peter Tsaffaras.

Contracts at various stages

One MCCC agreement signed; DCE members voting by mail

The Massachusetts Community College Council recently wrapped up contract negotiations with the state Board of Higher Education. Members of the MCCC unit that represents full-time and some part-time faculty members, as well as professional staff, ratified a multi-year agreement in September.

A mail-in ratification vote for adjunct instructors, who are members of the MCCC's Division of Continuing Education Unit, is taking place in November, according to MCCC President Joseph LeBlanc. The ballots, which will be handled by mail, are expected to be counted in early December.

Meanwhile, the contracts for several MTA higher education unions representing full-time employees on a number of campuses have been ratified and signed. They are now awaiting funding through the legislative process. These unions represent faculty and staff at all of the state colleges and on the Amherst, Boston and Lowell campuses of the University of Massachusetts.

Municipal employees now required to take ethics training

Municipal employees, including educators, are now required by the state to get training on professional ethics and conflict-of-interest requirements.

An online training program is up and running, and MTA members may complete it to satisfy the requirement. The training will take 60 to 90 minutes for most people to complete.

The state Ethics Commission has established April 2, 2010, as the deadline for completing the first training.

The process results from passage by the Legislature of a comprehensive ethics reform law, sections of which became effective on Sept. 29. The

law requires the state to provide the training and also states: "Every state, county, and municipal employee shall, within 30 days after becoming such an employee, and every 2 years thereafter, complete the online training program."

The state Ethics Commission has established April 2, 2010, as the deadline for completing the first training.

While MTA members can take the

training that is currently available, they should be aware that the online program is geared toward state employees and was created before the new legislation took effect. The MTA Legal Division notes that this version satisfies the ethics requirement and that members who wish to get the training over with can use it. But the division

Please turn to **Municipal**/Page 17

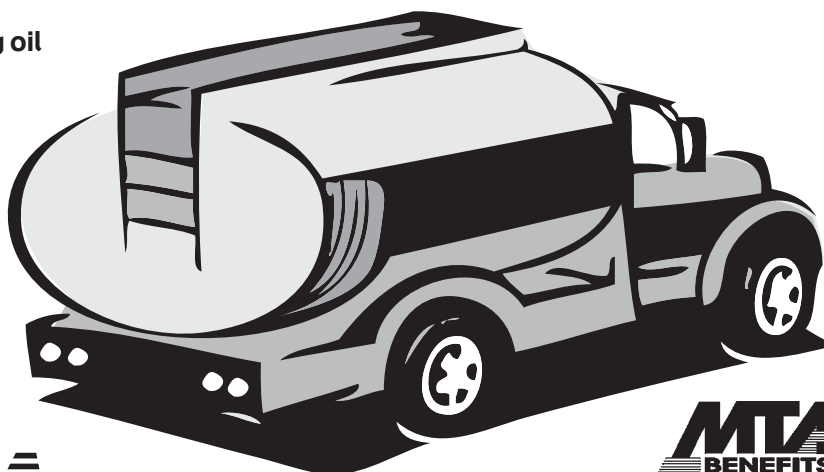
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EMAC event seeks to build 'a stronger union'

If you missed the MTA Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee Conference in April, you have another chance to attend this year. The two-day conference, which is aimed at growing the number of MTA ethnic minority members involved in their schools and unions, has officially moved its place on the calendar from April to December.

The theme of this year's conference, which will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Natick on Friday, Dec. 4, and Saturday, Dec. 5, is "Working Together to Create a Stronger Union." Princess Moss, a member of the NEA Executive Committee, will deliver the keynote address on Saturday.

"I want people to enjoy themselves, connect with others, learn some new things and make a commitment to get involved in the union movement," EMAC Chairwoman Susan Baker said of her goals for the conference. "If we don't get involved, no one else will. We can't wait for someone else to fix things. We are the union, and we have to be the ones to roll up our sleeves and change the things that need fixing."



The conference will officially kick off at 6 p.m. Dec. 4 with a cocktail hour featuring the Boston Community Gospel Choir. After the choir performs and dinner is served, a disc jockey will be on hand, and the dance party will begin.

A variety of workshops will be offered on the following day. They include *Recruitment and Retention of Teachers of Color*, presented by Affirmative Action Recruitment Consortium consultant Samuel Turner and consortium Executive Director Regina Caines; *Cultural Mathematics*, presented by University of Toledo Professor Tod Shockey; *Helping Minority Teacher Candidates Into the Profession*, presented by NEA Senior Policy Analyst Richelle Patterson; *Knowing and Enforcing Your Union Contract*, presented by MTA

field representative Dorine Levasseur; *The Bully-Free Workplace*, presented by MTA Training and Organizing Coordinator George Luse; and *Managing Diverse Classrooms — How to Build on Cultural Strengths*, presented by MTA Regional Manager Michael Walker-Jones.

Baker said the workshops range in scope and content and will be useful to teachers and education support professionals working in both preK-12 schools and public higher education. She said she would like participants to leave the conference on Saturday afternoon with a plan of action — specific steps to take to get involved at the local or state level.

"We want people to leave the conference feeling empowered, educated and ready to roll," Baker added.

The fee for the conference is \$25 for commuters, \$100 for shared accommodations and \$175 for a single room. For more information or to register, members should contact Linda Ferrari in the MTA's Braintree office at 800.479.1410 or visit www.massteacher.org/emac. The registration deadline is Nov. 25.

Retirees are urged to use influence and look toward the future

Continued from Page 13
in upcoming elections, especially the special election to replace the late Senator Ted Kennedy.

Executive Director-Treasurer David A. Borer looked at the troubled auto industry to draw a parallel to threats the association faces.

"The auto workers are now feeling the effects of not responding quickly enough to the threat posed by foreign competition," Borer said. "They have been reduced to a fraction of their size and influence, in

part because they failed to organize when foreign automakers built plants in the U.S. In a similar fashion, we have long been opposed to charter schools, only to see their numbers explode under changes in the law and the increase in federal funding.

"We can't ignore this," Borer said. "We have to rethink our position, and we have to organize charter schools, or we'll find ourselves in a similar spot."

In addition to Liston, Roberts, Gorrie and Kane, committee members are Eileen Cleary of Brockton,

Richard Connole of Auburn, Mary Gilmore of South Yarmouth, Nancy Green of Wakefield, Robert Lague of Woburn, Kathryn Rogers of Taunton, Nina Romano of Somerville, Gerry Ruane of Malden and Louise Russell of Shrewsbury.

Retired members will find more news and photos about the liaison program and the gathering in the MTA Reporter newsletter. Anyone interested in the liaison program should contact Jo Ann Fitzgerald by e-mailing jfitzgerald@massteacher.org.

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For more information on this exciting program, visit www.fsc.edu/gce/speaker.

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MTA retirees press case for fairness on COLAs

By Jo Ann Fitzgerald

MTA Retired members turned out in force for a recent Public Service Committee hearing on the continuing push to bring more fairness to the process for cost-of-living adjustments.

