

MTA

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Association

TODAY



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The Fiscal Crisis **Behind the Fight for** **More Funding**



Bill Brown, Gateway Education Association vice president, said transportation costs are among the escalating expenses affecting rural school districts.

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MTA TODAY

Massachusetts Teachers Association
2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor
Quincy, MA 02171-2119

617-878-8000

mtatoday@massteacher.org
massteacher.org

Max Page, President

Deb McCarthy, Vice President

Mike Fadel, Executive Director-Treasurer

Mike Fadel, Publisher

Amanda Torres-Price,

Communications Director & Editor

Mary MacDonald, Editor & Writer

Veronica Sosa-Dunetz,

Design & Layout

Scott McLennan, Writer

Jonathan Ng, Photographer

Laura Mullen, Editorial Assistant

MTA TODAY DIGITAL

Carlos Avila, Developer & Strategist

Sarah Nathan, Content Manager & Photography

Bob Duffy, Video & Photography

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COVER PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIC HAYNES



A DIVERSE UNION
of EDUCATION
WORKERS



The Gift of Discomfort



“

At a moment when public education is under attack as never before, we paradoxically must reemphasize our need to offer the gift of discomfort to our students.”

MAX PAGE

Each of us has moments from our education that are seared in our memories. They are touchstones for how we move through the world. I remember one such moment like it was yesterday. It was sixth grade at Wildwood Elementary School in Amherst. We were handed “100 Great Short Stories.”

The first story we read involved violence, including between family members. It was all about the underside of a community and its traditions. It was unnerving and frightening. I never forgot the story and have returned to it, repeatedly.

It was Shirley Jackson’s “The Lottery.”

Should I have been protected from that famous work of literature, of the annual stoning of one of the townspeople by all others? And maybe I also shouldn’t have been allowed to read the disturbing “The Chaser,” by John Collier, in which a young man buys a love potion that makes his object of affection obsessed with him. The pharmacist notes that the apothecary also sells poison, then bids the young man farewell with a haunting “au revoir” — “until we meet again.”

Was I harmed by being exposed to these troubling stories? Or was my teacher (who later won a national teaching award) putting before me and my classmates works of literature that inspired us to think about ethics and responsibility, and also that cultivated a love of literature?

I mention this, because over 13,000 people responded in October to an MTA Facebook post about the efforts of a small group to remove the book “All American Boys” from the middle school curriculum in Danvers. Seventh-grade teacher and Danvers Teachers Association member Sarah Stone observed when she spoke before the school committee:

“We are standing at a crossroads. Option A is to have faculty teach with books that we select based upon curriculum review, our expertise and the developmental needs of our students. Option B is to pretend that some of the most pressing and relevant issues of our time simply don’t exist and to fail in giving our students the experiences and tools they need to think critically in an increasingly complex world. Only one of these options sounds like a reasonable path for our school community.”

Andrea Sherman, president of the Beverly Teachers Association, who spoke as a parent of two children in the Danvers schools and as an English teacher herself, said simply: “Discomfort is not harm. In fact, avoiding that which makes us uncomfortable does our students a great disservice.”

We are rightly talking about the need to care for the mental health of our students, advocate for more recess, win a “bell-to-bell” ban on cellphones, protect our LGBTQ+ and immigrant students, and demand more supports inside and outside our classrooms. We will be more committed than ever to protecting those in our schools – students and educators – who are most under threat by forces spinning circles of hate.

At a moment when public education is under attack as never before, we paradoxically must reemphasize our need to offer the gift of discomfort to our students.

Discomfort is the birthplace of real learning – not rote, standardized-test learning, but deeper learning where students engage in a reading, an experiment, a class discussion, a performance and find themselves confused, lost, their preconceptions questioned, wrestling with a problem – and then emerge enlightened. “Comfortable” learning produces adults comfortable with the status quo. Learning rooted in discomfort will produce creatively contentious adults who expect better from a world that produces so much injustice.

And the crucible holding this chemical reaction together is the educator, guiding, supporting, cajoling, questioning, challenging. In other words, educating. **■**

Max Page, MTA President

FISCAL CRISIS

By **Mary MacDonald**
Photographs by **Eric Haynes**



Fran Frederick, Belchertown Education Association president, said the state needs to revisit its funding process.

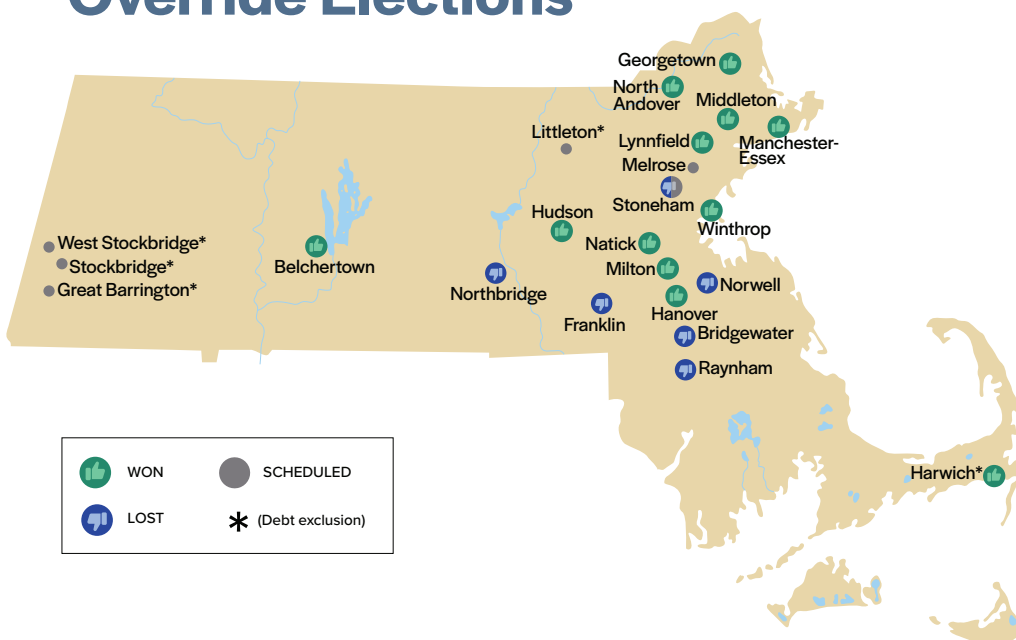
Local School Districts Grapple with Fiscal Constraints

