

# MTA Today

A publication of the Massachusetts Teachers Association  
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## ALL OUT TO DEFEAT QUESTION 2





# Vote AGAINST Question 2 — and FOR Hillary Clinton

There is much at stake for students, educators and public education as voters head to the polls on Nov. 8.

The MTA strongly urges members to vote NO on Question 2, an initiative that would lift the cap on charter schools, and to vote for the association's recommended candidate for president, Hillary Clinton.

■ If passed, Question 2 would allow the state to approve 12 new Commonwealth charter schools every year forever, draining billions of dollars from our district public schools and destabilizing our public education system. It would encourage charters to expand into cities and towns where they don't exist now, taking critical resources from successful public schools.

## Early voting is an option

Please make every effort to get to the polls on Nov. 8. If you do not plan to vote in person that day, consider early voting, which begins on Oct. 24 and ends Nov. 4 in Massachusetts. Details are available at [votenoearly.com](http://votenoearly.com), a Save Our Public Schools Web page that provides general information on voting — whether early, absentee or on Election Day — as well as a phone number to call if you have questions and a link for those willing to volunteer on the campaign.

■ Hillary Clinton can be counted on to make the best, most rational choices for students and public education. She knows that teachers, education

support professionals and other educators — from prekindergarten through graduate school — are the real education experts, and she is committed to making sure that educators are included when education policy is made. As educators, we teach our students that kindness, collaboration and cooperation are important in school and in life. The leader of our nation should reflect those values.

In the center of this edition of *MTA Today*, readers will find a General Election Guide that also features MTA-recommended candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives and for the state Senate and House of Representatives. Each of these candidates has shown that he or she will support public education.

## MTA Today

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**This edition also includes the 2016 Election Guide and the Fall issue of The MTA Advantage**

## 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

Energy is surging into the No on 2 campaign as MTA members, parents and other allies work to spread the word about the disastrous impact that passage of the ballot initiative would have on Massachusetts public schools. This edition of *MTA Today* is filled with coverage of the issues surrounding the proposal, which would eliminate the cap on privately run charter schools throughout the state. The MTA and other members of the Save Our Public Schools campaign will continue phone banking, canvassing and taking other actions to oppose Question 2 all the way through Election Day. Also included in this edition is the 2016 General Election Guide, which explains why members should support Hillary Clinton for president and features recommended candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives and the state Legislature.

Cover design by Joshua Degregorio



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## Quote-Unquote

**Public funding for charter schools "necessarily affects the public funding of non-charter schools in the district."**

**— Suffolk Superior Court Judge Heidi Brieger, in her ruling dismissing a lawsuit arguing that a cap on charters is unconstitutional**



# Massachusetts to host NEA RA

## Hundreds of MTA volunteers needed for 2017 event in Boston

By Jean Conley

The National Education Association Representative Assembly will be held at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center from June 30 to July 5 — and the MTA will serve as host to the thousands of delegates from around the country who will set the priorities and policies of the 3-million-member association for the next year.

The chair of the Host Committee for the event is Julia Monteiro Johnson, a longtime MTA activist.

Does she find it daunting that Boston will host the primary legislative and policymaking body of the NEA, which also happens to be the largest democratic deliberative body in the world?

Well, yes, says Monteiro Johnson. But she is quick to add that her excitement far outweighs any anxiety.

She wants delegates and volunteers to experience what she did when she attended her first RA in California. She has been to at least a dozen since then.

“All I can say about it is that you walk into a convention center and you look up — and everybody you see is somehow connected to public education,” Monteiro Johnson said. “It’s absolutely amazing. Even when you’re on the last day and everybody is exhausted, the delegates are still actively engaged. They are committed to doing the business that needs to be done.”

Monteiro Johnson, now retired after 31 years as a library teacher and department chair in the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District, says she is finally able to donate the time and the energy to the things that she wants to be involved in. She adds that having a husband who serves as her “driver and support system” is a big help.

Retired Everett special education teacher Richard Liston is the Host Committee’s treasurer, responsible for handling committee finances. As is the case with Monteiro Johnson, Liston’s decades as a teacher and involvement in the MTA fired his interest in serving on the committee.

Liston knew that the role of treasurer would be challenging, but he is looking forward to the experience.

“After many years as a delegate to various RAs, I thought it would be exciting to help make this a great experience for delegates from across the country,” Liston said. “I also really wanted to show everyone what a great organization the MTA is and how we work together for success.”

There are five subcommittees of the Host Committee, which will oversee delegate services, information, the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, the RA telephone network, and ushers.

Of course, tending to the needs of thousands of out-of-towners is no small job, so the Host



Julia Monteiro Johnson, above, is the chair of the Host Committee for the 2017 NEA RA. She said she wants delegates and volunteers to have the same type of experience she had when she attended her first RA. At left, Richard Liston, pictured at the 2014 MTA Retired Members Gathering, is the treasurer of the Host Committee. “After many years as a delegate to various RAs, I thought it would be exciting to help make this a great experience for delegates from across the country,” Liston remarked.

Photos by Bob Duffy and Scott McLennan

Committee is reaching out to the entire MTA membership in search of volunteers who are eager to be part of this large and important event.

Delegates to the RA are not allowed to be volunteers.

“We will need 200 volunteers every day — and that’s the minimum,” Monteiro Johnson said. “We need ushers, microphone attendants, and people to help with the telephone network and in the information booths. We need ESPs, retirees, new members and higher ed members. We desperately need our members to step up and say, ‘I’m willing to do this.’”

The event will provide the volunteers — many of whom may never have attended an RA before — with the chance to meet fellow educators from

all over the country and get a close-up view of the workings of the NEA RA.

Monteiro Johnson said she is especially happy that the assembly will be in Boston because it allows people from the Northeast region who have not been able to attend conventions elsewhere in past years to attend an RA closer to home.

“We had always been told that there was not a facility large enough in Boston,” she said. “So when I heard that we would finally be hosting at the facility at the Seaport, I said, ‘Wow, that’s so exciting.’ I’m just so delighted that they are coming here.”

*For more information and access to a sign-up form, please visit [massteacher.org/ra](http://massteacher.org/ra), which will be updated as needed during the months ahead.*



## Editorial

# Voting is key to building our power

**Y**our votes in the 2016 election — to defeat Question 2 and to stop Donald Trump from taking the White House — are critical for our state, our public schools and our nation.

We are at a crossroads in this country. Corporate power brokers have set their sights on Massachusetts, pushing a ballot measure that would undermine and deeply destabilize public education. If Question 2

passes, beginning on Jan. 1 the state will be able to approve up to 12 new charter schools each year forever.

Which districts would see massive cuts leading into the next school year? Whose jobs would be lost? Whose students would be underserved? How soon would charters proliferate in your district?



Barbara Madeloni  
MTA President

But the flipside is also true. If we win by defeating Question 2, we will have established that the MTA — in coalition with parents, students, local organizations and other unions — is strong enough, fierce enough and determined enough to use our collective power to fight for the schools our communities deserve.

Your phone calls, canvassing and talks with voters make a difference. Your vote matters, as do those of your family members, friends and neighbors. Vote No on 2 — and be sure to work to get the “No” vote out on Election Day.

While voting for our presidential candidate here in Massachusetts can feel less crucial because of the Electoral College system, make no mistake that it matters. Our votes help send a message to the nation that we refuse the racist, xenophobic, misogynistic lies and intimations of violence coming from one candidate.

We must declare our commitment to the candidate who will protect the Supreme Court, assert union rights and be ready to listen and respond to our demands for public education as a right: Hillary Clinton.

Let’s work to make Election Day a day to celebrate public education, our collective power, and the first woman president. And remember that this year, Massachusetts voters are eligible to vote early — from Oct. 24 to Nov. 4 — so there are other

When we win — the ballot question and the presidential election — it will not only be because each of you went out and did your part. It will also be because lots of allies — from labor and from the community — worked with us.

options if you can’t get to the polls on Nov. 8 or simply want to cast your ballot in advance.

No matter what, we need you to be active in the campaign. Make phone calls to get out the vote. Participate in a stand-out on or before Election Day. Wear your buttons.

Talk to people. Our voices make a difference. We have to use them.

**A**nd then, after Nov. 8, let’s use the power we have gained. The commissioner of education is playing dangerous games with the teacher evaluation system, pretending to improve it but holding on to test-based rating systems.

The Legislature has done nothing to address the recommendations of the Foundation Budget Review Commission regarding school funding. Our secretary of education continues to push privatization plans and austerity budgets on public higher education. And we will need to hold Clinton’s feet to the fire to ensure that she delivers on promises of economic and racial justice and support for real public education.

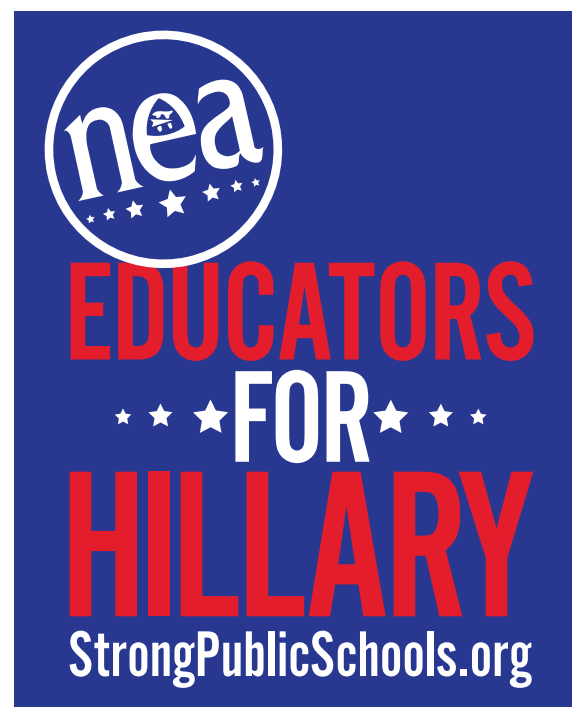
Let’s hold forums across the state and build our vision for the schools and colleges our communities deserve.

Let’s fight for the Fair Share Amendment and full funding for public education, from prekindergarten through graduate school.

Let’s grow the opt-out movement and demand that assessment be returned to the classroom.

Let’s push back against the educator evaluation system being used to punish and constrain our practice.

Let’s work to regain seniority rights.



Let’s work together for a living wage for ESPs and for benefits, fair pay and reasonable employment expectations for adjuncts.

When we win — the ballot question and the presidential election — it will not only be because each of you went out and did your part. It will also be because lots of allies — from labor and from the community — worked with us.

We need to remember this — and as we build our power locally and statewide, we need to stand for and with these allies on issues that matter: paid family medical leave, a higher minimum wage, immigrant rights, an end to the school-to-prison pipeline, single-payer health care, global warming, and an end to racism and economic injustice.

We are at a crossroads. Let’s march together for our students and our communities.

### Letters policy

**M**TA Today welcomes letters to the editor from MTA members. Letters should be no longer than 200 words. Each letter submitted for publication must address a topic covered in MTA Today, must be signed and must include the writer’s telephone number for confirmation purposes. Opinions must be clearly identified as belonging to the letter-writer. We reserve the right to edit for length, clarity and style. To submit a letter, mail it to MTA Today, 2 Heritage Drive, 8th floor, Quincy, MA 02171-2119, or e-mail it to [mtatodayletters@massteacher.org](mailto:mtatodayletters@massteacher.org). For additional information, please refer to the guidelines posted on [www.massteacher.org](http://www.massteacher.org).



# Peyser faces protest at UMass Boston

By Scott McLennan

Faculty members, staff and students seized upon Education Secretary James Peyser's recent appearance at the UMass Boston convocation to protest faculty cuts amid rising tuition and fees on the campus.

The activists called for adequate state investment in public higher education, and they took Peyser to task for opposing the proposed Fair Share Amendment, which would provide almost \$2 billion annually to public education and transportation.

Student and employee activists packed the convocation on Sept. 15, carrying signs criticizing the state's level of support for public colleges. They booed when Peyser refused to explain why he opposes the Fair Share Amendment. The amendment, which is intended to be placed before voters in the 2018 election, would add 4 percent to the state income tax on annual income above \$1 million.

Following the convocation, about 200 students, faculty members and staff rallied on the campus plaza, affirming their commitment to high-quality and accessible public education.

Allies from the Save Our Public Schools campaign, which is fighting the proposed lift of the state's cap on Commonwealth charter schools, also joined in.

Boston City Councilor Tito Jackson led the crowd in chants of "Whose schools? Our schools!" and "Hey, ho, Question 2 has got to go!"

MTA President Barbara Madeloni reflected on Peyser's convocation speech and called his remarks "chilling," especially when he invoked Henry Ford as a role model. Madeloni contrasted the image of Ford's auto factories, obsessed with efficiency, with her own vision of a university as a place where relationships form the foundation of learning.

UMass Boston educators and students were outraged last spring when approximately 400 non-tenure-track instructors received notice that they might not be called back for the fall semester. The university claimed it needed to address a budget deficit but was not sure how many faculty members it would actually need to cut.

Notifying most of the adjunct staff caused huge disruption; some instructors left to find work elsewhere rather than wait to see if their courses would be offered in the fall. Morale suffered as veteran professors, even those who were eventually called back, were left feeling undervalued.

By the time the fall semester began, roughly 100 positions were cut. Even with the addition of some



Photo by Chris Christof

Boston City Councilor Tito Jackson led chants of "Whose schools? Our schools!" and "Hey, ho, Question 2 has got to go!" during a rally at UMass Boston on Sept. 15.

new tenure-track instructors, course sections were eliminated, which faculty leaders had feared would happen.