They were briefed at MTA headquarters, then went to the State House to urge passage of House Bill 2487, which has been filed by Representative Jay Kaufman, D-Lexington.

Kaufman's bill would immediately increase the base on which the annual inflation-indexed COLA for retired public employees is computed from \$12,000 to \$16,000. Subsequently, the bill would gradually increase that base over 15 years to an amount that approximates what Social Security uses for its maximum allowance when calculating an annual COLA. (For 2009, Social Security's maximum benefit at full retirement age is \$2,323 per month, or \$27,876 annually.)

As things stand, the COLA base has not increased for 12 years. The maximum annual adjustment that a retiree or survivor can receive has been \$360 since 1977. The maximum monthly COLA is just \$30 a month, or less than 99 cents a day.

The COLA base was set at \$6,000 in 1971 and has only doubled to \$12,000 during the past 38 years. Meanwhile, the cost of living in Massachusetts has increased more than fivefold. Had the COLA base been indexed to inflation in 1971, it would now be \$30,000 instead of \$12,000.

MTA President Anne Wass testified before the committee on Oct. 26 as part of a panel that included Mary Gilmore, a member of the MTA Executive Committee; Kathleen Roberts, a member of the MTA Board and co-chair of the MTA Retired Members Committee; and Robert Brousseau, the teacher representative on the Pension Reserves Investment Management Board.

Wass testified that the MTA supported any and all bills that would improve the cost-of-living adjustment for all retired Massachusetts public employees.

"Last session, a bill that is the same as H. 2487 was fashioned and reported favorably by the Public Service Committee. This year, the

legislation has 46 sponsors, including several members of this committee. Certainly, this is a ringing endorsement of how compelling are its reasons for passage," Wass told the legislators.

MTA members throughout the state were involved in supporting the bill by participating in MTA's Virtual Lobby Campaign and e-mailing their legislators to let them know the importance of an increased COLA.

For updates on the COLA bill, please visit www.massteacher.org.



Photo by Bob Duffy

Robert Brousseau, the teacher representative on the state PRIM Board, testifies on H. 2487. MTA Retired Members Committee Co-Chair Kathleen Roberts, left, and MTA President Anne Wass, center, also called for legislators to increase the base for cost-of-living adjustments.



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Educators planning school field trips are invited to bring their students to the 4.3-acre Massachusetts Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Green Hill Park in Worcester, where they can talk with veterans and learn about an important part of America's history. The visits are free, and the memorial is a good location for a picnic lunch.

For more information, e-mail Fran Elliott at saltydog61@charter.net.



Looking toward the future

A number of MTA members participated in a session of the NEA Minority Leadership Training Program that was held Oct. 16-18 in Boston. The intense, hands-on training is designed to give ethnic minority members the skills and confidence to become association leaders. Members must take part in two weekend-long trainings held over the course of two years in order to become program graduates. Pictured from left to right are first-time participant Robert Grantham, MSP-Lowell; first-time participant Paulette Walker, Brockton; program graduate Christopher Gusman, Wareham; MTA Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee Chairwoman Susan Baker, Falmouth; program graduate Barbara Lora, Brockton; first-time participant Deborah Lewis, Somerville; and NEA Director Julia Monteiro Johnson, Dennis-Yarmouth.

Photo by Sarah Nathan

Push to repeal offsets continues in Congress

The MTA and the NEA are continuing to lobby for passage of federal legislation that would repeal the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision, both of which unfairly penalize educators in Massachusetts and 14 other states.

Bills have been filed in both the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate. The House version of the Social Security Fairness Act of 2009 is H.R. 235. The Senate bill is S. 484. All members of the Massachusetts congressional delegation continue to be strong supporters of the repeal effort.

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 in which they have earned Social Security and in public-sector jobs not covered by the system.

To receive updates on the repeal effort, please send your name, 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.

Municipal employees must get ethics training

Continued from Page 14

cautions that it does not precisely address the parts of the law dealing with municipal employees.

There are plans to devise targeted training programs for municipal employees, but the schedule is highly uncertain because of a lack of funding. It is possible that the more specific municipal training will not be available by the April deadline.

Staff at the state Ethics Commission have emphasized that the online training is not a test, but a training tool. It is not possible to flunk, they advise.

To take the online training, members may visit www.mass.gov/?pageID=ethhomepage&L=1&L0=Home&sid=1eth and click on "Mandatory Summaries and Training," then click on "Online Training Program." For more information, members should consult an MTA field representative.



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A policy review can reassure you — or highlight insurance gaps

Do your insurance policies reflect your current and near-term needs? Unfortunately, many consumers just renew their existing policies year after year, which can mean too much or too little insurance to address the financial consequences of exposure to accidents, theft and other risks.

To make sure you have the right coverage, your insurance policies should be reviewed by a professional insurance agent annually or when major life events occur.

What questions should you bring to a personal insurance review? What should you expect your insurance professional to cover? The following tips will help you prepare for the meeting, which may take no more than 15 minutes.

How to start the process

First, collect the pages of your existing policies, in particular the “declaration pages.” These list current coverages and the dollar amount maximum (“limits”) that might be paid as part of a claim. You probably have auto insurance and insurance on a home, condo or apartment. Insurance for identity theft — as well as for Jet Skis, boats, campers and similar recreational vehicles — may also be part of your protection portfolio.

You may also have the extra protection of an umbrella policy.

The key is to have all your policies so you can look at coverages, limits and ways to save by combining policies. In general, placing your



auto and home policies with the same insurer will save you money.

What to look for in a review

In reviewing your auto policy, start with uninsured and underinsured motorists (UIM/UM) coverage.

States that require it may set a lower limit than limits for other motorists. In economic downturns, the probability of encountering an uninsured motorist may be higher. Consider having UIM/UM coverage limits match your bodily injury limits.

Auto or home claims may involve a lawsuit. Are your liability limits adequate to cover the value of your assets and future wages? For instance, a settlement or judgment against you could include your retirement and college savings as well as your home. Do you need an umbrella policy to provide additional coverage?

If you lack comprehensive/collision coverages, you're probably not covered for fire, theft, vandalism, glass breakage, hitting an animal, road debris and more.

Home insurance questions should focus on coverage and limits for personal liability due to injuries such as those resulting from falls on your property. Are limits high enough for valuables that might be damaged or stolen — such as jewelry, cameras, musical instruments and artwork? Are you covered for water and sewer backups? Do you have sufficient coverage in today's dollars to replace your home if it burned to the ground?

Policy reviews highlight missing coverage, notable coverage gaps and your options for closing those gaps. While you probably invest most of your insurance dollars covering your home and auto, you should ask about your need to cover identity theft, recreational vehicles and situations requiring an umbrella policy.