Gaps in state funding, combined with changing economic conditions, are dramatically impacting many public school districts in Massachusetts. A resulting fiscal crisis is unfolding in myriad ways, in schools that are struggling to cover soaring transportation costs, in districts that are losing needed funds when students go to charter schools and in communities where the per-pupil funding isn't keeping pace with inflation. Federal cuts threatened by the Trump administration could make the situation even worse, removing needed support for student programs. The budget squeeze faced by districts has led to an increase over the past year in override campaigns, including debt exclusions, where voters are being asked to increase local funding for schools through higher property taxes, beyond the limits of Proposition 2½. Most of the MTA-supported overrides have been passed successfully – 12 of 18 to date. But the greater focus for MTA members is seeking comprehensive state relief through legislation that would ensure all students, no matter where they live, have access to a complete education. That requires sufficient funding. To effect change, among other strategies, the MTA has organized Fiscal Crisis Action Teams, turned out large numbers of students and educators for a State House budget hearing and gathered signatures for a letter aimed at Gov. Maura Healey and the Legislature.

CHAPTER 70 INFLATION CAP

Under current law, Chapter 70 state funding increases for local districts are capped for inflation at 4.5 percent, no matter how high inflation runs in a given year. The MTA supports legislation that would ensure the percentage keeps pace with inflation. This would help relieve pressure on school systems that are fighting to keep pace with soaring expenses. In Belchertown, an override election narrowly was approved in May, producing \$3 million more for public schools. Approved in 2019, the Student Opportunity Act directed more funding to districts with low-income students, but has not resulted in additional funding for Belchertown, explained Fran Frederick, president of the Belchertown Education Association. After years of escalating costs, and facing the closure of a school and the loss of 30 positions, townspeople approved the override by a mere 20 votes. Most people expected it would be that close, Frederick said. The state has to change the Chapter 70 formula to reflect current conditions, Frederick said. "It's Chapter 70. We're just not funding schools the way we need to fund schools. We're operating with outdated metrics and outdated numbers."

MTA-Supported Override Elections



CHARTER SCHOOL REIMBURSEMENTS

When students leave a public school in their district to attend a charter school, the state provides partial reimbursement for the loss of that per-pupil funding. As MTA Today went to press, state funding for charter school reimbursements had just been decided. The Legislature voted to override Gov. Maura Healey's veto of a line item in the state budget that would have provided \$19.9 million more in the fiscal 2026 state budget for districts impacted by charter school enrollment. Legislation sought by the MTA to change the reimbursement formula would add a fourth year to the existing, three-year sliding scale for charter reimbursements and increase reimbursements in the second year.

Charter schools can have a dramatic financial impact on large districts, including Springfield, Worcester, Brockton and Fall River, but they also affect many rural schools because each child that leaves for a charter school means more money is lost to the public district than regained through reimbursement. In a small school with declining enrollment, this can have an outsized impact.

Cara Berg Powers, a resident of Worcester and an adjunct faculty member at Worcester State University, testified at the State House to support charter school reimbursement reform. By adding another year to the transitional reimbursement, the legislation will add more stability to public districts, she said. "It makes them 100 percent whole in the first year, and then steps that down gradually."

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

Regional school districts, typically rural, that run buses over a large geographic area are particularly harmed by high inflation that is driving up transportation costs. Regional school districts are supposed to be reimbursed for a significant portion of these costs, but it historically has been underfunded. Legislation sought by the MTA would provide full reimbursement for regional transportation costs. Bill Brown, the Gateway Education Association vice president, noted that his district covers a large area. State reimbursements vary, and it is difficult for the district to control transportation costs because competition is limited among the private bus companies doing business in rural communities. Districts are being hit by declining enrollment, which reduces state funding for the local schools, but the costs are escalating. “The buses are still on the routes, whether they pick up 20 kids or 15 kids,” Brown said. “It’s the same amount for gas and the same cost for transportation.” The impact has been cumulative. Gateway, for example, no longer has after-school buses for activities. The district is trying to fight back, including by taking students to Beacon Hill to testify for regional district support. “This district in particular has been active in pushing back, which decreases the discouragement to some degree,” Brown said.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ‘Circuit Breaker’ Program

State-mandated special education services are carrying increasingly expensive costs, stretching local school system budgets. The state, through the “Special Education Circuit Breaker Program,” reimburses school districts at 75 percent for instructional and transportation costs above a per-pupil level of about \$50,000, but this has become inadequate. Legislation sought by the MTA will raise the reimbursement level to 90 percent, lower the threshold at which costs become eligible for reimbursement, and create a commission to look at additional reforms.