In addition to seeing course offerings reduced, UMass Boston students saw an increase in tuition and fees.

"The FSU, Professional Staff Union, Classified Staff Union and Graduate Employee Organization are working together to fight these cuts and cost hikes as they undermine the mission of UMass Boston," said Marlene Kim, president of the Faculty Staff Union. "Public universities have a responsibility to the communities they serve, and likewise the state has a responsibility to support the mission and objectives of its public colleges."

Union locals at UMass Boston have been working collaboratively to address the cuts on campus. Leaders have spoken out against the handling of the deficit during UMass Board of Trustees meetings, and they jointly submitted a letter to *The Boston Globe* criticizing a vice chancellor for telling the newspaper that negotiated raises for employees were responsible for the deficit.

Their letter, published on Sept. 25, pointed out that Vice Chancellor Ellen O'Connor was incorrect in stating that employees were receiving 4 percent annual pay increases. Even if they were, the writers said, it would not account for an \$18 million spike in spending.

Union leaders are not calling for cuts elsewhere, however. Instead, they are asking university leaders to join them in advocating for increased funding for public higher education.

"Demanding adequate funding for public colleges and universities and opposing the cap lift on charter schools are just different parts of the same fight," Madeloni said.

"As educators, we understand the devastating effect debt can have on a student's ability to complete a degree program," she continued. "And we see firsthand how our K-12 schools suffer as millions of dollars flow into privately run charter schools. The Legislature and governor need to be held accountable and work with us to make sure every student at every level has access to quality public education."

## **JOBS AT THE MTA**

The Massachusetts Teachers Association is hiring. To view available job opportunities, please visit [massteacher.org/jobs](http://massteacher.org/jobs).

The MTA is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We value our diverse workforce and welcome applications from minorities, women and persons with disabilities.





Photo by Scott McLennan

MTA leaders, members and staff gathered at an All Presidents' Meeting in Southbridge on Sept. 24 to work on plans to defeat Question 2.

# Ballot fight goes down to the wire

By Laura Barrett

Energy continues to surge into the No on 2 campaign as voters become increasingly concerned about how lifting the cap on charter schools would affect students who attend their district public schools.

MTA members and other activists taking part in the Save Our Public Schools campaign are vowing to keep working through Election Day, supporting a “no” vote through phone banking, knocking on doors, holding signs, posting on social media and engaging in thousands of conversations with friends, neighbors and relatives.

That work is paying off. More than 165 school committees — from Adams-Cheshire to Monomoy and everywhere in between — have voted to oppose lifting the cap on charter schools. Also opposed are the NAACP, the Massachusetts PTA, U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren and Edward Markey, Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey, Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, the Democratic State Committee, the Massachusetts AFL-CIO and numerous other civil rights, parent, student and labor organizations.

The MTA is one of the leaders of the No on 2 campaign.

“Our efforts are making a huge difference, but we can’t stop now,” said MTA President Barbara Madeloni. “Even though the ‘yes’ supporters are outspending us two to one, their lead is slipping away. They are redoubling their efforts, and we must do the same. This is a wonderful opportunity for members to experience the power and respect that come from being an educator.”

Madeloni said it has become clear that this initiative is about more than just charter schools.



Photo by Chris Christo

Educators showed their support for the No on 2 campaign with signs and stickers on Sept. 20, just before Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester spoke at Brockton High School. Chester, a charter school supporter, was booed by parents and educators who turned out for the forum.

“It’s about whether we value public education enough to protect, fund and improve it for all students,” she said.

“It’s about who gets to decide education policy in our state — the Waltons from Arkansas or Massachusetts educators, families and the local leaders we elect.

“And it’s about standing up for decent wages, hours and working conditions for educators while calling out the charter model of hiring unlicensed teachers, depriving educators of a collective voice and burning them out in two or three years.”

Even many charter school supporters oppose Question 2, understanding that it would — in Mayor Walsh’s words — “wreak havoc” on public school finances.

Question 2 would allow the state to approve 12 new schools every year in perpetuity, on top of the dozens that could already open under the existing cap. Even more significantly, it would eliminate the limit on how much money can be diverted from public schools to charters. Today, that figure is 9 percent of school spending in most districts; it is 18 percent in Boston and other districts in the bottom 10 percent based on test scores.

“Question 2 could open the floodgates to charterizing entire districts in just a few short years,” said Erik J. Champy, vice president of the MTA and a former president of the Massachusetts PTA. “It’s a threat to our public schools and all who care about them.”

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# Charter school seeks 'damages' from teachers

Mystic Valley demands thousands from educators who resigned to take public education jobs

By Laura Barrett

**A**s a teacher, you'd have to do something pretty bad for your school to come after you for \$6,087, right?

You would think so — unless, that is, you were a teacher at the Mystic Valley Regional Charter School in Malden.

Three recent Mystic Valley employees came to the MTA for help when they received letters billing them for thousands of dollars. Their offense? Resigning before the start of the upcoming school year to take better jobs with public schools in the Greater Boston area.

The MTA's Legal Services Division is helping all three fight the bills.

Their stories underscore how abusive charter schools can be when no union or local school committee has any authority to keep them in check.

"It was shocking, hurtful and, of course, very stressful to get that letter," said Matthew Kowalski, a high school history and economics teacher. "I felt I was a good employee at Mystic Valley for seven years. I didn't run out on my responsibilities. I didn't leave the school in a damaging way. I can only assume they are coming after me to scare other teachers because they lose so many teachers every year."

Kowalski worked in the business world for five years before deciding to become a teacher. He taught in a Catholic school and then earned a master's degree in education at Boston College. He landed a job at Mystic Valley in the fall of 2009, heading there with a positive impression of charter schools.

"I saw some of the good things they are doing, but also a lot of problems with the system," he said. "A big one is that teachers feel powerless. Their opinions are not always valued. A lot of decisions about the curriculum are made by the trustees, who for the most part don't have any background in education — at least not in the classroom."

The grinding schedule at the school also presented problems for family life. The school year is a month longer and the school day is an hour longer at Mystic Valley than at most public schools, and the teachers there have no job security. With three children under the age of 6 and another one due in November, Kowalski was eager to get a more stable job in a public school.

**B**ecause they are not in a union, charter school staff members are at-will employees. At Mystic Valley, employees have to sign a new contract each year, no matter how long they have worked there. The contract for 2016-17 stipulates: "The School reserves the right to terminate this agreement at any time, for reasons it determines are in the best interests of the School."

It goes on to say, "If Employee unilaterally terminates his/her employment with the School, Employee shall remain obligated to pay liquidated damages and to refrain from working in other



Photo by Laura Barrett

Teacher Matthew Kowalski was shocked to receive a demand for \$6,087 in damages.

sending district schools for the remainder of the school year."

It gets worse. One might think that this unusual clause must refer to employees who leave in the middle of the school year, but that's not so. The school demands that employees sign the contract in the spring for the upcoming school year — and then pay damages for terminating the contract at any time after that.

"Last year, the contract for the following school year came out in April," Kowalski explained. "I asked for more time because my wife and I were still considering our plans for the following year after we found out we'd be having another child.

"They gave me some extra time, but then I got called into the office and was given an ultimatum to sign by April 29 or give up my position," he continued. "With three young children at home, I couldn't risk not having a job in the fall, so I had to sign. It's tough for teachers, because a lot of openings come up in May, June, July or even later, but I had to sign."

In fact, many jobs do not become available until after June 15, the date by which districts in Massachusetts have to notify teachers who don't have Professional Teacher Status that they won't be rehired in the fall.

"I was offered a job in Walpole a couple of weeks after I signed at Mystic Valley," Kowalski said. "On May 20, exactly three weeks after I had signed the contract, I gave Mystic Valley written and verbal notice that I was offered this other job and I wanted to rescind my acceptance of the contract. I felt confident there were no damages. If I'd just been sent to a training because they expected I'd be back next

year, maybe then I would understand that they'd want reimbursement. But there was nothing like that."

In fact, Mystic Valley quickly hired Kowalski's replacement, whom Kowalski trained and provided with all of his curricula and materials. He also assured students who were juniors that he would write their college recommendations in the fall, even after starting his new job.

Mystic Valley administrators didn't even sign Kowalski's contract until two weeks after he had rescinded his signature. He was sure there wouldn't be a problem. "I was shocked in the middle of July to get a letter demanding a payment of over \$6,000 for liquidated damages," he said. "What damages?"

He contacted his soon-to-be local association president in Walpole and was put in touch with the MTA Legal Services Division. In an Aug. 24 letter to Mystic Valley School Director Martin Trice, Kowalski's MTA attorney wrote, "Why you would sign a contract after the other party had revoked his acceptance in writing is mystifying. Your efforts to then claim liquidated damages border on the unconscionable."

The attorney also attacked the contract's non-compete clause forbidding former Mystic Valley teachers from working for one of the many sending districts, writing, "It would seem highly anomalous that charter schools, statutorily established to 'stimulate the development of innovative programs within schools,' would prevent their employees from disseminating their innovations into these other public schools. Given that all of this is financed through public funds, the anomalous likely becomes the unenforceable."

The lawyer also noted that district schools not only cannot forbid their teachers from working in a competing charter school, but are legally required to give them a leave of absence of up to two years if they want to work in a charter school. The double standards abound.

**K**owalski soon learned he wasn't alone in fighting his former employer. Stephen Tassinari, who had been a "floating" teacher before becoming a special education teacher, received similar bad news after notifying Mystic Valley that he was leaving at the end of his fourth year at the school. He was charged \$4,900 in "damages."

"Teachers there come and go like a revolving door," he said. "Most people do two years and leave." Like Kowalski, Tassinari believes the school is trying to enforce the liquidated damages clause to stop the revolving door.

Rather than improve pay and working conditions, the school uses strong-arm tactics through the charter-imposed contract to force teachers to stay.

Although Tassinari liked many of his colleagues and students at Mystic Valley, he was ready for a change. He was offered a position in the Stoneham Public Schools and resigned from the charter school

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# Honoring a colleague — and her activism

## Retirees celebrate Gladys Durant's life and share election energy

By Scott McLennan

The 15th annual Retired Members Gathering honored longtime MTA activist Gladys Durant, who died in June. And the gathering itself reflected her can-do spirit, as numerous retired members committed to participating in the campaign to defeat Question 2.

The event, held Sept. 28 at the Sheraton Framingham Hotel and Conference Center, also offered workshops and social opportunities, along with updates from MTA leadership.

Retired Members Committee Co-Chairs Kathleen Roberts and Richard Liston welcomed the hundreds of attendees, who in turn gave Roberts a standing ovation in recognition of her recent 102nd birthday.

Liston addressed the attendees, saying, "While we may have left our classrooms, we never left this profession — and I know you are all committed to our active members and our public school students as well."

He highlighted a new mentoring initiative between retirees and the Student Educators Association of Massachusetts, or SEAM, and he commended the success that retirees achieved in gathering signatures last year to move the Fair Share Amendment toward the ballot in 2018. The amendment would raise revenue for public education and transportation through an additional 4 percent tax on annual income over \$1 million.

Liston urged his fellow retirees to be involved in the Save Our Public Schools campaign to defeat ballot Question 2, which seeks to lift the cap on charter schools. Many heeded the call by signing up for various actions and picking up "No on 2" yard signs to display in their neighborhoods.

"There is a lot of rhetoric being presented by charter school proponents," Liston said. "But Massachusetts public schools are the best in the country. That's because we did a good job. We made a difference in the lives of so many students, as our active teachers currently do, and our future teachers, with our support, will continue to do."

MTA Vice President Erik J. Champy applauded the retirees, telling them, "We stand on your shoulders. You fought the fights that have been so important to educators and students." Further, Champy acknowledged many individuals at the gathering for nurturing his path to leadership.

MTA President Barbara Madeloni praised the professionalism of the retirees, calling them and active educators "experts in our field."

In opposing Question 2, she said, "we have an amazing opportunity to be leaders in protecting public education."

Executive Director-Treasurer Ann Clarke wore two hats — literally — as she addressed the crowd.

First she donned a "Save Our Public Schools" cap to emphasize the MTA's commitment to the No



The annual Retired Members Gathering, held on Sept. 28 in Framingham, provided MTA retirees with a chance to network, share a meal and hear speeches from MTA leaders. The event reflected the activist spirit of Gladys Durant, who died in June. The committee recognized her contributions with this year's Honor Our Own award. In the photo at left, Durant's son, Michael, got a kiss from Retired Members Committee Co-Chair Kathleen Roberts after accepting the award on his mother's behalf. Roberts, for her part, received a standing ovation to mark her recent 102nd birthday.

Photos by Scott McLennan

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Durant's son, Michael, accepted the award and described his mother as someone who was passionate about social justice and education.

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on 2 campaign. Then, as the audience applauded, she took off that hat and put on a cap bearing the trademark "H" of the Hillary Clinton presidential campaign. Clarke noted the importance of both defeating the ballot question and making sure that Clinton prevails over Donald Trump in the election.

Presentation of the Honor Our Own award is a highlight of the gathering each year. Typically, the Retired Members Committee solicits nominations. But this year the committee itself decided to recognize Durant, who died June 4 at the age of 75.

Durant taught for more than 30 years in the Attleboro Public Schools and remained active in both her local association and the MTA throughout retirement.

"She was one of a kind, a force of nature," Liston said.

Durant's son, Michael, accepted the award and described his mother as someone who was passionate about social justice and education.

"Whenever there was an election, she made sure we knew how important it was to vote," he said, adding with a laugh: "And my mother *always* made sure we knew whom or what to vote for."