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No wonder members like MTAB



"Because I am an MTA member, the admission fee is waived at many museums and parks that I visit. In this difficult economy, it is so helpful to be able to go to entertaining and educational places and not worry about the enormous cost."

— **Christina MacDonald, Shrewsbury Education Association**

"When I switched my auto insurance to MTA Benefits, I saved a lot of money. I now have five cars insured for what it cost previously to insure four — and one car has maximum coverage, which I didn't have before. Not only did Ramona Kowalsky at MTAB show me how to save on auto insurance, she also pointed out that I would receive an additional discount if I added my renters insurance to the policy. Almost everything was done by phone and e-mail, making it an easy process. I would highly recommend that members contact MTAB for their auto and home insurance."

— **Willie Vega, Springfield Education Association**



"Refinancing with Greenpark was easy and stress-free."

— **Arthur Gilman, MTA Retired, who refinanced twice with Greenpark, partner in the MTA Home Mortgage Program**

••• 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.

PITTSFIELD — Ward F. Johnson: second Saturday of each month (**walk in**), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Berkshire Office, 188 East St., Pittsfield; 413.499.0257, or at home, 413.443.1722; e-mail: wardman33@aol.com.

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.

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Nomination papers available

MTA members who intend to seek election to MTA office at the 2010 Annual Meeting of Delegates or to run for NEA Director may now apply for nomination papers.

Annual Meeting elections will take place in May for vacancies in the offices of President, Vice President, Regional Executive Committee Member, Statewide Retired District Director and District Director.

There are two NEA Director vacancies. The directors will be elected by direct-mail ballot. Ballots will be sent to the entire membership.

Applications for nomination papers for MTA office must be submitted in writing to the office of the Executive Director-Treasurer, MTA, 20 Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108. Although there is no deadline for requesting them, nomination papers for MTA office must be filed with the Executive Director-Treasurer by 5 p.m. on March 5, regardless of postmark.

Nomination papers for NEA Director posts may be requested in the same manner, but must be filed no later than Friday, Jan. 8.

No person may be a candidate for more than one office. Each candidate must specify the office sought, the term of the office, his or her MTA membership individual ID number (which can be found on the MTA membership card), home and school addresses, telephone numbers, fax numbers, e-mail addresses and local association.

All candidates must comply with the nomination and election provisions of the MTA Bylaws, which will be made available to candidates.

President and Vice President*: The President and Vice President will be elected for two-year terms commencing July 15, 2010. A candidate must be an active MTA member** or a retired MTA member within the statewide retired district. A local affiliate shall not be represented on the MTA Board of Directors by more than one officer (President or Vice President).

Regional Executive Committee Members*: There will be four vacancies for Regional Executive Committee Member positions. **All terms will be for three years***.** The regional vacancies are for Regions B, D, E and H. A candidate must be an active MTA

member** and must be employed in education within the electoral region in which the candidate seeks office.

Statewide Retired District Directors*: There are two vacancies for Statewide Retired District Director. Both are for three-year terms. Candidates must be members of the statewide retired district. There is a self-nomination process. The nomination deadline is March 5.

District Directors — MTA Board*: There will be 14 vacancies for District Director positions on the MTA Board. All terms will be for three years. The open districts are 6A, 33C, 36C, 41C, 39E, 40E, 12F, 13F, 24F, 16G, 17G, 20G, 48H and 49H. Each candidate must be an active MTA member** and must be employed in education within the electoral district in which the candidate seeks office.

NEA Directors*: The vacant NEA Director seats will be filled by direct-mail vote in March and April, in tandem with the NEA statewide and regional delegate elections. The term is three years, beginning Sept. 1, 2010, and expiring Aug. 31, 2013, in accordance with the NEA's fiscal year.

be submitted by any member. The initial deadline for submissions to the Resolutions Committee is Jan. 8. Proposed resolutions may also be submitted by the end of business on Friday, May 7, at the Annual Meeting of Delegates. The committee may also propose resolutions.

All resolutions submitted are

Each candidate must be an active MTA member** and an active or education support professional NEA member, as determined by the NEA Constitution and Bylaws, for at least two years immediately preceding the election, and a non-supervisor member as defined by the NEA. The policy procedure for the direct election of NEA Directors and Alternate NEA Directors is available upon request.

For information on nominations and elections, please contact Diane Foley of the MTA Governance Division by calling 617.878.8217, e-mailing dfoley@massteacher.org or faxing inquiries to 617.742.7046.

*In accordance with Article IX, Section 2B, of the MTA Bylaws, all members of the Board of Directors (including officers; Regional Executive Committee Members; the Statewide Retired Region Executive Committee Member; District, Statewide, and At-Large Directors; and NEA Directors) will be delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates. Election as delegates will occur simultaneous to, and by virtue of, election to the above-named offices.

considered by the Resolutions Committee, and those submitted by the January deadline are also brought before the Board of Directors. To become the official position of the MTA, a resolution must be adopted by the delegates at the Annual Meeting.

The 2009-2010 committee members are Chairwoman Diana Marcus,

**RIF'd members and members who have been granted leaves of absence by their employers may be considered active members employed in education.

***Regional Executive Committee and Retired Region Executive Committee: A bylaw revision concerning terms of office for these positions takes effect on July 1, 2010. Executive Committee candidates elected by delegates to the 2010 Annual Meeting will be subject to its terms. The bylaw states: *The term of office shall be for three years. Members shall be eligible for not more than two consecutive terms provided that an Executive Committee member who has been elected to one two-year term under the previous bylaw shall nonetheless be eligible to serve two more three-year terms. Anyone elected to two two-year terms under the previous bylaw shall be eligible to serve an additional three-year term. If a member has filled an unexpired term, he/she shall be eligible for election to two full terms, provided, however, that the consecutive years served do not exceed nine. The term of office shall commence on July 1.*

Teresa Barut, Kathleen Comer, Ted Kempinski, Sandra Moriarty and Dorothy Scally. Laura Barrett is the staff consultant, and Janice Morrissey is the staff assistant.

For a copy of the current resolutions, go to the MTA Web site, www.massteacher.org, and search for "Resolutions."

2010 ELECTION TIMELINE

NOMINATION DEADLINES

January 8	Statewide/Regional and Retired Delegates to the NEA RA
January 8	Regional Ethnic Minority Delegates to MTA Annual Meeting
January 8	Statewide Retired District Delegates to MTA Annual Meeting
January 8	NEA Directors
March 5	President
March 5	Vice President
March 5	Regional Executive Committee Members
March 5	Statewide Retired District Directors
March 5	District Directors
March 5	Retired Members Committee
April 9	Student Delegate Election to the NEA RA (if Applicable)

FILING DEADLINES FOR PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

January 8	Bylaws and Standing Rules
January 8	Resolutions

MTA Resolutions Committee now accepting proposals

Proposed revisions to MTA resolutions are now being accepted. Resolutions are the organization's statements of principle on issues relating to members, public education, the welfare of students and human and civil rights.