Bill Brown, Gateway Education Association vice president, said rural and regional districts are particularly impacted by increasing transportation costs because of their large geographic areas.



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RURAL SCHOOL AID

Rural districts in Massachusetts face particular challenges. Because they lack efficiencies of scale, they cost more per pupil to educate children than the state average. Rural schools also often have declining enrollment, due to jobs being located outside rural areas, a lack of new housing and other impacts, such as families moving to seek out larger districts with more options, said Jessica Corwin, a School Committee member in Sunderland. Corwin also is co-chair of the Rural Schools Committee, a group of school leaders fighting for more state funding. The MTA is supporting legislation that would increase state support for rural school districts, including through full funding for their unique challenges, such as an aid fund that would receive \$60 million annually for direct support. Citing her own district, Corwin explained why it is so much more expensive to educate a child in rural Massachusetts. “It costs us about 23 percent more per student to provide a basic education,” she said. “If you are going to have a public school, you need to hire a superintendent and a business manager and a director of special education, a principal, a school nurse, a school custodian and a school secretary, whether your school serves 100 students or 1,000 students. We can’t cut some of those essential things.” The Chapter 70 formula doesn’t account for sparsity, and it needs to, she said. “We get the minimum per-pupil increase. When the minimum per-pupil increase is big it’s a good year. This year it was \$150 (per student) and people really celebrated that. If you only have 100 kids in your school, that increase doesn’t cover anything substantial in the budget.” **T**

For information about the school fiscal crisis and MTA efforts to address it through comprehensive legislation, please visit massteacher.org/fiscalcrisis.



Jessica Corwin, a Sunderland School Committee member, said some rural districts are being forced into a spiral, where they have to cut needed programs and services as students leave for larger districts.

Protecting Public Higher Ed From FEDERAL CUTS

By **Scott McLennan**



Public higher education is not immune to the impact of a fiscal crisis — but the source of the current crisis is tied more directly to federal spending cuts.

From the earliest days of the second Trump administration, colleges and universities have been thrust into chaos, with funding frozen or cut when deemed to support programs at odds with the president's agenda. Federal funding connected to everything from research to student support has come under fire, especially when a federal agency characterizes a program as an initiative promoting diversity, equity and inclusion.

What is becoming clear is that the longstanding, federally funded TRIO grant program, which provides support for low-income and first-generation students, as well as students with disabilities, will be scaled back. Nutrition education programs funded by SNAP, including one operated by UMass Amherst staff, are losing federal funding. Federal support that bolstered colleges helping Hispanic students also is being cut.

According to the Healey administration, Massachusetts is losing approximately \$3.7 billion in federal funding that has been used for education, health care, transportation, public safety, housing and other initiatives.

MTA members have been urging legislators to pass Gov. Maura Healey's proposed DRIVE Act, which sets aside \$400 million in state money to cover federal cuts to programs at colleges and universities in Massachusetts. Of that amount, half would come from Fair Share Amendment revenue to support public higher education programs.

Healey has said the money will backfill cuts to research, but MTA higher ed members are pushing for the bill to cover more than research and include other vital programs facing cuts.

At UMass Boston, the 500 students participating in Student Support Services programs funded by TRIO will not see any disruptions caused by funding cuts,

“ We know that without long-term solutions, these cuts will directly affect student retention and success.”

RENEA GORMAN

at least through August 2026. But other TRIO-supported programs, such as Talent Search and Upward Bound that recruit high school students, have lost their federal funding.

Professional Staff Union member Franklin Ortiz, one of the advisers in the support services program, is troubled that TRIO is being written off as an unnecessary relic of the 1960s, especially as it attracts a wide variety of students to UMB who might not otherwise access higher education.

“Our program targets low-income students, first-generation students and students with learning disabilities. We help guide them through every step of the college process. We do everything from helping with course selection, working with them on letters for internships and making sure FAFSA forms are properly filled out,” Ortiz said.

He understands firsthand how important such support can be.

“If there were no TRIO, there’d be no Franklin,” he said, explaining that as an undergraduate at UMB, he nearly dropped out in his first year. But thanks to support services, he navigated a rough patch and graduated in 2018. He then pursued a master’s degree and returned as a counselor in the program so he could help others.

He estimated that keeping that one program currently funded by TRIO

running would cost about \$1 million annually. All three TRIO-funded programs at UMB cost about \$3.5 million. Though Springfield Technical Community College expected one more year of funding under a federal grant designed to provide student supports, the Trump administration clawed back \$1.8 million of the \$7.3 million the college was awarded in 2021 as a Hispanic Serving Institution.

The administration instead diverted all HSI funding to colleges and universities designated as tribal colleges and Historically Black Colleges and Universities, of which there are none in Massachusetts. The HSI cuts hit STCC, as well as Holyoke, Bunker Hill, Northern Essex, Middlesex and North Shore community colleges. Salem State University also was impacted.

Renae Gorman, president of the Massachusetts Community College Council chapter at STCC, called the cuts “a devastating blow to our college community, especially at a time when enrollment is growing and students need more – not fewer – support services.”

The HSI grant funds supported a STEM center, academic advising and other student support services. The campus administration needs to do a better job engaging faculty, staff and all stakeholders whenever the college faces such a significant challenge, Gorman said.

“Our union members have repeatedly raised concerns about transparency, staffing and declining morale, and this funding loss only amplifies those issues,” she said. “We know that without sustainable, long-term solutions, these cuts will directly affect student retention and success.”