Durant was an active member of the Retired Members Committee at the time of her death. She held other leadership positions in the MTA and had received the Honor Our Own award in 2010.

A couple of annual attractions were in full swing again this year. Mary Gilmore, a former MTA president, was stationed once again at a table featuring a fund-raising raffle for the Voice of Teachers for Education.

Another staple of the event is the donation of school supplies to a district with a high level of need. This year, attendees donated numerous items to the Southbridge Public Schools.



# EMAC Conference: 'Deepening the Conversation' on race

By Jean Conley

**R**ace, Ethnicity and Public Education: Deepening the Conversation” is the theme of the 2016 Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee Conference, which will be held at the Sheraton Framingham Hotel and Conference Center on Dec. 2 and 3.

Yan Yui, a fifth-grade teacher at the Hansen Elementary School in Canton and the new chair of the committee, said this year’s event will focus on shaping discussions about race.

“As last year’s EMAC Conference focused on organizing and building coalitions on a larger scale, this year’s focus is more internal and closer to home,” she said.

“The committee felt that this is the perfect time to deepen the conversation,” she continued. “Which questions should we be asking as ethnic minorities, as educators and as members of communities? How can ethnic minority educators help their students with conversations about race, and how can we help to shape the conversation in general?”

Yui added, “We had great conversations about race, inequality and education at the Summer



Conference. Now we’d like to continue and build upon those.”

The conference will feature representation from members of the National Education Association’s four ethnic minority caucuses: Black, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Asian/Pacific Islander. The four representatives will participate as speakers, as workshop participants and as members of a panel discussion.

Information tables will be set up so that conference participants can learn more about the

NEA’s ethnic minority caucuses during breaks between workshops.

After registration and check-in on Friday, a dinner for those attending the conference will open with welcoming remarks by Yui and MTA leaders. As *MTA Today* went to press, arrangements with conference speakers were still being made.

On Saturday morning, a number of 1½-hour workshop sessions will be held. They include “The School-to-Prison Pipeline,” “Islamophobia,” “Working with Immigrants and Undocumented Students,” “Emerging Leaders,” “Cultural Proficiency,” and “Minorities in the Media.”

Each workshop will be presented twice, with a short break in between sessions.

After lunch on Saturday, attendees will break into groups for facilitated discussions, and then all participants will reassemble to report out just before the conference concludes.

*Please visit [massteacher.org/emac](http://massteacher.org/emac) to register for the conference online. For further information, e-mail Coordinator Jennifer Freeling in the Division of Training and Professional Learning at [events@massteacher.org](mailto:events@massteacher.org) or call the division at 617.878.8150.*



## 2017 HCR AWARD NOMINATIONS

The MTA Human Relations Committee is soliciting nominations for the 2017 MTA Human and Civil Rights Awards, which honor individuals and groups that have shown extraordinary dedication to civil rights and human relations.

The awards will be presented on Friday, June 16, at the 35th annual Human and Civil Rights Awards celebration at the Four Points by Sheraton Norwood Hotel.

For further information, please e-mail Mary Gilgallon, director of the Division of Governance and Administration, at [mgilgallon@massteacher.org](mailto:mgilgallon@massteacher.org).

**NOMINATIONS ARE DUE MARCH 24**  
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# Effort to block PCB testing spurs outcry

By Scott McLennan

The Educational Association of Worcester won a prolonged legal battle in June to conduct testing for dangerous chemicals in the city's public schools, and the public outcry that has followed the Worcester School Committee's attempt to appeal that decision may actually hasten the work needed to address the situation.

Educators and members of the community excoriated the School Committee at its meeting on Oct. 6, describing as unconscionable the committee's decision to block testing for polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, at Doherty and Burncoat high schools despite the fact that officials had known for years that the EAW discovered extremely elevated levels of PCBs in those buildings.

PCBs, which are labeled probable carcinogens by the federal Environmental Protection Agency, have been linked to many illnesses.

Worcester school officials ignored the EAW's findings in 2009 and refused to allow any further testing for PCBs. In 2010, the union filed a charge with the state Department of Labor Relations.

The DLR's decision was a long time in coming. In June of this year, a hearing officer issued a complaint upholding the union's position that it had the right to test caulk at Burncoat and Doherty for PCB levels; the School Committee quickly appealed.

Mayor Joseph Petty, chair of the committee, opposed voting on the appeal and instead moved that



Photo by Scott McLennan

Roger Nugent, president of the Educational Association of Worcester, handed out information about PCBs and their health effects during a recent meeting with union members at Doherty High School.

the board take up the issue during an executive session at its Oct. 20 meeting.

During public comments on Oct. 6, former Worcester Mayor Raymond Mariano criticized the committee for not having moved more quickly to test and to abate any problems related to PCBs. Mariano galvanized the meeting with his testimony that his wife, a teacher at Burncoat, had told him she was concerned about the number of colleagues being diagnosed with cancer. She ultimately developed cancer herself.

"I put my trust in the Worcester School Department," Mariano said, describing the situation as "disgraceful."

Richard Shea, a Worcester resident, retired educator and MTA Senate district coordinator, also blasted the board, telling committee members his wife had worked at Burncoat and that family members attended school there. He said it was time to "do the right thing."

Public school parents and former students, as well as city business owners, likewise urged the School

Worcester school officials ignored the EAW's findings in 2009 and refused to allow any further testing for PCBs. In 2010, the union filed a charge with the state Department of Labor Relations.

Committee to test for the presence of PCBs in the schools.

EAW President Roger Nugent, who testified at the School Committee meeting, said later that officials should have gauged and addressed the problem long ago.

"The EAW discovered high levels of PCBs in schools that we tested more than six years ago. We want the city to acknowledge the problem and to work with us on resolving the problem," he said. "We should all be on the same page when it comes to protecting the health of students and educators."

PCBs were used in the production of caulk and other building materials starting in the 1950s. The federal government banned the manufacture and use of PCBs in 1979. EPA regulations stipulate that materials found to have more than 50 parts per million of PCBs need to be removed and properly disposed of.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer, like the EPA, has declared that PCBs are probable carcinogens. Animal studies have shown that PCBs affect the immune, reproductive, nervous and endocrine systems.

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# Walk-in helps spread 'No on 2' message

By Scott McLennan and Jean Conley

Educators, parents and students gathered at schools across the state before the start of classes on Oct. 6 to take part in a nationwide walk-in organized by the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools.

The alliance is a network of parent, community and labor groups throughout the country dedicated to educational justice and equity.

Across Massachusetts — in cities such as Springfield, Worcester and Fall River and in smaller communities such as Canton, Dedham and Danvers — the rallies and gatherings spread the “No on 2” message in opposition to the November ballot question seeking to lift the cap on charter schools.

Charter schools will drain \$450 million from district public schools this year, and the proposed expansion would pull an estimated \$1 billion a year from public school districts within six years.

In one scene in Springfield that was representative of many others across the state, a large group of public school educators, students, parents and community activists lined the sidewalk outside the Sumner Avenue School.

The group drew enthusiastic support from morning commuters — with drivers honking their horns and calling out encouragement. The Springfield Education Association organized the

walk-in at Sumner and at other schools in the city with support from community allies.

Springfield’s public schools will lose nearly \$36 million to privately run charter schools this year alone.

“We see the resources that are needed in our schools. We see the teachers and the paraprofessionals taking money out of their own pockets to provide for the students and the classrooms. If there are available resources, they should be coming to these schools — not going to charter schools,” said Ipsita Lizardi, a Sumner parent.

In Canton, the walk-in precipitated a flood of participation by educators and parents.

Canton Teachers Association President Patricia Phalan said she is always impressed by the level of commitment and activism shown by her fellow educators, as well as their dedication to their students.

“Teachers are up to their eyebrows in work — and then they have a family at home,” she said. But events such as the walk-in “give educators a chance to reflect on their professionalism and stand up together for the work they do,” she said.

MTA President Barbara Madeloni joined the rally at Canton’s Hansen Elementary School.

“It’s amazing how committed our educators are,” Madeloni said. “Even with everything they

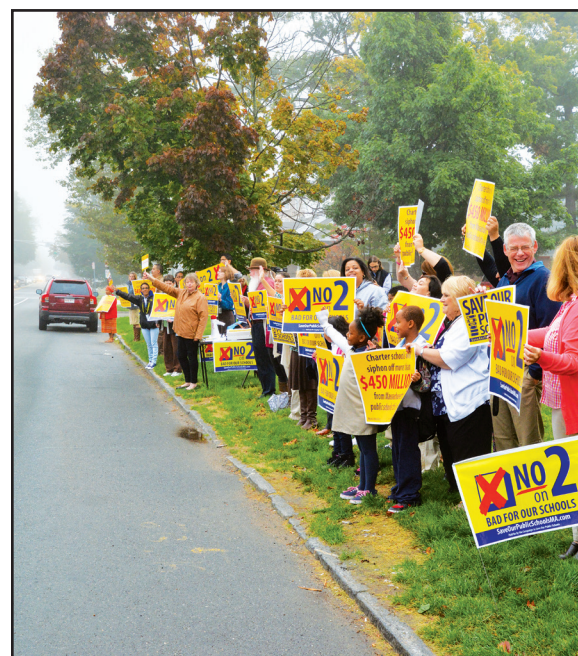
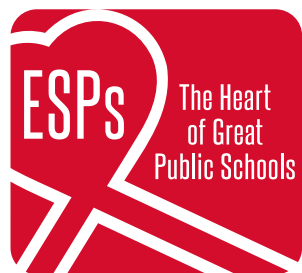


Photo by Chris Christo

A large group of educators, parents, students and community activists lined the sidewalk during the walk-in at the Sumner Avenue School in Springfield.

face, between testing and evaluations, they still really believe in public education and are willing to fight for it.”



## SAVE THE DATES



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# Four Massachusetts teachers receive presidential awards

Four MTA members were honored recently as outstanding math and science teachers.

In August, President Barack Obama named 213 educators as recipients of Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. The Massachusetts honorees were among the educators who received their awards at the DAR Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 8.

Massachusetts kindergarten-through-sixth-grade educators chosen

for the award were John Heffernan, a technology teacher, and Karen Schweitzer, a math teacher.

Both work at the Anne T. Dunphy School in Williamsburg, and both are members of the Williamsburg Teachers Association.



John Heffernan



Neil Plotnick



Karen Schweitzer



Keith Wright

Grade 7-12 educators from Massachusetts selected for the award were Keith Wright, who teaches chemistry at Hampshire Regional High School in Westhampton, and Neil Plotnick, a math teacher at Everett High School. Wright is a member of the Hampshire Regional Education Association. Plotnick is a member of the Everett Teachers Association.

Nomination years alternate between K-6 and 7-12, so the awardees named in August represent two nomination years. Heffernan and Schweitzer were nominated in 2014, while Wright and Plotnick were nominated in 2015.

Following their initial selection at the state level, the winners were chosen

Following their initial selection at the state level, the winners were chosen by a panel of scientists, mathematicians and educators.

by a panel of scientists, mathematicians and educators. Each winner receives a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation to be used at his or her discretion.

*The White House press release on the awards — and more about each of the recipients — can be found at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/08/22/president-obama-honors-outstanding-mathematics-and-science-teachers>.*

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## REGIONAL RETIREMENT CONSULTATIONS AVAILABLE

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

### PLEASE NOTE:

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

**AUBURN** — Louise Gaskins: first Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Central Office, 48 Sword St., Auburn; 508.791.2121, or at home, 978.448.5351.

**QUINCY** — Harold Crowley: Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., MTA, 2 Heritage Drive, 9th Floor, Quincy; 617.878.8240 or 800.392.6175, ext. 8240.

**CAPE COD** — Lawrence Abbruzzi: second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Barnstable Teachers Association (BTA), 100 West Main St., Suite #7, Hyannis; 508.775.8625, or at home, 508.824.9194.

**FITCHBURG** — Robert Zbikowski: second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Fitchburg Teachers Association office, 78 Franklin Rd., Fitchburg; Call 978.297.0123 or e-mail: [zibstar702@verizon.net](mailto:zibstar702@verizon.net).

**HOLYOKE** — Ron Lech: third Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Western Office, 55

Bobala Road, Suite 3, Holyoke; 413.537.2335, or at home, 413.893.9173.

**LYNNFIELD** — Mary Parry: third and fourth Saturdays of each month, 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.

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

**RAYNHAM** — Edward Nelson: third Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Southeast Office, 756 Orchard Street, third floor, Raynham; 508.822.5371. Call Nelson at home: 774.239.7823.

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



# Standardized tests 'don't define us'

By Laura Barrett

There's a new twist in the state's accountability system. Forty-one schools have seen their accountability ratings drop in recent weeks because student participation rates on standardized tests last spring fell below either 95 percent or 90 percent. But at the Swift River School in Western Massachusetts, participation was so low — only 16 percent of the eligible students took the test — that the school had “insufficient data” to generate any rating at all.

That result is just fine with Danika Tyminski, now a sixth-grade teacher at the preK-6 school in the Union 38 Regional School District.

“The more the community talked about whether or not students should take the test,” she said, “the more people agreed that these standardized tests don't define us.”

Tyminski said the conversation about testing was initiated by Johanna Bartlett, chair of the New

Salem-Wendell School Committee. Under the leadership of Bartlett, who taught English for 30 years, the School Committee held a community forum that drew about 50 teachers and parents from New Salem and neighboring towns.

A lively discussion followed, with some families saying that they felt testing was right for their children and others speaking up for opting out.

Later in the 2015-2016 school year, the committee approved a declaration encouraging teachers to talk to parents about the testing options at parent-teacher conferences. Parents and students were to be supported, whatever their decision.