A proposal for a new resolution or revision of an existing one may

- **NEA DELEGATE ELECTIONS**
- **REGIONAL ETHNIC MINORITY DELEGATES TO THE MTA ANNUAL MEETING**
- **STATEWIDE RETIRED DISTRICT DELEGATES TO THE MTA ANNUAL MEETING**

ADDITIONAL FORMS MAY BE REQUESTED OR THIS FORM MAY BE DUPLICATED. FORMS SHOULD BE SENT TO: DIANE FOLEY, MTA, 20 ASHBURTON PLACE, BOSTON, MA 02108

DISTRICT/REGION:

- ☐ MTA Retired member
- ☐ MTA Life member who is an MTA Retired member

8. **Insert punctuation** in the same box immediately after the word that you want it to follow.
9. Indicate intent to commence a new **paragraph** by inserting the paragraph symbol (§) in the same box immediately preceding the first word in the paragraph.
10. **A date** represented as "October 1, 2008" shall constitute three words. The same date represented as "10/1/08" is only one word.
11. Send this entire nomination form and photo to: MTA, Governance Specialist, 20 Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108. Only the data on this form and photos received by **January 8, 2010**, will be published with the ballot. **PHOTO ON FILE MAY BE USED.** The Credentials and Ballot Committee may request a new or more recent photo.

SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____

NEA RA delegates to be elected by mail

Statewide, regional and retired delegates from Massachusetts to the 2010 NEA Representative Assembly will be elected by mail ballot next March and April.

The election for NEA Directors will be held simultaneously and in the same manner.

The nomination period for delegates is now in process and will close at 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 8.

The election period runs from March 1 through April 23. Ballots for statewide and regional delegates will be mailed to eligible active MTA/NEA members and will be accompanied by bio/statements and photos of candidates who submit them.

Retired delegate ballots and bio/statements will be mailed only to retired and retired life NEA members.

The MTA will be notified by the NEA in February of the number of delegates allocated to Massachusetts. The

The nomination period for delegates is now in process and will close at 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 8.

allocation of statewide and regional delegates will be based on electoral regions A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H. A list of local associations by electoral region is available upon request.

The distribution of statewide and regional seats will be voted on by the MTA Board of Directors at its meeting Jan. 29-30; candidates will be informed of the final allocation plan and will be given an opportunity to alter the designation for the level they seek to represent.

Tentative dates for the RA are July 1 through July 6, and travel dates are June 30 and July 7. The RA will take place in New Orleans. The statewide,

regional and retired delegates from Massachusetts will attend, in addition to delegates elected by local associations.

The Credentials and Ballot Committee has adopted procedures for the election that call for ballots and other material to be sent directly to each NEA member in Massachusetts in a self-mailer that bears the notice: "Important: Ballots Enclosed."

Ballots will be returned directly to the Credentials and Ballot Committee at a post office box. Data from the returns will be tabulated and counted at MTA headquarters in Boston under the supervision of the Credentials and Ballot Committee.

Elected delegates are expected to comply with the accountability requirements set forth by the MTA. Funding will not be provided unless accountability is met.

The policy procedure for the election of MTA delegates to the RA should be reviewed carefully by anyone considering candidacy.

The policy procedure for the election of retired delegates is available upon request.

It states that this election "shall be subject to all restrictions, procedures, and deadlines set forth by the NEA guidelines and MTA's statewide and regional election process."

Inquiries concerning procedures for the nomination and election of NEA delegates may be addressed to Diane Foley in the MTA Division of Governance. Her phone number is 617.878.8217, her fax number is 617.742.7046 and her e-mail address is dfoley@massteacher.org.

Regional ethnic minority delegates to be chosen

Regional ethnic minority delegates to the 2010 MTA Annual Meeting will be elected by mail ballot next March and April in conjunction with the NEA delegate/director elections.

The nomination period for regional ethnic minority delegates is now in process and will close at 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 8. Nominations are open to all eligible ethnic minority members through a self-nomination process. The form appears on page 22 of this issue of *MTA Today*.

Regional ethnic minority delegates will be elected by mail ballots forwarded in the same self-mailer as the NEA ballots.

Ballots for regional ethnic minority delegates will be mailed to active MTA members, accompanied by bio/statements and photos of candidates who submit them.

The election period runs from March 1 through April 23. Ballots for regional ethnic minority delegates will be mailed to active MTA members, accompanied by bio/statements and photos of candidates who submit them.

The 2010 allocation of regional ethnic minority delegates will be based

on MTA electoral regions and equal to the number of district directors from each region. No more than one delegate from each district within a region will be elected, with the exception of 44H, which has two directors.

There will be 47 vacancies for regional ethnic minority delegates.

All terms will be for one year. The regional vacancies are: Region A, seven vacancies; Region B, five vacancies; Region C, seven vacancies; Region D, five vacancies; Region E, five vacancies; Region F, six vacancies; Region G, six vacancies; and Region H, six vacancies. Each candidate must be employed in education within the region in which the candidate seeks office.

Inquiries regarding nomination, election and the policy procedure may be directed to Diane Foley in the MTA Division of Governance. Her phone number is 617.878.8217, her e-mail address is dfoley@massteacher.org and her fax number is 617.742.7046.

Bylaws and Rules Committee now accepting proposals

The MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee will soon begin reviewing proposed amendments.

A proposal to amend the Bylaws addresses the governance of the association or the primary characteristics and functions of the MTA.

A proposal to amend the Standing Rules addresses the procedures of the Annual Meeting of Delegates, nominations and elections or governance documents.

Filing process and deadline: Proposed changes to the Bylaws must be received in writing by the MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee by 5 p.m. on Jan. 8.

Proposed changes to the Standing Rules only may be submitted in writing to the MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee up to the opening of the first business session of the May 7-8 Annual Meeting in Boston. However,

early submission by the Jan. 8 deadline provides an opportunity for a full hearing by the committee, by the Board of Directors and at the April pre-convention meetings. It also allows advance publication in the April/May issue of *MTA Today*.

Submitters will be informed of committee hearing dates and will be expected to meet with the committee to discuss the language and intent of their proposals.

Proper format: Please use the following format for each proposed amendment.

1. Specifically cite all articles, sections and lines of the Bylaws or Standing Rules that are to be changed or affected.

2. Set forth your proposal in two columns, comparing the proposed text opposite the present text. In the proposed language, underline amended or

added language. Enclose in parenthesis language to be deleted. Indicate the location of completely new language.

3. Accompany each proposed amendment with a written rationale on its purpose, impact and intent.

4. Include at the end of all proposals the submitter's name and local association.

5. Provide your full name, address, telephone number(s), fax number(s), e-mail address or addresses and your MTA membership ID number, which can be found on your MTA membership card.

Who may submit proposals: Individual MTA members, groups of members and local associations are eligible to submit proposed amendments to the MTA Bylaws and Standing Rules. Members wishing to use an official title representing an MTA affiliate or committee are required to

submit evidence that a vote was taken by authorized representatives of the affiliate or the committee.