The Trump administration also stripped away all funding for SNAP-Ed, a nutrition education component of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. UMass Amherst’s Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment helped administer these programs through regional offices staffed by members of the Professional Staff Union and University Staff Association. Massachusetts can use unspent SNAP-Ed funds to continue programs into next summer. But the long-term fate of the program is uncertain, despite its record of promoting healthy lifestyle and diet choices.

MTA members also have been seeking support for the DRIVE Act at the local level, asking municipal bodies such as city councils and select boards to call on state lawmakers to pass Healey’s spending proposal and expand the scope of what those funds can help protect. The city councils in Salem, Haverhill and Lowell are among the communities that already have passed such resolutions.

As MTA Today went to press, the Legislature’s Joint Committee on Economic Development & Emerging Technologies was scheduled to hold an Oct. 30 public hearing on the DRIVE Act. **T**

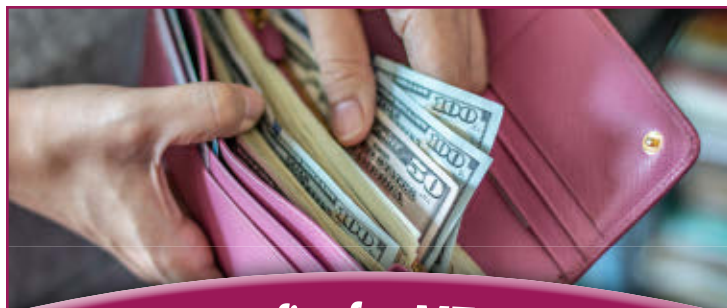
To learn more about the ongoing fight to protect higher ed, please visit <https://lead.me/mtaprotectingeducation>



Write for MTA Today

MTA Today invites members to submit first-person articles, or perspectives, on issues relating to public education. We publish these articles under the heading "More Than Words" and they are clearly labeled as a contributor's opinion. To be considered for publication, articles must be written by the author and must be original work. The author must be a current member of the MTA. The length should be no more than 1,000 words. A photograph of the author will be scheduled prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit all submissions, including for uniformity with union goals, clarity, length and style. The editor will work with writers who submit for publication, but not all submissions will be accepted for publication. **T**

If interested, please submit your writing, as well as contact information, to mtatoday@massteacher.org.



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SEEKING JUSTICE

Considerations of an Adjunct Faculty Member and Organizer

By **Melissa Santos** Photograph by **Eric Haynes**

As a child, I vacationed with family in Portugal and bore witness to a long-standing tradition: the running of the bulls. My immediate response was to empathize with the bull. In home videos of that moment, you can hear me urge the bull on. I saw the injustice wielded by people, supposing that they could not only overpower the bull, but that they could subdue its wild nature. The spectacle was inhumane.

Decades later, I became a union organizer for the Massachusetts State College Association. It was through that experience that I began to understand the connection between adjuncts and the trapped bulls on those streets.

The terms we use vary. We are adjuncts, contingent or part-time faculty.

An adjunct is a noun, meaning: “A thing added to something else as a supplementary rather than an essential part.” In real terms, we are ‘supplementary’ to full-time, tenure-track faculty. We are not essential.

To say we supplement something, means we “complete or enhance something.” In this view, full-time faculty are neither complete nor fully enhanced without us. However, we are not essential, either. We are simply additive material.

There is a great history of higher education, with the foundation being bringing education to the masses in the hopes of a more equitable and wise people. This, above all, was to further democratic principles. If we have a more educated population, then we will have more educated people either participating in or advocating for democratic principles.

But here we are, as adjuncts, educated people denied not only the basic principles of job security and benefits, but the larger benefits of higher education professionals.

I came to this position knowing all of the above. However, all of it has become even more clear as I traversed the role of organizer for the ‘supplementary’ and ‘inessential.’

The reality is that full-time faculty and part-time faculty are in two completely different situations. If we strip it all bare, though, as educators, our goals are the same. Our mission is to guide and assist our students. While our positions are different, this is the constant. Our students are what matters.

What divides us, though, matters.

Audre Lorde, a Black, lesbian feminist and poet, once said: “Sometimes we are

blessed with being able to choose the time, and the arena, and the manner of our revolution, but more usually we must do battle where we are standing.”

Understanding ‘where we are standing’ is part of the work of being an organizer. Where we stand, however, is not a place of our own choosing. It has been chosen for us.

Our only foundation is our own strength.

Lorde also wrote: “For the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.”

Part of the work of being an organizer is coming to understand who the ‘master’ is. The ultimate master is the current higher educational system.

I remember the first time I became aware of the precariousness of my position. I was getting ready to teach a course when an email arrived from our then-chapter president warning us of the 15 percent rule (This is basically a stipulation that only 15 percent of faculty can be part-time). The email was a warning call to me that my position as an adjunct was not only unstable but a “problem.” In that moment, that email told me I was expendable.

Melissa Santos is a 13-year adjunct faculty member at Bridgewater State University.

I will spare you the journey that led me to decide to teach in higher education. I will say, though, that it was encompassed by a love of literature and a love of teaching. I was an older student, returning for my undergraduate degree at the age of 26. The Ph.D. was always my goal because I wanted that status. I wanted the respect that came with that title. I wanted prestige.

Only now do I see how faulty that image was.