The result was staggering. All of Tyminski's fifth-grade students opted out, along with most of the rest of the school.

So what did students in her class do with all the time they didn't have to spend on test preparation and administration?

“It was wonderful,” Tyminski said. “We had read the novel *Sadako*



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Danika Tyminski, who teaches at the Swift River School in New Salem, works with a student on a writing project. Last year, all of her fifth-graders opted out of standardized testing. “The more the community talked about whether or not students should take the test,” she said, “the more people agreed that these standardized tests don't define us.”

and the *Thousand Paper Cranes* and we decided to put it on as a play. We did scene blocking. The students collaborated with the art teacher to design and create sets. They learned

their lines and performed the play at the end of the year.

“We also do salamander research with the U.S. Geological Survey,” she continued. “We are collecting data about the effects of climate change on the salamander population. There is no way we would have had time to do our research during the testing.”

A third project, she said, was to delve into pre-algebra, which is something the class rarely had time to do in the past. The students used a pan balance to better understand equivalence and the nature of equations.

MTA President Barbara Madeloni applauded the way Swift River and several other schools with high opt-out rates handled the issue, beginning with a communitywide discussion of the issue.

“Students, parents and educators alike have been calling for an end to the destructive high-stakes use of standardized testing in our schools,” Madeloni said. “Opting out of tests, which are distorting education and consuming increasing amounts of time and money, is a legal and effective way to protest this system.”

State law requires districts to administer standardized tests but does not require students to take them. As parents and students considered their options, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education advised school administrators to

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# MTA pushes DESE to eliminate misuse of scores

By Laura Barrett

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education took two steps forward and then two steps back in considering changes to the Student Impact Rating system that is supposed to be implemented in about 40 districts this fall and in others next year.

The MTA is working with other stakeholders to end the impact rating and to prevent the use of student assessment results to make high-stakes decisions about educators.

“After the election, we will be calling on members to let state education officials know that ratings based on student test scores and other assessment results do not belong in the evaluation system,” said MTA President Barbara Madeloni. “In the meantime, we are continuing to work to end the current impact rating mandate and to prevent test scores from being misused in other ways.”

In a memo to superintendents and others dated Sept. 21, Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester acknowledged that developing Student Impact Ratings based on standardized test scores and District-Determined Measures has been “among the most challenging aspects of implementation” of the new educator evaluation system. Chester said he will propose changes to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

“In light of the concerns stakeholders have shared, it is my intention to bring to the board ... proposed amendments to the Educator Evaluation Framework that eliminate the separate Student Impact Rating,” he wrote.

Madeloni said, “That language sounded promising at first, but it has proven to be much less than meets the eye. We subsequently learned that the commissioner’s plan was to eliminate the impact rating but require use of student assessment results in determining an educator’s summative rating. That could actually be worse than the current system. We are pushing hard to make sure that doesn’t happen.”

The MTA and AFT Massachusetts have been fighting the mandate since early spring. In April, the organizations released a position paper detailing problems with the system. Both unions testified about the concerns at a special

Negotiations that would lead to an impact rating system have ground to a halt in most districts, with neither administrators nor unions having an interest in continuing down this path.

BESE session in June and have been continuing to meet with DESE staff and leaders to advocate for changes. The MTA also supported a fiscal 2017 budget amendment to eliminate the Student Impact Rating requirement; that amendment was not included in the final state spending plan.

The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents has also weighed in against the current system, though discussions are ongoing about whether MASS and the unions are seeking the same remedy. Common ground with the DESE had not yet been found as this edition of *MTA Today* went to press.

Under current regulations, Massachusetts has a two-part evaluation system. The first part, based on observations and a host of other criteria, generates a summative rating of Exemplary, Proficient, Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory. The

second part requires districts to use two measures of student learning to create an impact rating of low, moderate or high.

If Student Growth Percentile scores are available, they must be one of the measures. If not, two District-Determined Measures must be used. The impact rating is supposed to determine the length of the Educator Plan.

Teachers and administrators alike have objected that the system is unworkable. Negotiations that would lead to an impact rating system have ground to a halt in most districts, with neither administrators nor unions having an interest in continuing down this path.

“Creating new DDMs is time-consuming and has led to more testing just when we are pushing for less,” said Madeloni. “Trying to use student results to calculate an individual

teacher’s impact on student learning is invalid and unreliable. It’s a waste of time and has potentially dangerous outcomes for educators.”

The alternative proposed by the DESE in late September was, in some ways, less rigid than the impact rating system, but the results could be more consequential if used to lower an educator’s summative rating. A summative rating of Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory could eventually lead to dismissal.

“We hope the commissioner rethinks the direction this appears to be heading in,” said Madeloni. “If not, we will once again activate members to push back against bureaucratic regulations that do not improve teaching and learning in our schools.”

Chester plans to bring regulatory revisions to the BESE in November, after which they will probably be sent out for public comment. If the proposed revisions do too little to protect educators from an invalid system, the MTA will urge board members to revise or reject the proposed changes.

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# MTA members go all out to defeat Question 2

Continued from Page 6

MTA leaders and activists have been crisscrossing the state, speaking out against the ballot question. Funding has been at the heart of their concerns.

District public schools are losing more than \$450 million to charter schools this year alone. If Question 2 passes, that number could rise to more than \$1 billion in just six years.

"I'm opposed to Question 2 because of the funding our public schools will lose," said Alexizendria Link, an English language arts teacher at Worcester's North High School and a former charter school teacher. "Our public schools could use those resources for more staff, more field trips, more lab equipment, additional support for students and additional professional development for teachers."

A Suffolk Superior Court judge weighed in on the funding issue in an Oct. 4 ruling dismissing a legal challenge to current limits on charter schools.

"[P]ublic funding for charter schools necessarily affects the public



"I'm opposed to Question 2 because of the funding our public schools will lose," said Alexizendria Link, an English language arts teacher at Worcester's North High School and a former charter school teacher.

funding of non-charter schools in the district," Associate Justice Heidi Brieger wrote. "Defendants argue, and the court agrees, that the Legislature's charter school cap reflects an effort to allocate education funding between and among all the Commonwealth's students and therefore has a rational basis and cannot violate the equal protection clause."

Under Question 2, new charters could be opened anywhere in the state, even in communities where residents

say they don't want them, don't need them and can't afford them. That was certainly the case in Brockton, where a charter school was opened this fall over the opposition of every elected official representing the city.

Kim Gibson, president of the Brockton Education Association, said that this is a form of "taxation without representation" since the local community has to pay for it at the expense of the Brockton Public Schools.

"A nonpartisan commission found that Massachusetts public schools are underfunded by more than \$1 billion a year," Gibson said. She also noted that there are thousands of children on waiting lists for prekindergarten across the state.

"The last thing we need in Brockton are more charter schools taking resources from our district public schools," Gibson said.

While Boston and other large cities have been the primary focus of the "yes" campaign, all districts are at risk. Northampton Mayor David Narkewicz has been outspoken about the negative financial impact that existing charter schools already have on his district, let alone what the future might hold if Question 2 passes.

"We're losing almost \$2.3 million to charter schools based on 202 students," he told *MTA Today*. "That's more funding than we currently allocate, on average, to our four elementary schools, which serve between 230 and 330 students each. The average annual budget for them is \$1.7 million."

The five charters attended by Northampton students include specialized schools for performing arts and language immersion, often called "boutique" charters. According to an article in the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, a survey of Northampton's charter parents showed that they are more affluent and more likely to have advanced degrees than average for the community.

"The 'yes' side wants to paint a picture that charters are mainly serving disadvantaged kids in struggling urban schools, but that's not the case out here in Hampshire County," Narkewicz said.

While Northampton is paying tuition so that some students can attend the Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School, the district can't afford to bring back foreign language instruction to its own elementary grades.

Also galling to local taxpayers is that a portion of a recent \$2.5 million Proposition 2½ override, needed in part to backfill revenue lost to charters, is being diverted to these quasi-private schools over which the community has no control or oversight.

Another major concern is that charter schools don't serve all students.

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# District public schools have a special mission



Photo by Nancy deProsse

No on 2 advocates were out in force for the Springfield Puerto Rican Parade on Sept. 18.

Continued from Page 15

“Comparing district schools to charters is like comparing apples to oranges,” said Madeloni. “It is well known by now that charter schools fail to serve as many English language learners and special needs students as their sending districts. The ‘no excuses’ charters also suspend high numbers of students for minor nonviolent offenses. This practice forces out kids who don’t fit the mold.”

Somerville Teachers Association President Jackie Lawrence, speaking at a No on 2 rally on Oct. 6, said that district public schools have a special mission that needs to be supported. Charters pose a sharp contrast in the way they serve students with special needs, she noted. “I taught 3- and 4-year-olds who were identified with special

needs,” Lawrence said. “I looked into the eyes of parents who were grappling with information that their child, their precious baby, needed special education services. And then I showed them the light. I explained to them about the services that educators in Somerville are able to offer. What I and my colleagues did not do, nor would we ever do, is counsel parents to take their child out of the real public schools. Somerville teachers believe in educating all children, regardless of their skill level, ability, language, gender and race.”

*The MTA is urging members to be involved in the No on 2 campaign all the way through Election Day. To sign up to participate, please visit [massteacher.org/phonebanks](http://massteacher.org/phonebanks).*

## MTA welcomes dismissal of suit seeking cap lift

On Oct. 4, Suffolk Superior Court Judge Heidi Brieger dismissed a lawsuit that challenged the constitutionality of the state’s cap on Commonwealth charter schools.

On Oct. 13, lawyers for the plaintiffs filed a notice of appeal with the court.

MTA President Barbara Madeloni released the following statement shortly after the dismissal of the initial lawsuit was announced:

*We are deeply gratified that the Superior Court threw out the ill-conceived lawsuit that sought to eliminate the cap on charter schools. The court agreed with Attorney General Maura Healey’s motion to dismiss the lawsuit and accepted none of the plaintiffs’ multiple claims that limits on charter schools violate students’ constitutional rights. The MTA filed an amicus brief in support of the attorney general’s motion, as did the NAACP.*

*The ruling sets the record straight, finding that the cap is consistent with the constitutional requirement to “cherish” public education. The court noted, “This decision — how to allocate public education choices among the multitude of possible types — is best left to those elected to make those choices to be carried out by those educated and experienced to do so.”*

*We agree. Supporters of lifting the cap made their case to the Legislature and failed to win there — in the most appropriate venue for deciding how to allocate scarce education resources. Now they are engaged in the most expensive initiative petition campaign in the history of Massachusetts.*

*The court notes that charter schools are “funded by the school districts from which they draw students or in which they are located. Consequently, public funding for charter schools necessarily affects the public funding of non-charter schools in the district.”*

*Again, we agree. Through misleading ads, supporters have been trying to convince voters that Question 2 will actually **increase** funding for public schools. We are working with other supporters of public education to get out the truth recognized by the court: Charter schools will drain \$450 million from district public schools this year; and that number could rise to more than \$1 billion in just six years if Question 2 is passed. It is also important that voters understand that under Question 2, charter schools could be opened anywhere in Massachusetts, with no limit on how much money any one district could lose.*

### Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

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3. **Filing Date:** September 21, 2016
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		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		69,317	69,366
b. Legitimate Paid and/or Requested Distribution	1. Outside County Paid/Requested Mail Subscriptions 2. In-County Paid/Requested Mail Subscriptions 3. Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Etc., Outside USPS 4. Requested Copies Dist. by Other Mail Classes Through USPS	68,352 N.A. N.A. N.A.	68,426 N.A. N.A. N.A.
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation		68,352	68,426
d. Nonrequested Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	1. Outside County Nonrequested Copies, Including Samples 2. In-County Nonrequested Copies 3. Nonrequested Copies Dist. Through USPS by Other Mail Classes 4. Nonrequested Copies Distributed Outside the Mail	695 N.A. N.A. N.A.	695 N.A. N.A. N.A.
e. Total Nonrequested Distribution		695	695
f. Total Distribution		69,047	69,121
g. Copies Not Distributed		270	245
h. Total		69,317	69,366
i. Percent Paid		98.99%	98.99%

### 16. Electronic Copy Circulation

		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Previous 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Requested and Paid Electronic Copies		54,120	52,752
b. Total Requested and Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Requested/Paid Print Electronic Copies (Line 16a)		122,472	121,178
c. Total Requested Copy Distribution (Line 15f) + Requested/Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)		123,167	121,873
d. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Both Print & Electronic Copies)		99.44%	99.43%

I certify that 50% of all my distributed copies (electronic and print) are legitimate requests or paid copies.

17. The Statement of Ownership will be printed in the Fall 2016 issue of this publication.
18. 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 civil penalties).



# Nomination papers available

MTA members who intend to seek election to MTA office at the 2017 Annual Meeting of Delegates or to run for NEA Director may now request nomination papers.

Annual Meeting elections will take place in May for four Regional Executive Committee seats, the At-Large ESP Executive Committee seat, the Statewide Retired Region Executive Committee seat, 20 District Director seats and the seat for the At-Large Director to represent ESPs. Four members of the Retired Members Committee will also be elected.

There are two NEA Director seats up for election. Ballots for the NEA Director elections will be sent to the entire membership in March.

Applications for nomination papers for MTA office must be submitted in writing to the office of the Executive Director-Treasurer, MTA, 2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor, Quincy, MA 02171-2119, or by e-mailing [MTAGovernance@massteacher.org](mailto:MTAGovernance@massteacher.org). 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 Friday, March 3, regardless of postmark.

Nomination papers for the NEA Director posts may be requested in the same manner, but must be filed no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 13.