Current document: A copy of the current document containing the MTA Bylaws, Standing Rules and Resolutions is available to any member upon request.

Assistance: The Bylaws and Rules Committee and MTA staff are available to discuss ideas for potential amendments.

Informational inquiries and written proposals submitted for the attention of the MTA Bylaws and Rules Committee should be channeled through Mary Ann Alfond, MTA director of professional services. Her address is MTA, 20 Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108. Her telephone number is 617.878.8213, her fax number is 617.742.7046 and her e-mail address is malfond@massteacher.org.

Statewide retired delegates to be chosen by mail ballot

MTA statewide retired district delegates to the 2010 MTA Annual Meeting will be elected by mail ballot in conjunction with the NEA delegate/director elections.

The nomination period for statewide retired delegates is now in process and will close at 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 8.

Nominations are open to all eligible MTA/NEA retired members through a self-nomination process. The form appears on page 22 of this issue of *MTA Today*.

Statewide retired district delegates will be elected by mail ballots forwarded in the same self-mailer as the NEA retired delegate ballots. The election period runs from March 1 through April 23. Ballots for statewide retired delegates will be mailed to retired MTA/NEA members and will

The election period runs from March 1 through April 23.

be accompanied by bio/statements and photos of candidates who submit them. The 2010 allocation of statewide retired district delegates and successor delegates will be based on the number of MTA/NEA retired members from the statewide retired district on record no later than March 1. Terms last one year.

The policy procedure for the election will be mailed to any candidate who requests a copy.

Inquiries may be directed to Diane Foley in the MTA Division of Governance at 617.878.8217. They may also be e-mailed to dfoley@massteacher.org or faxed to 617.742.7046.

Retired committee has four seats open

Four members of the eight-member Retired Members Committee will be elected by statewide retired district delegates to the 2010 MTA Annual Meeting.

Please see the December 2009/January 2010 issue of the *MTA Reporter* for details and the self-nomination form.

The deadline for nominations is March 5.

Election waiver

If the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of positions to be filled, elections may be waived and the candidates declared elected to the positions in question.

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- 16. **The Statement of Ownership will be printed in the Oct./Nov./Dec. 2009 issue of this publication.**
- 17. **James P. Sacks, Editor**

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/ or civil sanctions (including multiple damages and civil penalties).

Obituaries

Michael J. Antonio, 68, of Westborough. Was a teacher and principal in the Westborough Public Schools for 37 years, retiring in 2000. Sept. 22.

Dr. Harold A. Bantley, 74, of Marblehead. Was a professor of media and communications at Salem State College for many years before retiring. Oct. 18.

Dr. Thelma L. Berger, 77, of Lynn. Taught in the Marblehead Public Schools for 32 years. Also taught in Somerset and Nahant and served as supervisor of instruction for the Title I supervisor program in Salem. Sept. 4.

Betty Ann M. Bernard, 66, of Uxbridge. Was an elementary school teacher for 35 years. Retired in 2000 from the Balmer Elementary School in Northbridge. Oct. 7.

Joseph Cardillo, 89, of Waltham. Taught business law at Waltham High School. Was principal of both Henry Whittemore and Nathaniel Banks

elementary schools for over 30 years, retiring in 1984. July 30.

John J. Farrell, 80, of Buzzards Bay. Was an industrial arts teacher for the Natick, Framingham, Bourne and New Bedford school systems. Was a recipient of the Teacher of Year award in 1975. Sept. 1.

Lorraine B. Kilburn, 61, of Middleton. Was an English teacher at Bellingham High School for 35 years, retiring in 2006. Aug. 19.

Nahum “Abe” Sherf, 76, of Swampscott. Was a professor in the Department of History and Economics at North Shore Community College for 43 years and served as department chair, retiring in 2008. Also served on the MTA Executive Committee, representing higher education members. Sept. 27.

Eunice H. Sudentas, 93, of Westfield. Was an elementary school teacher in Vermont, Huntington, Holland and Westfield. Retired in 1974 from the Abner Gibbs Elementary School in Westfield. Oct. 3.

Principal: ‘This isn’t a shoe factory’

Continued from Page 5
educators interviewed has warmed to the idea of merit pay.

“We’re dealing with little kids here and there are so many variables that affect their performance,” Crowley said. “This isn’t a shoe factory where

you can just say workers have to turn out 10 shoes an hour and if they do that they get a bonus.”

Rovelli echoed that sentiment. “You can have high expectations. You can give a student a lot of individual attention. But in the end, it is up to the student. Not every student is willing to do the work,” she said.

She added that if she were still teaching at her former school, she probably would not get any bonus pay since MCAS scores in that school were generally low, while at the Talmadge she might because the students do well. “I’m the same teacher both places, so why would I qualify in one school but not another?” she said.

In several hours of conversation, the educators at the Talmadge offered many ideas about how to best educate low-income and minority children. The suggestions they put forward when asked open-ended questions about what works and what could be improved had no relationship to the plans being promoted in Washington, D.C., or on Beacon Hill. Readiness Schools never came up. No Child Left Behind was dismissed as unrealistic by Crowley, who said, “They expect ELL (English language learner) students to take the test after being in the country just one year. I’d like to see them go to Spain and take a test as hard as MCAS after just one year and see how they do.” Charter schools were not suggested as a solution. The union contract was not cited as an impediment to quality teaching.

A school reform idea worth proposing? Perhaps policymakers should be required to spend at least one day in a public school talking to staff and students about why Massachusetts public schools are, on average, doing so well before they vote on the next major education overhaul.

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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 — China or Greece, Archaeology of Ancient Civilizations*. **Booking now.** Visit www.nowvoyagereducation.com, call Carol Cohen at 781.784.5197 or e-mail carolcohen@verizon.net.

“ART FROM INTUITION” by MTA member Dean Nimmer. Over 10,000 enthusiastic artists, teachers and students can’t be wrong! This book guarantees to jump-start creativity in the classroom for children of all ages. Available at bookstores, *Amazon.com* and www.artfromintuition.com.

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EDUCATION/LICENSURE

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IS YOUR PRELIMINARY LICENSE EXPIRING? Get your Initial license in six months. PRPIL (Performance Review Program for Initial Licensure) is a portfolio-based route to Initial Licensure offered exclusively by *Class Measures* through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Visit www.classmeasures.com or call 781.939.5699 for more information.

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TEACHER LICENSURE PROGRAM — If you have a Preliminary License 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 are offered on weekends and during the summer at our Dedham site.

MASTER OF EDUCATION WITH PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE — Saturday classes, \$575 per class: *Reading Specialist (Initial)*, *Early Childhood, Elementary, Special Needs PreK-8, Middle School, and Secondary*. Classes are held in Quincy or on-site in your district. M.Ed. with Initial licensure one evening a week in Quincy. Contact Eastern Nazarene College at 617.774.6703 or visit www.enc.edu.