The dream was the opposite of the reality I had grown up with. I am a child of immigrant parents, who only obtained their GED diplomas later in life. Perhaps it was a way of distancing myself from that, but I hope not. The subconscious is a funny thing. I never was embarrassed by my parents, and I hold my family's ability to carve a real life for themselves under those circumstances close to my heart.

I have all this knowledge behind me. I have that young girl there, too, who witnessed those bullfights. And in this way, what's past is indeed prologue. I cannot imagine I would have the passion and drive to organize adjuncts if my past was different. Can I say that young girl shouting for the just treatment of the bulls would find herself shouting for the just treatment of her own livelihood, and others like her? I guess it would be quite poetic to say yes.

The reality of our position, "where we are standing," complicates the ability to organize adjuncts. This is something I've learned in my time as an organizer. Far too many adjuncts have lost faith in the union. We are continually aware of our oppressed position but have often been forced to rely on the good



“Where we stand, however, is not a place of our own choosing. It has been chosen for us.” MELISSA SANTOS

graces of some well-meaning members who can rarely fully understand what we want or need because they do not share our lived experiences. These are all very uncomfortable truths that must be addressed for us to realize a fully democratic union.

While the bulls did not always defeat the bullfighters, it was their tenacity of spirit and

downright perseverance that fascinated me. They never faltered in protecting themselves, by any means necessary.

Perhaps there is some poetry in it all. **T**

Melissa Santos, an adjunct faculty member in the English Department at Bridgewater State University since 2012, is the organizing chair of the Massachusetts State College Association.

Nominate a Deserving Education Support Professional!

#WeLoveOurESPs

The 2026 MTA ESP of the Year Award is a fantastic opportunity to recognize an individual who exemplifies the professionalism, creativity and dedication of the public education profession. The award is open to ESPs who work in preK-12 and higher education. Nominations are now open and will be collected through Dec. 15, 2025.

Nominate someone today! Visit massteacher.org/esp for a nomination form and more information.



Katherine Monteiro, a registered behavioral technician in Weymouth, is the 2025 MTA ESP of the Year.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB DUFFY

COLA Update By Mary MacDonald

MTA members testified in a hearing at the State House in September, urging legislators to approve a larger pension base on which the cost-of-living adjustment is calculated. Since 2012, the base for state pensions has been \$13,000. As a result, the 3 percent COLA typically awarded in years of high inflation adds little — \$390 a year — to retired educators' pensions.

As members live longer in retirement, their state pensions can't keep up with inflation, said MTA President Max Page.

"The promise that the Commonwealth makes is if you serve the public and you serve our students and our schools, then you will be able to retire in dignity after a career of 25 or 30 years," he told legislators. "We're not honoring that commitment."

The MTA is pushing for legislation that would increase the amount applied to the COLA to \$18,000. The bill (H.2812) also would create a mechanism to cap out-of-

pocket expenses for public retirees who are not Medicare-eligible. And it would freeze the health insurance premium contribution share for current municipal retirees at the percentage they were paying when the legislation takes effect.

In October, the First Wednesday Retiree Speaker Series featured a panel of retirement legislation experts, including Shawn Duhamel and Frank Valeri, CEO and president, respectively, of the Mass Retirees Association. The challenge for increasing the COLA, Valeri explained, is that the actuarial cost scares off many legislators.

"Our appropriation is over \$4 billion and it's increasing by 8 percent a year," he said. "With that kind of pressure, it's very difficult to get any administration to increase the cost-of-living benefits."

A nine-member state commission is looking into COLA options and is expected to release proposals in December.

In the Sept. 17 legislative hearing, members described the realities of living on tightened budgets.

Page said that an educator who retires with a \$50,000 pension will see that amount eroded by 20 percent in a decade, given inflation. "It's a great pension system as long as you don't live too long," he said.

Sheila Hanley, a retired reading teacher who worked in Randolph for 30 years, explained that she and her husband, a retired counselor, worked at a time when their salaries were lower than surrounding towns. Retired for a decade, Hanley said she thinks of how difficult finances must be for retired educators who are older than her.

"Think of those educators who have been out 15, 20, 25 years, and how this has impacted their lives." **T**

For more information on the COLA legislation, please visit massteacher.org/legislation.



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Save on Heating Costs This Fall

By **Diamond Coleman**

As fall settles in and temperatures begin to drop, it's the perfect time for MTA members to explore smart ways to manage heating costs. With energy prices fluctuating and winter on the horizon, planning ahead can make a real difference. Fortunately, MTA Benefits offers two exclusive programs designed to help members and their families save money on heating oil and propane — ensuring warmth and comfort throughout the colder months without straining their budget.

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Heat USA is the largest heating oil buying group in the United States, and it's specially designed to deliver significant savings and added benefits to customers. By leveraging the collective purchasing power of over 80,000 households, Heat USA is able to negotiate premium rates and services with top-rated, local oil suppliers.

One of the standout features of the program is access to lifetime free or deeply discounted full-service contracts. These contracts often include essential benefits such as parts and labor coverage, ensuring that heating systems stay in tip-top shape all season long. Heat USA also offers 24-hour emergency service for urgent heating needs and free annual system cleanings and tune-ups, which help improve energy efficiency and reduce the risk of breakdowns.

On average, members save between 15 and 20 cents per gallon on heating oil. There's also a \$10 discount for the first year, bringing the total cost to just \$25, plus a \$50 certificate for equipment upgrades. Another added perk of this program is automatic delivery, so you never have to worry about running low on heating oil — especially on cold days.