The MTA Annual Meeting will be held May 19 and 20. The NEA RA will be held June 30 to July 5. Both will be held in Boston.

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 individual membership 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 affiliation.

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

**Regional Executive Committee members\*:** There will be four Regional seats up for election to the Executive Committee. The seats are

TIMELINE

NOMINATION DEADLINE – DECEMBER 29

Candidate Recommendation Committee

- Congressional Districts 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9

NOMINATION DEADLINE – JANUARY 13

MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates

- Regional Ethnic Minority Delegates
- Statewide Retired District Delegates

NEA RA (Representative Assembly)

- Statewide, Regional and Retired Delegates

NEA Directors

AMENDMENT DEADLINE – JANUARY 13

Filing Deadline for Proposed Bylaw Amendments

Initial Deadline for Proposed Standing Rules and Resolutions Amendments

NOMINATION DEADLINE – MARCH 3

Executive Committee

- Regions A, C, F and G
- Statewide Retired Region
- At-Large ESP

Board of Directors

- Districts 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A, 6A, 26A, 8B, 11B, 34C, 43C, 15D, 27D, 37E, 38E, 22F, 18G, 21G, 44H, and 45H
- At-Large ESP

Retired Members Committee

NOMINATION DEADLINE – APRIL 14

NEA RA Student Delegates

for Regions A, C, F and G. A candidate must be an active MTA member\*\* and must be employed in education within the electoral region in which the candidate seeks office. All terms will run for three years. Nomination papers

must be signed by at least 100 active members from the candidate’s region, with no more than 25 from any one local affiliate.

**At-Large ESP Executive Committee member\*:** The seat for

At-Large ESP Executive Committee member will be up for election. The term is for three years. Any active member\*\* of the association who is an education support professional is eligible to be a candidate. Nomination papers must be signed by at least 200 active members, with no more than 50 from any one local affiliate and no more than 100 from any one district.

**Statewide Retired Region Executive Committee member\*:** The seat for Statewide Retired Region Executive Committee member will be up for election. The term is for three years. Any retired member may be a candidate by submitting a self-nomination letter by March 3.

**District Directors — MTA Board\*:** There will be 20 District Director positions up for election on the MTA Board. All terms will run for three years. The open districts are 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A, 6A, 26A, 8B, 11B, 34C, 43C, 15D, 27D, 37E, 38E, 22F, 18G, 21G, 44H and 45H. Each candidate must be an active MTA member\*\* and must be employed in education within the electoral district in which the candidate seeks office. Nomination papers must be signed by at least 50 active members from the candidate’s district.

**At-Large Director for ESPs\*:** The At-Large Director for ESPs will be elected to a three-year term on the MTA Board. A candidate must be an active MTA member\*\* in the education support professional category. Nomination papers must be signed by at least 200 active members, no more than 50 of whom may be from any one local affiliate and no more than 100 of whom may be from any one district.

**NEA Directors\*:** Two NEA Director seats will be filled by vote of the membership in March and April, in tandem with NEA statewide and regional delegate elections. The term for each is three years beginning Sept. 1, 2017, and expiring Aug. 31, 2020, in accordance with the NEA’s fiscal year. Each candidate must be an active NEA member\*\*, as determined by the NEA Constitution and Bylaws, for at least two years immediately preceding the

Please turn to **MTA**/Page 21



## 2017 NOMINATIONS

**AN ONLINE SELF-NOMINATION FORM IS AVAILABLE AT [MASSTEACHER.ORG/NOMFORM](https://www.massteacher.org/nomform) FOR THE FOLLOWING:**

**Delegates to the NEA RA • Regional Ethnic Minority Delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting • Statewide Retired District Delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting**

**WE ENCOURAGE CANDIDATES TO UTILIZE THE ONLINE FORM *(or this paper form may be submitted).***

**A candidate must file a nomination form with the Executive Director-Treasurer by 5 p.m. on Friday, January 13, 2017, regardless of postmark.**

NAME OF CANDIDATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBER ID #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-MAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

HOME ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

**WORK E-MAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**WORK PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**LOCAL ASSOCIATION** (leave blank if retired): \_\_\_\_\_

DISTRICT/REGION/RETIRED: \_\_\_\_\_

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. **MTA Policy:** Each candidate may submit by the deadline a headshot photograph and biography/ statement containing no more than 50 words. **Note:** Only the first 50 words will be printed. *The Credentials and Ballot Committee reserves the right to edit all bios.*
2. **Write out** your statement on a separate piece of paper first, and then fill out the grid.
3. **Type or print clearly**, using both upper- and lower-case letters, as you expect the final statement to appear.
4. Insert only **one word** per box.
5. **Do not combine words or numbers with hyphens or slashes.**
6. “An,” “a” and “the” constitute one word.
7. **Abbreviations** such as “NEA-RA” and “MTA” count as one word.
8. **Insert punctuation** in the same box immediately after the word that you want it to follow.
9. **A date** represented as “October 1, 2016” shall constitute three words. The same date represented as “10/1/16” is only one word.
10. Send this entire nomination form and photo to: MTA Governance and Administration Division, 2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor, Quincy, MA 02171-2119. Only submissions received by **January 13, 2017**, will be published with the ballot. A photo the MTA has used within 2 years may be reused.

**BIO/STATEMENT GRID – PLEASE PRINT**

**PLEASE SELECT FROM THE FOLLOWING AND CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOXES:**

- ☐ 50-word (maximum) bio/statement grid enclosed.
- ☐ I am not submitting a bio/statement grid.
- ☐ I have e-mailed a photo to [jconnelly@massteacher.org](mailto:jconnelly@massteacher.org) (high-resolution JPEG – 300 dpi).
- ☐ Photo enclosed.
- ☐ Use my 2015 or 2016 photo.\*\*
- ☐ I am not submitting a photo.
- \*\*MTA can only use past photos if published for 2015 or 2016 elections

**\*\*MTA can only use past photos if published for 2015 or 2016 elections**

***My qualifications are in accordance with those of the designated position for which I am a candidate:***

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL FORMS MAY BE REQUESTED OR THIS FORM MAY BE DUPLICATED. FORMS MAY BE FAXED TO JOHN CONNELLY AT 617.570.4908.



# Delegates to be elected for NEA RA

Statewide, regional and retired delegates from Massachusetts to the 2017 NEA Representative Assembly will be elected by the membership in March and April.

The nomination period for delegates is now in process and will close at 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 13. Nominees are encouraged to use the self-nomination form available online at [massteacher.org/nomform](http://massteacher.org/nomform). The form may be submitted electronically. Alternatively, a paper form can be found on Page 18 of this issue of *MTA Today*.

The election period runs from March 6 through April 28. Ballots for statewide and regional delegates will be sent 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 sent only to retired and retired life NEA members.

The distribution of statewide and regional seats will be voted on by the MTA Board of Directors at its meeting on Feb. 3 and 4; 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.

For active members, the delegate categories include *regional non-supervisor*, *statewide non-supervisor*, and *statewide other/supervisor*.

Retired members receive an allocation of RA delegates in proportion to their membership, and candidates for those seats are elected by the retired membership.

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

Tentative dates for the RA are June 30 through July 5. Massachusetts is proud to host the 2017 RA in Boston. 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 to each NEA member in Massachusetts. Voting is by secret ballot, and the election and tabulation are conducted under the supervision of the Credentials and Ballot Committee.

There will be a \$1,200 stipend for statewide, regional, retired and student delegates.

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

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

*Inquiries concerning procedures for the nomination and election of NEA delegates may be addressed to John Connelly in the MTA Division of Governance and Administration at 617.878.8305. His fax number is 617.570.4908, and his e-mail address is [jconnelly@massteacher.org](mailto:jconnelly@massteacher.org).*

# Regional ethnic minority delegates to be chosen

Regional ethnic minority delegates to the 2017 MTA Annual Meeting will be elected by members in each region in March and April in conjunction with 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. 13.

Nominations are open to all eligible ethnic minority members through a self-nomination process. Nominees are encouraged to use the self-nomination form available online at [massteacher.org/nomform](http://massteacher.org/nomform). The form may be submitted electronically. Alternatively, a paper form can be found on Page 18 of this issue of *MTA Today*.

The election period runs from March 6 through April 28.

Ballots for regional ethnic minority delegates will be sent to active MTA members, accompanied by bio/statements and photos of candidates who submit them. The allocation of regional ethnic minority delegates is 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 three Directors, and 45H, which has two.

There will be 50 vacancies for regional ethnic minority delegates. All terms will last 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, nine vacancies. Each candidate must be employed in education within the region in which the candidate seeks office.

*Inquiries regarding procedures may be directed to John Connelly in the MTA Division of Governance and Administration at 617.878.8305. His e-mail address is [jconnelly@massteacher.org](mailto:jconnelly@massteacher.org), and his fax number is 617.570.4908.*

# 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. 13.

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 19-20 Annual Meeting in Boston.

However, early submission by the Jan. 13 deadline provides an opportunity for a full hearing by the committee, by the Board of Directors and at the April preconvention meetings.

It also allows advance publication in the Spring issue of *MTA Today*.

Submitters will be informed of 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.

- Specifically cite all articles, sections and lines of the Bylaws or Standing Rules that are to be changed or affected.
- 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 parentheses language to be deleted. Indicate the location of completely new language.
- Accompany each proposed amendment with a written rationale on its purpose, impact and intent.
- Include at the end of all proposals the submitter's name and local association information.
- Provide your full name, address, telephone number(s), fax

Please turn to **Guidelines**/Page 20



# MTA Resolutions Committee 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 be submitted by any member.

The initial deadline for submissions to the Resolutions Committee is Friday, Jan. 13.

Proposed resolutions may also be submitted prior to the end of business

on Friday, May 19, at the Annual Meeting of Delegates. The committee may also propose resolutions.

All resolutions submitted are 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 to the Annual Meeting.

To see the current MTA Resolutions, please visit [massteacher.org/resolutions](http://massteacher.org/resolutions).

## Nominations sought for Candidate Recommendation Committee

Nominations are now open for the election of members to the MTA Candidate Recommendation Committee.

The committee is responsible for making recommendations to MTA members to support candidates for state and federal office.

This year, elections will be held to fill the following seats on the Candidate Recommendation Committee: two seats each in Congressional Districts 2, 5 and 9 and one seat each in Congressional Districts 4, 6 and 8.

Terms on the committee last for three years. The committee member must reside in the congressional district to be represented.

Any MTA member interested in running for the CRC should obtain the nomination form online at [massteacher.org/nomform](http://massteacher.org/nomform) or contact John Connelly in the MTA Division of Governance and Administration. He can be reached by calling 617.878.8305 or e-mailing [jconnelly@massteacher.org](mailto:jconnelly@massteacher.org).

The nomination form and a biographical statement of not more

than 100 words must be received by Dec. 29.

Those eligible to vote for CRC members are delegates to the past year’s MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates who reside in the specified congressional district.

Upon request, candidates will be provided with a list of MTA Annual Meeting delegates for the congressional district, along with names and addresses.

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.

Ballots including the candidates’ biographical statements will be sent to the electorate on the first Friday in February (Feb. 3) and must be returned no later than 5 p.m. on the last Friday in February (Feb. 24).

The CRC terms will begin on March 15, 2017. Members of the CRC are eligible to be elected for two consecutive three-year terms. In no event can a person hold one of these positions for more than six consecutive years.

## Statewide Retired District delegates will be elected in spring

MTA Statewide Retired District delegates to the 2017 MTA Annual Meeting will be elected in conjunction with the NEA delegate/Director elections.

The nomination period for Statewide Retired District delegates is now in process and will close at 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 13.

Nominations are open to all eligible MTA/NEA retired members

through a self-nomination process.

Nominees are encouraged to use the self-nomination form available online at [massteacher.org/nomform](http://massteacher.org/nomform). The form may be submitted electronically.

Alternatively, a paper form can be found on Page 18 of this issue of *MTA Today*.

The election period runs from March 6 through April 28. Ballots for

statewide retired delegates will be sent to retired MTA/NEA members and will be accompanied by bio/statements and photos of candidates who submit them.

The 2017 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 will last one year.

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

Inquiries may be directed to John Connelly in the MTA Division of Governance and Administration at 617.878.8305. They may also be e-mailed to [jconnelly@massteacher.org](mailto:jconnelly@massteacher.org) or faxed to 617.570.4908.

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.

## Guidelines for Bylaws and Rules amendments

Continued from Page 19

number(s), e-mail address 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 members of the MTA staff are available to discuss ideas for potential amendments and to provide technical assistance.

Inquiries and proposals submitted to the Bylaws and Rules Committee should be channeled through Mary Gilgallon, MTA Director of Governance and Administration. Her mailing address is MTA, 2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor, Quincy, MA 02171-2119. Her phone number is 617.878.8213, her fax number is 617.570.4908, and her e-mail address is [mgilgallon@massteacher.org](mailto:mgilgallon@massteacher.org).





## 15th Annual Conference for Early Career and Future Educators

**Saturday, November 19**  
Worcester Technical High School

8–9 a.m. Check-in  
9 a.m.–3 p.m. Workshops

- ▶ \$65 for new teachers
- ▶ Free for members of SEAM – the Student Education Association of Massachusetts

Includes all sessions, materials,  
morning refreshments and lunch

**Prior registration required**  
[www.massteacher.org/newteachers](http://www.massteacher.org/newteachers)

### Conference strands include:

Student Engagement &  
Classroom Management

Supporting Students with  
Diverse Learning Needs

Technology in the Classroom

Literacy

Family & Community  
Engagement

### IMPORTANT NOTES

The Just for New Teachers Conference is open to MTA members in their first four years of practice. NEA/MTA student members entering the final year of an educator preparation program or who have completed student teaching are also invited, as are any other students enrolled in education degree programs. Districts may register individuals or groups by calling 800.392.6175, ext. 8153. This conference partially fulfills school districts' obligation to provide an induction program for all new teachers (603 CMR 7.00). The MTA will provide participants with a record of sessions attended.