ELEMENTARY PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE PROGRAMS — 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

“Professional Development and Licensure.” The district-based programs are offered in Dedham with Framingham State College.

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out the new grading calculator and lesson plan generator and be a part of this community! www.iTeachToo.com is fun, creative and free! The more we share, the more we learn. Members range from Alaska to Massachusetts!

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TRAVEL

PETER AND ELEANOR SANTOS WILL TRAVEL IN JULY 2010 — The destination is still a mystery but will be known by the time you read this. E-mail santos@crocker.com or call 413.567.3046. Together with C-tours, we wish you a happy Thanksgiving!

LONDON, PARIS AND AMSTERDAM FEBRUARY SCHOOL VACATION — 10 days, round-trip air, eight nights of quality accommodations, three city tours, Eurostar train London-Paris, Seine night cruise, breakfast daily, half-price theater tickets in London. \$1,699. For details, e-mail MeandBobMcGee@aol.com.

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EUROPE FEBRUARY VACATION — Award-winning all/mostly inclusive vacations: Sorrento, Rome, Feb. 13-21. \$1,899 per person all-inclusive. Flights, daily sightseeing, all meals, four-star hotel. Sorrento, Capri, Amalfi drive, Pompeii-Naples, Rome, Vatican City. London & Paris, Feb. 11-19. \$2,099 full sightseeing, most meals. Custom group bids available! Call Durgan Travel 781.438.2224.

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TRAVEL/STUDY

GREECE IN APRIL — Join Us! *The Examined Life: Greek Studies in the Schools* (ExL) encourages educators, K-12, to apply for 2010 Greek Study Fellowships. CEUs, PDPs, graduate credit. Stipends available. Please inquire: E-mail connie_carven@teachgreece.org or call 781.405.6094.

SEMINAR: EDUCATION IN IRELAND (6 Graduate Credits) — July 1-July 24, 2010. National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland. Study aspects of the Irish education system and history, literature and culture of Ireland. Write Barney Keenan, NUI coordinator, at 127 Glen Road, Gorham, N.H. 03581; call 603.466.2972; or e-mail Lilysky@ncia.net. **The Trip of a Lifetime!**

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JENSEN BEACH, FLORIDA — ON THE OCEAN. 2/2 Condo, first floor, large porch, No pets, nonsmoking, monthly rentals, 978.468.4657.

ST. CROIX, USVI — Charming Reef Teague Bay 2BR, 2-bath villa, beach, pool, restaurant, deli, golf course. W/many amenities. Available for immediate holiday rental. Call 413.567.6617.

POMPANO BEACH, FLORIDA — Timeshare for sale (\$2,350) or rent (\$650) for April school vacation. One-bedroom 1.5-bath townhouse on private beach. Call 413.782.8165 or e-mail jmm8600@verizon.net.

CONDO RENTALS — One-bedroom and/or two-bedroom newly renovated condos. Discount available for MTA members and families. View pictures and contact information at <http://home.comcast.net/~paterrell/>.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

THE MUSEUM OF RUSSIAN ICONS in Clinton is looking for people to join our group of volunteer docent tour guides. Learn about art, meet people and introduce visitors to the museum. The group meets every other Wednesday morning. Contact Tara Young at 978.598.5000, ext. 13, or tyoung@museumofrussianicons.org.

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MTA Today

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Suit seeks health insurance for adjunct faculty members

By Sarah Nathan

The MTA, the Massachusetts Community College Council and five instructors have filed a lawsuit seeking to force the state to offer health insurance coverage to adjunct faculty members who teach multiple courses on different public higher education campuses.

The suit, filed in November in Suffolk Superior Court, would affect part-time instructors working at community and state colleges and the University of Massachusetts.

"We are taking legal action to right a wrong that has been overlooked for too long and get some much-needed relief for these faculty members," said MTA President Anne Wass. "This lawsuit is about investing in public higher education."

The unfair treatment of adjunct faculty members is well documented in Massachusetts and across the country. More than half of the undergraduate courses at public colleges are taught by part-time faculty, many of whom teach at several institutions to patch together a living.

Despite their contributions to public higher education, these faculty members are paid by the course and not given health insurance benefits.

In the Massachusetts community college system, adjuncts are paid between \$2,535 and \$3,069 per three-credit course. Five courses per semester constitute a full teaching load at community colleges in the state.

The legal action addresses two separate fronts.

First, the suit alleges that the Commonwealth is erroneously refusing the faculty members access to the Group Insurance Commission, the state agency that administers health care coverage for state employees. The plaintiffs argue that adjunct instructors meet the definition of part-time employee as outlined in state law and must be treated as such.

"These part-time instructors sacrifice and persist because they love their work," said MCCC President



Photo by Sarah Nathan

Instructor John Cipora teaches a class at Holyoke Community College.

Joseph LeBlanc. "They persist in a challenging work environment, and wages are just one part of the problem."

"Despite the Commonwealth's groundbreaking 2006 law expanding access for Massachusetts residents to health insurance, these adjunct faculty members are given minimum pay for each course they teach and are then forced to pay hundreds of dollars each month for health insurance," he added.

The MTA, the MCCC and the instructors are also alleging that the state has not implemented the part of the Massachusetts Health Care Reform Act that would provide assistance, in the form of pro-rated contributions, to faculty members who cannot get health insurance from the GIC and instead buy coverage through the Commonwealth Health Insurance Connector Authority. The authority, an independent state agency tasked with helping citizens secure health insurance, was created after the passage of the reform act, which established a system to require almost all individuals to obtain health insurance.

"It's absurd," said John Cipora, who has served as an adjunct psychology and sociology instructor at Holyoke Community College since 2001 and is one of the plaintiffs in the case. "It's absurd that the state mandates health care for employers, but doesn't recognize us as employees."

"To have earned a doctorate and not be able to have health insurance is unbelievably unfair," Cipora said.

Another plaintiff, Patrick Lochelt, teaches more than a full course load at Northern Essex Community College and Middlesex Community College.

Lochelt noted that there are between 20 and 25 students in each of his classes and that in addition to actual instruction time, he spends about 20 hours a week reviewing their work. Because he teaches writing classes and requires each student to write five essays, he estimates that he grades about 1,000 papers per semester.

Lochelt, who has been teaching in Massachusetts for five years, says he does it because he loves the work.

'I make less than half per course what a full-time person makes, and I wake up every morning worrying about the bills I have to pay. It takes an enormous toll in every way.'

— Cynthia Duda
Adjunct English Instructor

He also believes that he meets the definition of a state worker under Massachusetts law, which clearly states that employees working 18.75 hours per week are eligible for health coverage.

"It's about fairness," Lochelt said. "I teach the amount that I do because I love the work, I like making a difference in the lives of my students, and it helps me to make the money that I need to live modestly. However, it is frustrating to give so much and get so little back in return."