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If your home uses propane, Tankfarm offers another excellent savings opportunity. It functions similarly to a wholesale club, aggregating demand and buying propane in bulk from trusted local suppliers. These savings are then passed directly on to members.

Those who use Tankfarm typically pay 50 cents to \$1 less per gallon than standard retail rates, offering major savings over the course of a heating season. Unlike many propane providers, Tankfarm does not charge hidden fees for membership or deliveries, and there are no multi-year contract obligations, giving members the flexibility they need.

Another way to save even more is by choosing to purchase, rather than rent, your propane tank, which lowers rental fees that can add up year after year. New Tankfarm customers will receive \$50 in

free propane upon joining and a \$100 certificate toward the purchase of a new tank. Local suppliers handle installation and service appointments, ensuring reliable support whenever it's needed.

Now is the ideal time to take control of your heating expenses before the cold weather fully sets in. Whether your home relies on heating oil or propane, Heat USA and Tankfarm offer both immediate savings and long-term value. From discounted fuel prices to free annual maintenance and emergency services, these programs offer far more than just cost reductions — they provide peace of mind, reliability and convenience throughout the colder seasons. **T**

For more details or to sign up, visit mtabenefits.com.



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

Freezing Temperature Safety Tips for Your Home

Freezing temperatures are often caused by extreme changes in weather, which also can involve significant wind, ice and snowstorms that may lead to downed trees, burst pipes, power outages and property damage.

Educators Insurance Agency offers the following tips to help you prepare and keep your property safe:

Prepare today:

1. Clean your gutters – Remove leaves and debris that may impact melting ice or snow from flowing.
2. Perform regular property maintenance – Care for trees and shrubs that are close to the house, as frozen branches can break and cause damage.
3. Seal cracks and insulate - Seal all cracks, holes, windows, doors and other openings on exterior walls with caulk or insulation to prevent cold air from entering.
4. Insulate exposed pipes – Use pipe insulation, blankets, Styrofoam or swimming pool water noodles to help keep pipes from freezing.

Before the storm:

1. Set the heat to at least 60 degrees during the day and night.
2. Shut off outdoor water sources.
3. Locate your internal water shut-off valve and learn how to use it.

During the storm:

1. Close all doors and windows, including garage doors.
2. Keep heat at 60 degrees or higher and close entries to unheated spaces to prevent frozen pipes.
3. Set your faucets to a slow drip to keep water flowing and prevent freezing pipes.
4. Open cabinet doors under sinks to help keep pipes warm.
5. Regularly check water sources where frozen pipes are more likely, including around sinks and bathrooms.
6. If you lose power:
 - Run your faucets at a fast drip until you can get a temporary source of heat.
 - If the power will be out for an extended period, shut off the main water valve then open and run the water faucets until the pipes are empty.



7. If your pipes freeze:
 - Don't wait for them to burst – try thawing them with a hairdryer, heat lamp or space heater (do not leave heat sources unattended.)
 - Call a plumber if you need assistance.

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Debunking Myths About the Food Your Kids Eat

We've all heard people (maybe even our own parents) say "eat everything on your plate" or "drink milk every day." But is this good nutritional advice or just food myths that have been passed down?

To find out, we asked the nutrition team at KinderCare. This is what they had to say about three popular mealtime myths.

MYTH: Join the Clean Plate Club.

REALITY: It's not a club you have to join.

It's great to clean your plate when you feel hungry enough for it, but making kids clean their plates can make mealtimes unpleasant. Stressing about your child eating every single bite at each meal will only make for a miserable time — for everyone! Kids intuitively know their bodies — they can enjoy food and drink, see how the food makes them feel, and know when they're full. By creating in-the-moment awareness and not forcing them to eat more or have a clean plate, you can help them develop healthy relationships with food that will grow with them into adulthood. So, slow down and take a moment to enjoy food together.

MYTH: Certain foods are good, others are bad.

REALITY: It's about getting a variety of foods.

You may have heard that you have to drink milk and eat green vegetables and proteins for a healthy body and healthy growth. But you know what? It's actually not that straightforward; it's much more about finding balance and getting a variety of foods in your daily diet. There isn't one magical food or food group that will unlock the key to perfect health. That can include treats too!

MYTH: Eating the right amount will help kids reach their ideal weight.

REALITY: Everybody is different; eating is about the individual.

You may have heard that if your child eats a certain amount, they will gain the desired amount of weight. The truth is that not everyone is built the same. Our bodies are different and that is OK. If your child is growing consistently, sleeping well, feeling happy overall, eating a variety of foods and feeling energized for activities and play, then they are likely developing at their own pace — without needing to meet certain requirements that may not be realistic for them.

So, the next time you're wondering if that nutritional advice you heard might actually be a food myth, check with your pediatrician and read more on KinderCare's Cooking and Nutrition hub, found at [kindercare.com](https://www.kindercare.com).

NOTE: This article is for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice or treatment. Please consult a qualified medical professional with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition or treatment.



Editor: **Carolyn Cassiani**
The MTA Advantage is published three times a year as a supplement to *MTA Today* by MTA Benefits, Inc.

2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor, Quincy, MA 02171-2119
Tel: 800-336-0990 • Fax: 617-557-6687
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No dues dollars are ever used to market MTA Benefits programs.



Six Discounts From MTA Benefits to Brighten Your Holiday Break

By Diamond Coleman

The holidays are just around the corner, and that means more time to rest, recharge and sneak in a little fun. Whether you're staying close to home or planning a quick day trip, your MTA membership can help turn a break into a budget-friendly adventure. From free admission at local attractions to discounts on skiing, massages, and even pickleball, there are plenty of ways to make the most of your time off.