## MTA GOVERNANCE POSTINGS 2017

### MTA election process is underway

Continued from Page 17

election. Nomination papers must be signed by at least 200 active members, no more than 50 of whom may be from any one local affiliate and no more than 100 of whom may be from any one district. The policy on eligibility and procedures for the direct election of NEA Directors is available upon request.

For information on nominations and elections, please contact John Connelly of the MTA Division of Governance and Administration by calling 617.878.8305, e-mailing [jconnelly@massteacher.org](mailto:jconnelly@massteacher.org) or faxing inquiries to 617.570.4908.

\*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; the At-Large ESP 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.

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

### Retired committee has four seats open

**F**our members of the Retired Members Committee will be elected by Statewide Retired District delegates to the 2017 MTA Annual Meeting in May. Please see the Winter issue of the *MTA Reporter* for details and the self-nomination form for these positions. The deadline for nominations is March 3. Terms last two years and begin on July 1.

## Save on the go with MTA Benefits

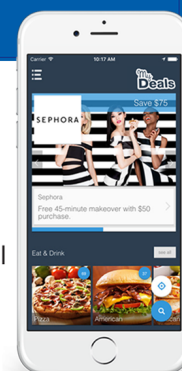
**Saving money is as easy as 1-2-3!**

### WEB

1. Go to [mtabenefits.com](http://mtabenefits.com)
2. Click on Members Only and log in with your e-mail address and password
3. Click on the Access Deals link and begin saving immediately!

### MOBILE

1. Search for the "My Deals" mobile app here:
2. Enter your e-mail address and your savings site password
3. If prompted to register, use **1267-Member ID** or use **1267** as your Program ID





# Travel safely this winter with Educators Insurance

While some of us might not like the thought of winter approaching, the cooler and shorter days of autumn remind us that we need to take measures to prepare for winter travel.

Here is how **Educators Insurance** can help.

If you plan on visiting friends or family members during the upcoming holidays, or if you want to take your children on a road trip over school break, it's important to ensure that you will be protected while you're on the road — even before your family piles into the car.

Whether your car breaks down or you get a flat tire, you can count on EIA partner Hanover Insurance and its **Roadside Assistance** coverage to be there for you 24/7.

The benefits of having roadside assistance include:

- Help wherever your vehicle becomes disabled in the continental United States or Canada.
- Access to a network of more than 35,000 service providers.
- Expenses of up to \$150 billed directly to The Hanover when you use a Hanover Roadside Assistance provider.

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Whether your car breaks down or you get a flat tire, you can count on EIA partner Hanover Insurance and its Roadside Assistance coverage to be there for you 24/7.

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**DriveSmart Advantage** also includes rental car coverage, which protects you in the event of a covered loss to a rented automobile. This coverage helps to keep you from having to pay out of pocket for loss of use of the rental, diminished value, and certain fees that the rental company may charge in processing the claim. It even covers up to \$500 in veterinary expenses and \$500 in burial expenses if

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**Heat USA** is the largest heating oil buying group in the United States, saving MTA members hundreds of dollars a year through an exclusive purchasing system in which dealers agree to a fixed profit margin above wholesale. Last heating season, **Heat USA** customers saved an average of 41 cents per gallon off the average full-service heating oil cost in Massachusetts.

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To learn how you can start saving on heating oil, visit [www.heatusa.com/mta](http://www.heatusa.com/mta).



# Opt-out action leaves teacher with no regrets

Continued from Page 13

provide students with a secure place to read or do other work during testing if they chose to opt out.

Twenty-seven schools, including Boston Latin School, dropped to Level 2 because they had participation rates below 95 percent. Another 14 dropped to Level 3 because their rates were below 90 percent.

“Parents and communities have a right to know if their local schools are well-funded, welcoming places

Tyminski said she has no idea how many students will opt out during the current school year. Some students and parents are curious about the new test being developed — a hybrid of PARCC and MCAS items — so she wouldn’t be surprised if more students took the test. But others may opt out again after experiencing the reduction in stress and increase in instruction time.

where students and educators have opportunities for deep learning, the free exchange of ideas and a rich curriculum that inspires creativity, problem-solving and community,” Madeloni said. “None of these characteristics can be measured by a standardized assessment. By making

the test results count for so much, the state is implicitly diminishing the importance of other school characteristics.”

Madeloni said that one consequence of the state lowering ratings based on participation rates is that the public should become increasingly skeptical of ratings when assessing the relative merits of different schools.

“When places like Boston Latin, Concord-Carlisle Regional High School, Amherst-Pelham Regional Middle School and the Charles E. Brown Middle School in Newton are all given lower ratings based on participation rates, not on other more important measures, then many people wake up to the fact that these ratings don’t provide us with the information we really need about our schools,” she said.

For her part, Tyminski said she has no idea how many students will opt out during the current school year. Some students and parents are curious about the new test being developed — a hybrid of PARCC and MCAS items — so she wouldn’t be surprised if more students took the test. But others may opt out again after experiencing the reduction in stress and increase in instruction time.

Tyminski gave a talk about the power of love in school at MTA’s Summer Conference in August.

Describing that talk, she said, “When you are motivated by love, that allows you to take risks. The whole opt-out movement was a big risk.”

She has no regrets.



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# Map shows impact charters have on districts

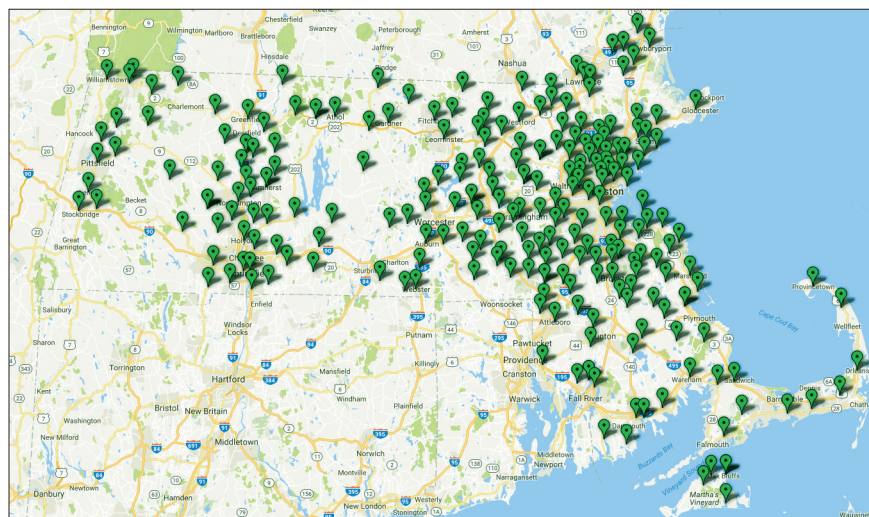
As the “No on 2” campaign to stop a broad expansion of charter schools moves into its final stretch, it is important to understand the impact that the current number of charter schools already has on district public schools.

It is just as important to share information with others about the \$450 million that is being diverted this year to privately operated charter schools.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s funding data show the costs that communities bear when they pay tuition to charter schools. Even when reimbursement from the state to sending districts is taken into account, communities of all types and from all parts of the state lose significant school funding.

An interactive map on the MTA website — posted at [massteacher.org/chartermap](http://massteacher.org/chartermap) — allows MTA members and others to pinpoint school districts to see how much they are losing to charters this year alone.

Checking figures for communities where you live, work and may be



canvassing will help you make the argument with voters that Question 2 is bad for public schools.

Question 2 would entirely lift the cap on charters, allowing 12 new ones each year forever anywhere in the state. If the ballot initiative passes, losses to districts across Massachusetts could rise to \$1 billion within six years.

As the map makes clear, charter schools drain funds from numerous

districts and all types of traditional public schools.

Along the South Coast and on Cape Cod, the annual numbers are staggering: New Bedford loses more than \$10 million, while Fall River is out \$12.5 million. Charter schools draw \$2.7 million from Barnstable, \$1.4 million from Bourne and \$2.7 million from Sandwich.

To the north, charter schools pull almost \$2.6 million from Billerica

and nearly \$2 million from Dracut. Moving west, Springfield schools lose close to \$36 million to charter schools, while Worcester contends with a \$22.4 million outlay to charter operators.

In the Berkshires, charter schools hit large and small districts alike. Pittsfield loses \$2.1 million, and the rural Adams-Cheshire Regional School District spends more than \$900,000 on charter school tuition.

The figures available on the map disprove the opposition’s claim that charter schools do not drain money from public schools.

The Foundation Budget Review Commission found last year that the way the state calculates a district’s foundation budget — the starting point in Massachusetts K-12 school financing — understates the cost of educating students to the tune of at least \$1 billion per year.

Budget losses to charter schools exacerbate an already troubling problem, which is why more than 165 elected school committees across the Commonwealth have passed resolutions opposing Question 2.

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# Effort to block PCB testing spurs outcry in Worcester

Continued from Page 10

During the testing in March of 2009, an independent researcher took samples of caulk from various Worcester public schools. The researcher notified the EAW that a sample from Burncoat High School showed that the PCB level was 3,180 ppm and that a sample from Doherty High School tested PCBs at 78,300 ppm.

The EAW conducted more tests in the following month, and those similarly showed extremely elevated levels of PCBs at Burncoat and Doherty, as well as at North High School, which was demolished after a new school opened on the site in 2011.

Also in 2009, EAW members at Burncoat told the union that they were troubled by the number of cases of cancer among employees at the school. At that time, 18 educators from various schools voluntarily gave blood samples to be used in a study by a Harvard University researcher of PCBs

in the workplace. Because of the clash between the Worcester Public Schools and the union, the resulting study did not name Worcester, instead referring to an urban school district and showing that the participants had elevated PCBs in their blood.

Though the Worcester Public Schools would not test the schools, it embarked on a plan to cover exterior caulking at schools across the city. At most sites, however, the project did not fully cover first-floor windows and left windows on second and higher stories untouched.

Educators meeting at Doherty High School last month reported that exterior caulk is peeling and that the school is frequently dusty and not cleaned in accordance with guidelines the EPA has issued for buildings with the presence of PCBs.

The EAW is planning a community forum on the PCB issue and welcomed the School Committee's willingness to coordinate on a public event to discuss next steps.

## NAACP honors MTA president



Photo by Bob Duffy

MTA President Barbara Madeloni, right, received the Chaney Goodman Schwerner Award from the New England Area Conference of the NAACP at the organization's 78th Annual Meeting banquet on Sept. 24. The award — named for three civil rights workers who died at the hands of Ku Klux Klansmen in 1964 — recognizes exceptional civil rights advocacy in pursuit of fairness, equality and justice. Madeloni is pictured here with Grace Ross, who also received the award this year, and Reginald Nunnally, a past award recipient. Ross is president of the Massachusetts Alliance Against Predatory Lending. Juan Cofield, president of the NEAC, praised Madeloni's "relentless and inspiring leadership" and "her advocacy in the struggle to arrest the spread of charter schools."

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# Natalie and Tyler

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## Obituaries

**Laura R. Keating, 44**, of Scituate. Was an elementary school teacher in Cohasset. Served on three Cohasset Teachers' Association bargaining teams and held the position of CTA vice president for one year. Aug. 24.

**Cynthia Kellem, 84**, of Hull. Taught English and was head of the drama department at Hull High School. July 9.

**Robert J. Luikey, 71**, of Millbury. Taught for 35 years in the

Worcester Public Schools, retiring from Quinsigamond Elementary School. Sept. 19.

**Pauline Perry, 90**, of Worcester. Was a biology teacher at Wachusett Regional High School for 23 years, retiring in 1986. Aug. 29.

**Barbara A. Selvitella, 71**, of Bellingham. Was the director of library services at Algonquin Regional High School in Northborough before retiring. Had also taught in the

Newton, Foxborough and Douglas schools, and at UMass Amherst. Aug. 18.

**Mary H. Stachowicz, 99**, of Springfield. Taught in West Hartford, Conn., and at the Washington Elementary School in Springfield. Was a principal for 25 years, serving at the Indian Orchard Elementary School and then at the Warner School in Springfield until retiring. Sept. 10.

**Norma A. Sullivan, 76**, of Stoughton. Was a history teacher at Sharon Middle School for many years, retiring in 1999. Aug. 27.

**Katherine M. Turnan, 73**, of Shrewsbury. Taught for 35 years at the Lake View School in Worcester. Aug. 19.

**Shirley E. Waite, 82**, of Concord. Taught elementary school in Burlington, Natick and Maynard. July 28.

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## MTA helps fight demands for 'damages'

Continued from Page 7

in July, well before teachers started back on Aug. 17. Like Kowalski, he was shocked to get a letter billing him for damages.

"It's terrible," he said. "It's insane. They come with this contract in April or May and know that they've got you in a vicious cycle."

A third teacher with a similar story is also being helped by the MTA. In his case, the school came after him a full year after he had left for a public school district.

There's no way to know how many former employees — unaware that such a practice is unheard of in public education — have simply paid the charges.

Thomas Scott, executive director of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, told *MTA Today* that "nothing shocks me" when it comes to charter school policies of this sort. "Although we expect employees to give us reasonable notice when they resign," Scott said, "I have never heard of a public school district trying to collect damages from employees who resign at the end of a school year to accept another job."