Cynthia Duda, an adjunct English instructor at Bunker Hill Community College and North Shore Community College, said that being solely responsible for her health insurance is challenging year after year.

"I don't know how much longer I can go on like this," said Duda, who is also among the plaintiffs in the lawsuit.

"I'm 61, so my health insurance costs more because I'm older," added Duda, who has been working as an adjunct instructor since 1990. "I make less than half per course what a full-time person makes, and I wake up every morning worrying about the bills I have to pay. It takes an enormous toll in every way."

She also pointed to the reliance that colleges place on adjunct faculty to keep serving their many thousands of students.

"If the part-time teachers didn't show up, these schools would shut down," Duda said.

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

All a-Twitter about a networking phenomenon

A LOCAL PRESIDENT SINGS ITS PRAISES

Introduced just two years ago, Twitter has exploded onto the communications scene, now listing more than five million members in its online directory. Users send abbreviated group text messages – a maximum of 140 characters – that are instantly transmitted via phone or online through www.twitter.com. Although originally designed for social networking, Twitter has also emerged as a way to gather and disseminate work-related information in real time on a wide range of matters.

“There was no way in the world I was going to use Twitter,” said Diana Marcus, president of the Burlington Educators Association. “I thought it was just a way of finding out things like who was having a latte at Starbucks. But recently I was faced with a situation in our local where I needed to accelerate and expand communications beyond what I had already implemented. I discovered Twitter is an immediate way to get information to and from our members. Also, many members are already there – using the new technologies. Old tried-and-true methods of communication such as e-mail aren’t enough anymore.”

Information on the run

Marcus routinely “tweets” members of her local about a wide variety of topics.

For example, she sent a message before members received their initial paychecks asking them to verify amounts so if there were a problem it could be corrected right away. Marcus also sends out links to Web site articles on the latest educator topics and asks for member comments.

“I frequently alert members to sites on www.mtabenefits.com where they can find money-saving programs – everything from dental insurance to travel – that are relevant to their lives and work,” said Marcus.

She added that she distributes messages through standard channels such as



‘The beauty of Twitter is that you can communicate with people who are on the road and on the run.’

– Diana Marcus
President, Burlington Educators Association

e-mail, newsletters and regular mail for members who aren’t comfortable with newer technology.

“The beauty of Twitter is that you can communicate with people who are on the road and on the run,” said Marcus. “It’s easy and it’s free. You can just pull out your phone to receive or send a message.”



Social media workshops

The MTA Communications Division offers workshops on how locals can use social media to engage and organize members. See web.massteacher.org for dates of upcoming workshops or contact Meg Secatore at msecatore@massteacher.org.

An MTA member since 2004

STEFANIE CHRISTO ~ another fan of MTA Benefits

PROFESSION: English teacher at Waltham High School

A MEMBER OF: Waltham Educators Association

Why teaching is important to her:

“Connecting with students on a one-on-one basis gives me the opportunity to impact their future in a positive way.”

How she takes advantage of MTA Benefits:

“I’m a frequent visitor to museums. With my MTA card, I can get in free or at a reduced cost. I also save on a gym membership each month with my member discount.”

Why she likes the MTA Benefits & Discount Directory:

“It includes such a wide spectrum of products and services for members. Whether it’s insurance, flowers, hotels or almost anything else, a member can find it in the directory – at an exclusive member discount.”





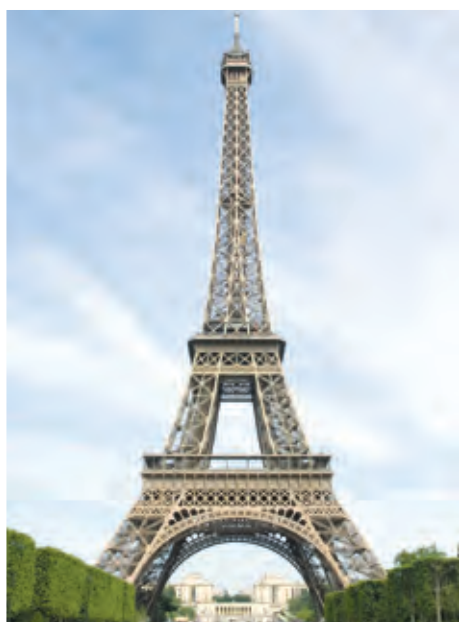
Shopping for the holidays – in Paris

Would you like to shop on the Champs-Élysées in Paris, sightsee in Savannah and Charleston or enjoy a fun-in-the-sun vacation during your winter getaway? These and other fascinating destinations are available to MTA members at surprisingly affordable prices through the MTA Vacation Center.

GO AHEAD TOURS

Paris City Stay – 9 days

Brighten your holidays in the City of Lights. Buy wonderful holiday gifts – for someone else or for yourself – in designer salons along the Champs-Élysées, chic boutiques of the Opéra district and world-renowned department stores and outdoor markets. Also enjoy the other exciting places of Paris – world-class



museums, star-ranked restaurants, grand gardens and legendary landmarks.

Charleston to Savannah: Southern Comfort – 7 days

This is a perfect trip for February school vacation week. Discover the charm, antebellum culture and colorful cuisine of Charleston and Savannah, favorite cities of the South. Charleston landmarks include the Old Citadel, Battery, Rainbow Row, Old Exchange Building and City Market. Savannah is America's first "planned city" with its 21 elegantly landscaped public squares. City highlights include Forsyth Park, River Street and the Cotton Exchange.

TNT VACATIONS

Punta Cana (Dominican Republic)

This has become the Caribbean's dream destination with its unspoiled beaches and discrete selection of world-class resorts. Punta Cana, which stretches along the country's beautiful eastern coast, is famous for its miles-long beach lined with thousands of palm trees. The best time to travel is from November to March when daytime temperatures are in the 80s, nighttime temperatures are in the 60s and breezes constantly flow.



Riviera Maya (Mexico)

The delightful town of Playa del Carmen and its resort area, the Riviera Maya, are places to relax and unwind. Enjoy the sun, miles of beach, snorkeling in a secluded natural pool and good living at TNT's all-inclusive resorts. Nearby is Tulum, one of the Yucatan's most magnificent Mayan ruins.

For prices and more information on discounted travel and special deals with Go Ahead Tours and TNT Vacations, visit the MTA Vacation Center at www.mtavacations.com.

There are no blackout dates, which means no restrictions during holidays and school vacation weeks. Book online for Go Ahead Tours and save an additional \$150 per person (use promo code **MTA-910002**); with TNT Vacations, save an extra 5 percent (use promo code **MTA**). Enjoy more rewards when you use the MTASM Credit Card for travel and shopping.

Great giveaways



Another Wow Wii!

Enter the MTA Benefits Fall Giveaway for your chance to win the hugely popular

Nintendo Wii featuring Mario, Zelda, Metroid, Wii Sports and Wii Play games. Sign up from Nov. 30 to Dec. 13 by going to www.mtabenefits.com, clicking on "Members Only" and then "MTAB Giveaways" and following the easy instructions.