Pats Peak

If you prefer snow to stadiums, head north to Henniker, New Hampshire, and spend a day (or more!) at Pats Peak. This local favorite offers 28 trails, 11 lifts, and terrain parks for all levels. Whether you're carving down the slopes or trying snow tubing for the first time, it's a fantastic way to embrace the winter season. Even better — MTA members get special discounts on lift passes, so you can enjoy the mountain without depleting your holiday budget.

Harlem Globetrotters at TD Garden

If you're looking for an outing that kids and adults can enjoy, the Harlem Globetrotters return to TD Garden in Boston on Dec. 26 with two high-energy performances. Celebrating 100 years of basketball, the legendary team will face their longtime rivals, the Washington Generals, in a game that is sure to be filled with a bunch of tricks, dunks and family-friendly fun. With a special promo code, MTA members get a discount on tickets, while supplies last.

Rt. 12 Pickle



Looking for a way to stay active indoors? Rt. 12 Pickle in West Boylston has you covered with eight indoor, climate-controlled pickleball courts. No need to worry about snow or freezing temps — your game can continue all winter long. The facility also includes a full-service bar, lessons, clinics and leagues. MTA members can take advantage of a discounted annual membership rate.

New England Aquarium

For something a bit slower paced and more educational, the New England Aquarium in Boston offers the perfect escape. Wander through exhibits filled with penguins, sea lions and fascinating sea creatures from around the globe. The Sea Turtle Hospital and Amazon rainforest displays offer something for kids and adults alike. Best of all, your MTA card gets you in for free — a \$39 value that makes this an unbeatable holiday outing for families.



Pioneer Valley Brews Cruise

If sipping your way through local flavors sounds more your speed, the Pioneer Valley Brews Cruise is an excellent winter activity. This guided tour operator, based in Northampton, takes you behind the scenes at local breweries, wineries and distilleries in the Connecticut River Valley. You'll meet the makers, sample their creations and get a real taste of the region's craft beverage scene. Just show your MTA card at check-in and get \$10 off your booking.



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Freezing Temperature Safety Tips for Your Home

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- If your pipes burst, first turn off the water then repair the pipe, clean up the water, assess the damage and contact your insurance company.

If you're planning to travel or won't be home during a freeze:

1. Keep cabinet doors open under sinks to let warmer air reach your pipes.
2. Set your thermostat to 60 degrees or higher.
3. Set your faucets to a slow drip to keep water moving through interior pipes at risk of freezing, or turn off your water completely – especially in a secondary or seasonal home.
4. Have a neighbor or friend stop by to check on your home during the freeze to help find issues early and prevent further damage.

Be sure to notify your insurance company immediately if there is damage and protect the property while mitigating any future risk.



For questions about coverage on your existing policy or to get a quote on a new policy, contact Educators Insurance Agency at educatorsinsuranceagency.com or 888-908-6822.

Six Discounts From MTA Benefits to Brighten Your Holiday Break



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Body & Soul Massage

Consider treating yourself to some well-earned relaxation at Body & Soul Massage in Salem. Their therapists specialize in pain relief and helping clients feel their best through therapeutic massage. With your MTA member discount, you can relax knowing you're taking care of both your mind and your wallet.

This holiday break, you don't have to travel far or spend a fortune to make great memories. Your MTA membership unlocks exciting ways to explore, unwind and enjoy the season — on your terms. So, grab your member card, share the savings and make this holiday season one to remember.

For more information on these discounts and others, visit mtabenefits.com.



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*\$3,000 in discounts for conventional loan as compared with standard Massachusetts conventional mortgage fees and closing costs. Loan Origination Fee is inclusive of the following fees: Origination, Processing, Commitment, Application and Underwriting. Borrower shall not pay any other fees that go directly to lender for processing a mortgage/loan. Does not include Title Exam fee savings.

Certain loans that may be arranged through a third-party lender are excluded from MTA savings.

Nomination Papers Available

MTA members who intend to seek election to MTA office at the 2026 Annual Meeting of Delegates or to run for NEA Director or Alternate NEA Director may now request nomination papers.

At the MTA Annual Meeting, May 8-9, 2026, elections will take place for MTA President and Vice President, four regional Executive Committee seats, 19 District Director seats on the Board of Directors, three at-large seats on the Board and Executive Committee, and the Statewide Retired seat on the Executive Committee.

Four members of the Retired Members Committee will be elected at the 2026 Annual Meeting.

In addition, there are two NEA Director seats and up to five Alternate NEA Director seats up for election, for which online voting instructions will be sent to the active membership in March.

Requests 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 emailing 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 6, 2026, 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. 9, 2026.

No person may be a candidate for more than one office. Each candidate must specify the office sought, their MTA individual membership ID number (which can be found on the MTA membership card), home address, telephone number, email address and local association affiliation.

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

President and Vice President*

The President and Vice President of the MTA will be elected for two-year terms commencing July 15, 2026. All delegates at the 2026 Annual Meeting are the voters in this election. A candidate must be an active MTA member** or a retired MTA member within the Statewide Retired District. A local affiliate shall not be represented on the MTA Board of Directors by more than one officer (President or Vice President). Nomination papers must be signed by at least 200 members, with no more than 50 from any one local affiliate and no more than 100 from any one electoral district.