Kowalski summed up his thoughts. "It was a very stressful summer," he said. "I was trying to prepare for my new job. I've got my three kids and another on the way. We had no income for two months and had to sort out temporary health insurance since Mystic Valley cut off my benefits at the end of June. I had a lot to do this summer. Getting this letter was a real distraction. I'm so grateful to the MTA for helping me try to resolve this situation."

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<sup>1</sup> National Safety Council, Injury Facts, 2008 edition.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Selected Social Characteristics in the United States, 2009.





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## Opposition to Question 2 continues to grow

**M**ore than 165 democratically elected Massachusetts school committees have now voted to oppose Question 2, the ballot question that would allow significant expansion of privately run charter schools anywhere in the state.

The initiative would take millions of dollars more away from successful local district public schools and cause the elimination of music and art programs, increased class sizes and other damaging cuts.

As *MTA Today* went to press, not a single school committee, city council or board of selectmen had voted to support Question 2.

“Proponents of Question 2 have made it clear that this ballot question is about stripping control of our local schools away from democratically elected local officials and turning it over to unelected state bureaucrats and secretive private organizations,” said Paul Schlichtman, a member of the Arlington School Committee. “School committees across Massachusetts are standing up against the private takeover of public education that takes millions away from the local public schools that 96 percent of Massachusetts students attend.”

At a debate on Question 2 at UMass Boston on Sept. 13, former State Representative Marty Walz, speaking for the Yes on Question 2 campaign, said that “the idea here is to get away from locally controlled schools.” She was responding to a question about an Annenberg Foundation report that found 60 percent of Massachusetts charter schools lack even a single parent on their governing boards.

The school committees have been joined by a number of city councils and boards of selectmen that have also voted to oppose Question 2. A complete list can be found on the MTA website at [massteacher.org/charterschools](http://massteacher.org/charterschools).

Dozens of organizations, including the Massachusetts PTA and the Massachusetts Municipal Association, also oppose Question 2.

“School committee members recognize that the expansion of charter schools in Massachusetts creates an unfair two-tiered system of education, draining taxpayer dollars from our local schools and

**Number of school committees  
OPPOSED to lifting the cap  
on charter schools**

**165+**

**Number of school committees  
IN FAVOR of lifting the cap  
on charter schools**

**0**

**#NoOn2**



sending them to charters, which are unaccountable to locally elected school committees,” said Jake Oliveira, president of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees and a member of the Ludlow School Committee. “I’m pleased to see so many local elected officials taking a stand to support public education. School committees are where community conversations about public education are debated.”

**E**very time a new charter school opens, it takes funding away from the public schools in that school district. Statewide, local school districts will lose more than \$450 million to charter schools in the current fiscal year, even after state reimbursements.

A statewide commission recently reported that public schools in Massachusetts are already underfunded by more than \$1 billion. If passed, Question 2 would allow the state to approve 12 new charter schools a year forever, with no limit on how much money a single district could lose. This could nearly triple the number of charter schools in just

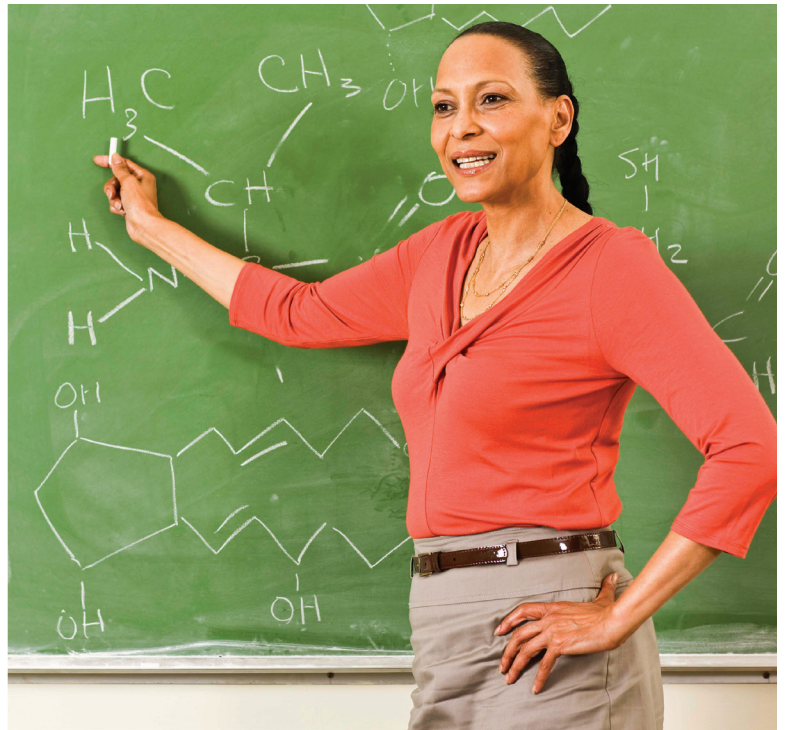
10 years and take away an additional \$1 billion each year from our local public schools. After 20 years, local public school districts would be losing nearly \$4 billion a year to charter schools.

Local communities and their school committees have no say in the approval or operation of charter schools. The state approves charter schools even when the communities in which they will be located are opposed to them. This has happened in Brockton, Gloucester and many other communities.

“My school district already allots \$10 million per year out of its school budget to charter schools, whose decisions about whom they choose to educate and whom they do not cannot be questioned by our democratically elected officials,” said Pia Cisternino, a Cambridge parent. “Our public schools are overseen by school committee members who’ve been elected by the community. Charter schools, on the other hand, are not overseen by our elected officials. If the cap is lifted, imagine what that will mean for our democracy. More and more schools will be funded with public money yet not held accountable.”



# 2016 General Election Guide



**MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT!**

SUPPORT CANDIDATES WHO WILL  
FIGHT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION



**MTA**  
Massachusetts Teachers Association



# MTA RECOMMENDS HILLARY CLINTON FOR PRESIDENT



*Hillary Clinton*

The MTA's recommended candidate for president, Hillary Clinton, can be counted on to make the best, most rational choices for students and public education.

Hillary Clinton believes America is stronger when we stand together as one nation, rather than when we are divided. We need a president who doesn't attack Americans based on their ethnicity or religion and doesn't make fun of people with disabilities, but instead has the steady leadership that will bring us together and will stand up for all of us.

As educators, we teach our students that kindness, collaboration and cooperation are important in school and in life. The leader of our great nation should reflect those values. Our youngest generations are the most

diverse in our history. It is crucial for our children and our future that we respect and celebrate their unique characteristics.

As president, Hillary Clinton will continue to make public education a top priority.

She is committed to ensuring that educators have a seat at the table when policy is made. She knows that teachers, education support professionals and other educators should be actively involved in decisions affecting public education. She knows that educators — from prekindergarten through graduate school — are the real experts.

We stand with our fellow NEA members across the country in our support for Hillary Clinton for president.





## U.S. HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES



**2ND DISTRICT**  
**James P. McGovern**



**3RD DISTRICT**  
**Niki Tsongas**



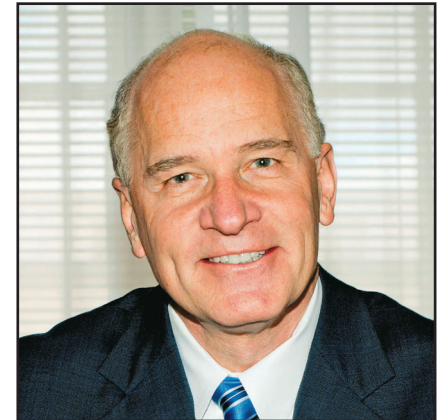
**4TH DISTRICT**  
**Joseph P. Kennedy III**



**5TH DISTRICT**  
**Katherine Clark**



**7TH DISTRICT**  
**Michael E. Capuano**



**9TH DISTRICT**  
**William R. Keating**

## EARLY VOTING IS NOW AN OPTION

Early voting in Massachusetts begins on October 24 and ends on November 4. Go to [votenoearly.com](https://votenoearly.com) for more information on voting — whether early, absentee or on Election Day — as well as to sign up to volunteer for the No on 2 campaign.





# STATE SENATE



**Julian Cyr**  
(D-Truro)  
Cape & Islands



**Jamie Eldridge**  
(D-Acton)  
Middlesex & Worcester



**Anne Gobi**  
(D-Spencer)  
Worcester, Hampden,  
Hampshire & Middlesex



**Adam Hinds**  
(D-Pittsfield)  
Berkshire, Hampshire,  
Franklin & Hampden



**John Keenan**  
(D-Quincy)  
Norfolk & Plymouth



**Eric Lesser**  
(D-Longmeadow)  
1st Hampden & Hampshire



**Jason Lewis**  
(D-Winchester)  
5th Middlesex



**Barbara L'Italien**  
(D-Andover)  
2nd Essex & Middlesex



**Michael Moore**  
(D-Millbury)  
2nd Worcester



**Marc Pacheco**  
(D-Taunton)  
1st Plymouth & Bristol



**Stan Rosenberg**  
(D-Amherst)  
Hampshire, Franklin & Worcester



**Walter Timilty**  
(D-Milton)  
Norfolk, Bristol & Plymouth





# MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES



**Estele Borges**  
(D-Taunton)  
3rd Bristol



**Tom Calter**  
(D-Kingston)  
12th Plymouth



**Oscar Camargo**  
(D-Andover)  
18th Essex



**Jim Cantwell**  
(D-Marshfield)  
4th Plymouth



**Gerry Cassidy**  
(D-Brockton)  
9th Plymouth



**Josh Cutler**  
(D-Duxbury)  
6th Plymouth



**Michael Day**  
(D-Stoneham)  
31st Middlesex



**Moses Dixon**  
(D-Worcester)  
17th Worcester



**Dan Donahue**  
(D-Worcester)  
16th Worcester



**Tricia Farley-Bouvier**  
(D-Pittsfield)  
3rd Berkshire



**Dylan Fernandes**  
(D-Falmouth)  
Barnstable, Dukes & Nantucket



**Ken Gordon**  
(D-Bedford)  
21st Middlesex





# MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES



**Sarah Hewins**  
(D-Carver)  
2nd Plymouth



**Natalie Higgins**  
(D-Leominster)  
4th Worcester



**Paul Jacques**  
(D-Rehoboth)  
4th Bristol



**Mary Keefe**  
(D-Worcester)  
15th Worcester



**Jack Lewis**  
(D-Framingham)  
7th Middlesex



**John Mahoney**  
(D-Plymouth)  
1st Plymouth



**Liz Malia**  
(D-Jamaica Plain)  
11th Suffolk



**Joan Meschino**  
(D-Hull)  
3rd Plymouth



**Jen Migliore**  
(D-Saugus)  
9th Essex



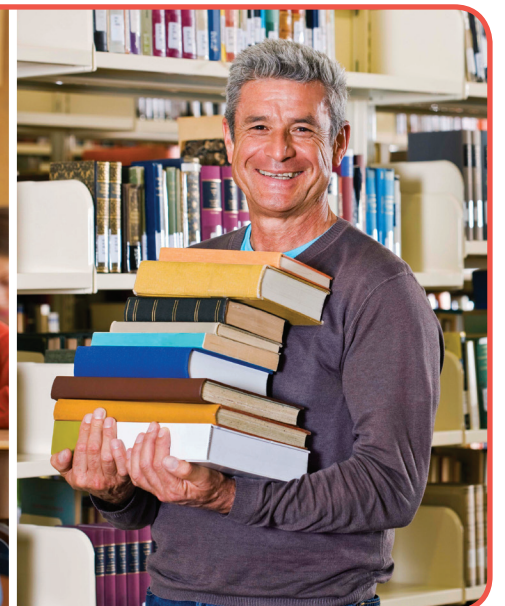
**Brian Murray**  
(D-Milford)  
10th Worcester



**Harold Naughton**  
(D-Clinton)  
12th Worcester



**Kara Nyman**  
(D-Hanover)  
5th Plymouth





# MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES



**Jerald Parisella**  
(D-Beverly)  
6th Essex



**Matt Patrick**  
(D-Falmouth)  
3rd Barnstable



**Denise Provost**  
(D-Somerville)  
27th Middlesex



**Rosemary Sandlin**  
(D-Agawam)  
3rd Hampden



**Tom Stanley**  
(D-Waltham)  
9th Middlesex



**Michael Toole**  
(D-Norton)  
1st Bristol

**PUBLIC FUNDS  
FOR PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS**

**VOTE**

**NO on 2**

All MTA-recommended legislative and congressional candidates featured in this Election Guide have pledged to vote **NO on Question 2.**

For more information on Question 2, please visit  
**[SaveOurPublicSchoolsMA.com](http://SaveOurPublicSchoolsMA.com) | [massteacher.org/charterschools](http://massteacher.org/charterschools)**





**NO on 2**   
**BAD FOR OUR SCHOOLS**

[SaveOurPublicSchoolsMA.com](http://SaveOurPublicSchoolsMA.com)

# **VOTE NO** **on Lifting the Charter Cap!**

Question 2 on the November ballot would allow the state to approve 12 new Commonwealth charter schools every year forever, eventually draining billions of dollars from our local public schools. The initiative would encourage charters to expand into areas where they don't exist now, taking critical resources away from successful public schools.

The MTA is a key backer of the Save Our Public Schools campaign to defeat Question 2. Save Our Public Schools is a grassroots coalition of education, parent, student and community groups that oppose lifting the cap on privately run, publicly funded Commonwealth charter schools.

## ***Why Lifting the Cap Is Bad for Public School Students***

### **LOST FUNDING**

This year alone, charters will divert more than \$450 million from public schools. That's money districts desperately need so they can offer more science, technology, art and music classes, as well as preschool services and smaller class sizes. The money should be kept in the public schools for the benefit of *all* students.