A high-definition TV!

Complete an online auto or home insurance quote via **MTAB's Quick Quoter by Dec. 13** and you will be automatically entered into the drawing for a high-definition TV, a \$600 value, courtesy of The Hanover Insurance Company and MTA Benefits. Visit www.mtabenefits.com, click on the box that says "Save Big on Auto Insurance," then click on "Quote Now" and follow the instructions. You'll also receive a free \$5 Borders[®] gift card.



The winners of both giveaways will be announced Dec. 14 under "What's New" on our home page.



Editor: Maryann C. Robinson
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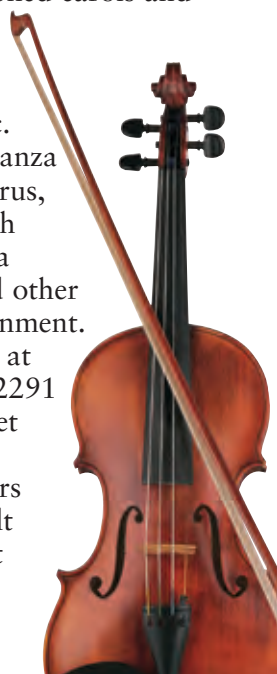
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The Tip Sheet

Enjoy the season's bounty, beauty and big entertainment – at a discount

Hear the sounds of the holidays

The Springfield Symphony Orchestra celebrates the season in grand style. Festivities begin with the **Traditional Holiday Pops** on **Saturday, Dec. 5**, an evening of old-fashioned carols and holiday songs featuring the symphony chorus. The Family Holiday Festival on Sunday, Dec. 6, is a musical extravaganza with the symphony chorus, student musicians, youth chorus and orchestras, a musical petting zoo and other family-oriented entertainment. Both celebrations begin at 8 p.m. Phone 413.733.2291 for information on ticket availability and concert locations. MTA members and one additional adult family member each get a 20 percent discount on tickets.



Take off for the top of the world

Enjoy the exhilaration and majesty of the mountains with Classic Ski Tours/Vermont Travel Club. In Vermont, ski at such popular places as **Okemo Mountain Resort, Killington and Mount Snow**. In Utah, known for “the greatest snow on Earth,” enjoy ski thrills at **The Canyons, Solitude, Alta and Snowbird**. The Vermont Travel Club Card saves MTA members up to \$30 on single-day lift tickets and \$54 or more on multi-day tickets to these top ski resorts. You also enjoy a 10 percent discount on dining and up to a 20 percent discount on lodging. Get \$10 off the retail price of \$39 for one to three cards or \$10 off a family pack of four cards for \$99. To receive the discount, register online at www.classicskitours.net, click on “Vermont Travel Club Card” and enter discount code **MTA SKI 10**.

Vermont



Boston



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Museums



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For more information on events and savings, look in your copy of the new MTA Benefits & Discount Directory or visit www.mtabenefits.com and click on “1000+ Discounts.”

Your very own stimulus plan

President Obama's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act focuses on stimulating economic recovery and helping to create a stronger and more prosperous nation. Why not take that approach on a personal level to improve your own economic well-being? Here's how MTA Benefits can help you with your stimulus plan:

Cut high interest rates by as much as two-thirds. Are you stressed because of high interest rates on your debt balances? You'll find welcome relief with an MTASM Personal Loan Account offering variable rates as low as 7.99 percent APR*, helping you to pay off debt faster**. Borrow from \$3,000 to \$25,000*** with no collateral required. Conditions and restrictions apply. Call 866.266.0211 and mention priority code UAA5CR.

Make shopping more rewarding. The MTASM Credit Card with WorldPoints® rewards lets you earn cash, travel (major U.S. airlines with no blackout dates) and merchandise (more than 1,000 brand name items from which to choose). You enjoy a low introductory APR offer and a low variable APR on purchases with the Platinum Plus® card. For information about rates, fees, other costs and benefits associated with this card or to apply, visit www.mtabenefits.com or call

877.721.9398 and mention source code UAA6HN. This credit card program is issued and administered by FIA Card Services, N.A.

Earn competitive rates with the safety of FDIC Insurance. The recent economic crisis showed the need to protect your savings. With FDIC-insured and MTA-sponsored deposit accounts, you can put your mind at rest and your money to work. Both types of MTASM Deposit Accounts – certificates of deposit and money market savings accounts – earn competitive rates and are provided by Bank of America. Conditions apply and rates vary. **To find out more or to request an application, call 800.205.8647 and mention priority code KA15558.**



*We will set your initial variable APR based on creditworthiness. APR will be calculated by adding a margin to the highest U.S. Prime Rate as published in The Wall Street Journal on the last publication day of each month. On 8/31/09, the U.S. Prime Rate applicable using this formula was 3.25 percent and APR range was 7.99 percent to 18.99 percent. We may adjust your APR on a monthly basis due to changes to the prime rate. We also reserve the right to change your APR, fees, or other credit terms at our discretion. Repayment term and payment amount are estimates which may change if, for example: your APR changes, you make late or partial payments, we assess fees, or you take additional advances. There is a 2 percent transaction fee on each advance (minimum fee \$5; there is no maximum). A transaction fee is added to balance and accrues finance charges. Other fees may apply.

**We may prohibit use of this account to pay off or pay down any account issued by FIA Card Services, N.A.

*** Upon approval, we will establish your credit line between \$3,000 and \$25,000 based on creditworthiness.

This account is issued and administered by FIA Card Services, N.A.

A member talks about retirement planning

“MetLife made it easy for me. Chris Burnes, my MetLife representative, helped me roll over a retirement account from a previous job into an MTA tax-sheltered annuity. I had not done this before, and Chris made things clear to me so I understood the tax advantages and investment possibilities. He helped me to feel confident that I'd reach my financial goals for retirement.”

– Jamie Valente,
Education
Association of
Plymouth
and Carver



START RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW Plan for a great retirement

Did you know:



- You should have 80 percent to 90 percent of your current yearly income during retirement.
- An annuity can provide more guaranteed lifetime income than you could provide by investing the same assets on your own.

Source: www.MetLife.com

That's why it's important to start planning now. MetLife®, partner in the MTA Tax-Sheltered Annuity Program, makes it easy for you to set up a retirement plan that works for you now and gives you the lifestyle you want later.



JUST FILL IN THIS EASY FORM:

Name _____
Local Association _____
Age _____ Expected retirement age _____
Address _____
Home phone _____ Cell phone _____
Personal e-mail address _____

Mail to: Christopher Burnes, MetLife Resources
One Research Drive, Suite 205C
Westborough, MA 01581
508.870.1925, ext. 4465

Questions?
Contact Christopher Burnes
at cburnes@metlife.com.

All program and pricing information was current at the time of publication (November 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.