### **NO LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

Charter schools are not accountable to their local communities. The state often approves them over the united opposition of the communities where they will be located. That's wrong. Local communities should have the final say on what kinds of schools they want.

### **'SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL' EDUCATION**

Charter schools are divisive, creating a two-track system described by the NAACP as "separate and unequal." They typically underserve English language learners and special needs students, leaving public schools with fewer resources to educate a higher-need population.

## ***How You Can Help***

Pro-charter groups have millions of dollars from hedge funds and corporate backers. We are relying on people power to fight this assault on public education. There are many ways that you can help. Local associations are holding community forums and canvassing, and MTA offices around the state are hosting phone banks. Please talk to your local association president today about how you can help!

[massteacher.org/charterschools](http://massteacher.org/charterschools) | [facebook.com/saveourpublicschoolsMA](https://facebook.com/saveourpublicschoolsMA)



# THE MTA Advantage

VOLUME 29 / NUMBER 1 / FALL 2016

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

## Save up to 50 percent on national brands and local favorites through Access

As a member of the MTA, you are entitled to discounts through **Access**, the nation's largest savings network. Access understands the need for valuable, relevant benefits that truly help enrich members' lives. With more in-store merchant locations than any other private discount program, Access offers unparalleled value every day. Access deals are not just run-of-the-mill specials available to the general public, however. They are exclusive offers delivering deep discounts of up to 50 percent at restaurants, retailers, hotels, theme parks and more.

We know the struggles you face. These days, every dollar earned counts and every penny saved helps. Many educators use their own money to pay for school supplies to help support their students while also trying to make the most of their hard-earned dollars to support themselves and their families. The beauty of the Access discount program is that it is designed to help members such as you save money — perhaps enough to help you recover the cost of your dues!

Making the most of the Access program is simple: The more you use it, the more you save.

The largest private discount network of its kind, Access comprises more than 350,000 merchants. Discounts can be found online by going to [mtabenefits.com](http://mtabenefits.com), logging in and then clicking on the "Access Discounts" link. You can also save while you're on the go with the "My Deals" mobile app. Simply download the app and show your phone to your retailer in order to save. It's that easy!



Access believes that the best savings occur at the types of places where you already shop. You'll find unique savings in categories such as dining, shopping, hotels and travel, car rentals, movies and entertainment, recreation, home and garden, health and beauty, and auto services. You can enjoy both popular national brands and local favorites. As a member of the MTA, you have access to more than 5,800 Massachusetts merchants, as well as more than 20,000 discounts in the New England region.



See how much you can save by using the Access discount program, brought to you by MTA Benefits. You'll be empowered by saving hundreds of dollars each year — if not thousands — on everyday purchases and big-ticket items. You'll find yourself saving instantly. So what are you waiting for? Start saving today!

## Spring travel season will be here soon



**Vacations are often the most highly anticipated events each year, but arranging all of the details for them can be stressful. With the MTA Vacation Center, planning your next trip will be a breeze.**

### **All-new resort stays with Wyndham® Extra Holidays**

**Wyndham® Extra Holidays** is an exclusive member benefit program that enables you to book one, two or three private bedrooms in a suite where you can spread out for the duration of your trip. Suites include well-equipped kitchens where you can prepare a full meal or a quick breakfast. Most suites also include your own washer and dryer, so you can lighten the load of your luggage for the trip!

A great feature of this program is that resort stays can be booked per night or for an entire week — it's up to you and depends on the type of trip you're planning. So whether it's a weekend getaway or a two-week extended vacation, you'll savor the perks of a spacious resort suite.

*Continued on page 4*

# Why solar power is growing rapidly in Massachusetts



**H**ot weather means more air conditioning and higher utility bills. Given how hot the summer of 2016 was, you might be wondering how to cut down on your electric bill next summer.

Homeowners throughout Massachusetts are finding that solar power offers one way to decrease reliance on their electricity providers.

Solar power systems are an affordable and effective way to drastically reduce your utility bill, increase your home's value and lessen your impact on climate change.

If you are new to solar power systems, you are bound to have questions.

## How much will it cost?

Many people wonder if they can afford solar. Right now, incentives and progressive loan programs in Massachusetts are some of the best in the country. A homeowner in Massachusetts who purchases a solar power system receives a federal tax credit of 30 percent of the cost of the system. Massachusetts also has a Solar Renewable Energy Certifications program that pays you

money for the energy your solar installation produces. Over 10 years, SRECs typically pay between \$1,500 and \$2,000 per year.

In addition, the new Massachusetts solar loan program provides a 3.25 percent 10-year loan that has an online approval system.

In combination, these programs result in a quick return on investment for solar customers in Massachusetts. Some of the incentives are first-come, first-served, however. The SREC program has a statewide cap, so when the cap has been reached, the program will close. Because solar power is now very popular and many homeowners are installing it, that cap could be reached within months.

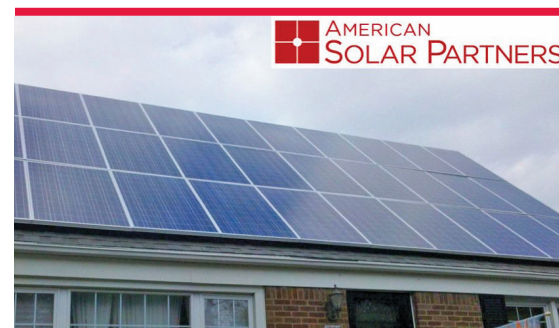
## Buying vs. leasing

One big decision is whether to buy or lease your system. While leasing may seem attractive because it usually requires no up-front cost, electricity savings are usually much lower than if you owned your system. By leasing your system, you may also lose out on federal and state solar incentives. If you buy your solar installation, the incentives go to you.

Recent research by *Consumer Reports* determined that ownership resulted in a much higher rate of savings. According to the magazine, many leases "contain an escalator clause that can further reduce savings by increasing payments 3 percent per year. So if you're paying 12 cents per kilowatt-hour in year one, with a 3 percent escalator, you'll be paying 18.2 cents in year 15." By owning your system, you are protected from rate increases because it's your power coming off your roof.

Moreover, selling a house with a leased system can be difficult. Many potential homebuyers do not want to take over lease payments. Solar systems are also considered home improvements. Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory did research showing that solar panels can increase the value of your home by up to \$30,000.

Many homeowners wonder if solar is feasible for them. The answer depends on conditions at your house. Shade, the direction your roof faces and your roof's shape are all factors. The professionals at American Solar Partners can let you know for free if solar is feasible for your house.



MTA Benefits has partnered with American Solar Partners, which uses only American-made solar panels and union installers. ASP can provide a free solar assessment and answer any of your questions.

Sign up for an assessment online at  
[www.americansolarpartners.com/mta](http://www.americansolarpartners.com/mta)  
or call ASP at 617.945.8054.



**Editor:** Elizabeth A. Bejoian  
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Website: [www.mtabenefits.com](http://www.mtabenefits.com)

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



# Tip Sheet

All discounts listed in the Tip Sheet  
can be found at [mtabenefits.com](http://mtabenefits.com)

## Your guide to holiday shopping

Gift giving often adds unnecessary stress to the holiday season. To help lessen the burden, we've come up with some great gift ideas that also provide discounts for MTA members.



Magazine subscriptions are gifts that last all year long. The MTA Magazine Service provides discounts of up to 85 percent on more than 900 titles. For sports fans, choose from more than 100 popular titles such as *Sports Illustrated*, *MotorTrend* and *Runner's World*. If you're shopping for food lovers, consider *Food Network* and *Cooking Light*. There are plenty of options for the children on your list, too. *National Geographic Kids*, *American Girl*, *Ranger Rick* and *Sports Illustrated Kids* are just a few that they're sure to enjoy. Some of the most popular titles among members are *The New Yorker*, *Time*, *The Economist* and *Popular Science*, to name just a few. If you haven't claimed your two free subscriptions yet this year, log on to [mtabenefits.com](http://mtabenefits.com) to order them!

Books make a great gift, and there are a number of shops across the state that offer discounts to members. **Broadside Bookshop** in Northampton offers a 10 percent discount on in-stock trade books not already discounted; larger discounts are offered on volume purchases. Brookline's ever-popular **Brookline Books**mith offers an 8 percent discount on new books; it offers larger discounts on volume purchases. **Storybook Cove** in Hanover offers a 10 percent discount on personal purchases and 20 percent on classroom purchases — with larger discounts for single-title volume purchases. There are also discounts on books written by fellow MTA members; check

out the Member Authors section of the *Benefits & Discount Directory*.



Tickets to a show are a unique idea, and there are plenty of theaters that offer discounts to MTA members. New this year is a 10 percent discount to **Berkshire Theatre Group** in Pittsfield; for the Beatles lover on your list, get tickets to the group's *Berkshire Musicians' Tribute to John Lennon*. Save 10 percent to 30 percent on tickets to performances at **Citi Performing Arts Center** at either the Wang Theatre or Shubert Theatre. Performances include *Rent*, *Carnival*, and *Hedwig & the Angry Inch*. The **Hanover Theatre for the Performing Arts** in Worcester has a lineup of shows that you won't want to miss. Save 10 percent on tickets to *The Nutcracker*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Sound of Music*, *CIRQUE DREAMS Jungle Fantasy*, and many more!



For many of us, half the fun of holiday shopping is browsing the aisles and choosing a gift the old-fashioned way. For the children on your list, visit **Boing! JP's Toy Shop** in Jamaica Plain for everything from arts and crafts to puzzles, brain teasers and games. Receive 10 percent off your purchase. Music lovers will be thrilled to receive a **Bose**® gift, whether it's the acclaimed Wave® Music System IV, headphones or a home entertainment system. New this year is **Yummy Treasures Bead Shop** in Pittsfield, where you'll find thousands of beads, charms and gemstones at 10 percent off regularly priced items. Don't forget to stop at Guest Services for your free Savings Passport when you visit **Clinton Crossing Premium Outlets** in Clinton, Conn.; **Merrimack Premium Outlets** in Merrimack, N.H.; **Wrentham Premium Outlets** in Wrentham; or **Woodbury Common Premium Outlets** in Central Valley, N.Y.

## Do you need a little extra holiday shopping money?

Make sure to enter the MTA Benefits giveaway from Nov. 14 to 21; two members will each win a \$500 American Express gift card!



For a full list of discounts, visit [mtabenefits.com](http://mtabenefits.com).

# The role of dental care in overall wellness

**A** study of routine periodontal care shows that when people treat oral health as a key piece of wellness, their overall health care costs and hospital admissions decline.

The study was conducted by Dr. Marjorie Jeffcoat, professor of periodontology and dean emeritus at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Dental Medicine.

Results were published in 2015 by **United Concordia Dental** in a paper titled *The Mouth: The Missing Piece to Overall Wellness and Lower Medical Costs*.

Using medical claims data from Highmark and United Concordia dental plans, Dr. Jeffcoat analyzed nearly 1.7 million insurance records from 2005 to 2009. Of that data set, 338,891 members were identified as having both medical and dental insurance. Data subsets were created by including those with a diagnosis of at least one specified medical condition and evidence of periodontal disease. Chronic conditions included cerebral vascular disease (stroke); coronary artery (heart) disease, and Type 2 diabetes. Also included in the study were women who were pregnant.

The study compared members who completed treatment and maintenance for gum disease with those who didn't. For each group, two outcomes were analyzed: total annual medical costs and total annual number of hospitalizations.

The study showed that annual medical costs and hospitalizations were considerably lower for members with chronic medical conditions and for women who were pregnant who completed their periodontal treatment and maintenance. The opportunity for cost savings was significant.



## Annual Medical Cost Savings

\$5,681 for members with cerebral vascular disease (stroke)  
\$1,090 for members with coronary artery disease (heart)  
\$2,840 for members with diabetes (\$1,477 for diabetes outpatient drug costs\*)  
\$2,433 for pregnant women

## Annual Hospitalization Reductions\*\*

21.2 percent for members with stroke  
28.6 percent for members with heart disease  
39.4 percent for members with diabetes

Without a doubt, good oral health is critical to overall health. The right dental coverage makes it easy for members to get the care they need to improve their overall wellness.

For more information on United Concordia dental plans through your MTA membership, please call Professional Insurance Services, Inc., at 800.382.1352 or go to [mtabenefits.com](http://mtabenefits.com). Click on Benefits and then Insurance.

\*Internal data analysis on diabetes and drug costs. Average savings after seven or more periodontal visits.

\*\*Not applicable to pregnant women.

## Spring travel season will be here soon

*Continued from page 1*

From beach vacations to a ski or golf trip or a weekend spent exploring nature, Wyndham Extra Holidays has the comforts of home awaiting you. With locations from coast to coast in the United States as well as in Hawaii, Mexico, Puerto Rico and St. Thomas, you're on your way to planning the trip of a lifetime.

### The magic of Orlando is a few clicks away

Find great savings on your next trip to Orlando with Orlando Member Discounts. Lodging discounts are available on vacation homes and condos, with savings of 20 percent to 70 percent. Hotels start at just \$42 per night. You can also save on tickets to Walt Disney World®, Universal Orlando® Resort, and LEGOLAND® Florida, as well as to dinner shows such as *Arabian Nights* and *Pirates Dinner Adventure*. Be sure to check out vacation packages that include a combination of lodging and ticket discounts.

Wherever you're headed on vacation, you can save up to 25 percent on your car rental with MTA member discounts. Details on travel discounts can be found at [mtavacations.com](http://mtavacations.com).