Regional Executive Committee members*

Four Regional Executive Committee seats will be elected at Annual Meeting by the delegates from each respective region. The seats are 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. 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. Members elected to serve on the Executive Committee also serve concurrently on the MTA Board.

District Directors*

19 District Director seats on the MTA Board will be elected at Annual Meeting by the delegates from each respective district. The open districts are 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A, 6A, 26A, 8B, 11B, 34C, 43C, 15D, 27D, 37E, 38E, 22F, 18G, 21G, and 44H. 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 Ethnic Minority Executive Committee member

The At-Large Ethnic Minority Executive Committee member will be elected by all Annual Meeting delegates. Any

TIMELINE

NOMINATION DEADLINE

December 30

Candidate Recommendation Committee

Congressional Districts 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9

NOMINATION DEADLINE

January 9

MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates

- Retired Ethnic Minority Delegates
- Statewide Retired District Delegates

NEA RA (Representative Assembly)

- Statewide, Regional and Retired Delegates

NEA Directors and Alternate NEA Directors

AMENDMENT DEADLINE

January 9

Filing Deadline for Proposed Bylaw and Resolutions Amendments

Initial Deadline for Proposed Amendments to Standing Rules

NOMINATION DEADLINE

February 6

MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates

- Regional Ethnic Minority Delegates

NOMINATION DEADLINE

March 6

Executive Committee

- Regions A, C, F and G
- At-Large Ethnic Minority Executive Committee Member
- At-Large ESP Executive Committee Member
- Statewide Retired Executive Committee Member

Board of Directors

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

Retired Members Committee

NOMINATION DEADLINE

April 3

NEA RA Student Delegates

active** member of the association is eligible to be a candidate for this Executive Committee seat. Nomination papers must be signed by at least 200 active association members, with no more than 50 from any one local affiliate and no more than 100 from any one electoral district.

At-Large ESP Executive Committee member

The seat for At-Large Education Support Professional Executive Committee member will be elected by all Annual Meeting delegates. 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 electoral district.

At-Large Director for ESPs

The At-Large Director for Education Support Professionals on the Board of Directors will be elected by all Annual Meeting delegates. 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 from any one electoral district.

Statewide Retired Executive Committee member

The seat for Statewide Retired Executive Committee member will be up for election, and will be voted on by the Retired delegates at Annual Meeting. Any retired member may be a candidate by submitting a self-nomination letter to the office of the Executive Director-Treasurer, or emailing the self-nomination to MTAGovernance@massteacher.org, by 5 p.m. on March 6, 2026.

Terms for the above Executive Committee and Board seats are three years and begin on July 1, 2026.

/ CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

Delegates to Be Elected for NEA RA

Tentative dates for the NEA Representative Assembly are July 3-7, 2026, and it will be held in Denver, Colorado.

Statewide, regional and retired delegates from Massachusetts to the 2026 NEA Representative Assembly will be elected by the membership during February, March and April.

The nomination period for delegates is now in process and will close at 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 9. Nominees are encouraged to use the self-nomination form available online at massteacher.org/nomform. The form may be submitted electronically. Alternatively, a paper form can be found on Page 24 of this issue of MTA Today.

The election period for statewide and regional delegates runs from March 2 through April 17.

Online voting instructions for statewide and regional delegates will be sent to eligible active MTA/NEA members.

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

The MTA will be notified by the NEA in January 2026 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.

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

The election period for retired delegates runs from Feb. 2, 2026, through March 13, 2026. Online voting instructions for retired delegates will be sent only to retired and retired life NEA members.

Retired members receive an allocation of RA delegates in proportion to their

membership, and candidates for those seats are elected by the retired membership.

Tentative dates for the RA are July 3-7, 2026, and it is scheduled to take place in Denver, Colorado. 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 online voting instructions to be sent to each NEA member in Massachusetts.

Those who prefer to vote by paper ballot may request one by following the instructions that will be sent to all voters.

Voting is by secret ballot, and the election and tabulation are conducted under the supervision of the Credentials and Ballot Committee.

There is a \$2,000 travel 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 procedure for the election of MTA delegates to the RA should be reviewed carefully by anyone considering candidacy. **T**

PROCEDURAL INQUIRIES

Inquiries concerning nomination and election procedures may be addressed to John Connelly in the MTA Division of Governance and Administration at 617-878-8305 or at jconnelly@massteacher.org.

2026 NOMINATIONS

Delegates to the NEA RA • Regional and Retired Ethnic Minority Delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting

• Statewide Retired District Delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting

For all positions except Regional Ethnic Minority Delegate to Annual Meeting, the nomination **deadline is 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 9, 2026**, regardless of postmark. For the Regional Ethnic Minority Delegate position, the **deadline is 5 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 6**.

We encourage candidates to use the online form available at

massteacher.org/nomform (or this paper form may be submitted).

1 NAME OF CANDIDATE: _____

MEMBER ID #: _____
PERSONAL EMAIL: _____
HOME ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____
LOCAL ASSOCIATION (leave blank if retired): _____

DISTRICT / REGION / RETIRED: _____

2 **Please check the box to indicate the elected position you are seeking.**
Candidate must fill out a separate nomination form for each position sought.

Please check one box only.

- ☐ Retired Delegate to MTA Annual Meeting
- ☐ Regional Ethnic Minority Delegate to MTA Annual Meeting*
- ☐ Retired Ethnic Minority Delegate to MTA Annual Meeting*
- ☐ Regional Delegate to NEA RA
- ☐ Statewide, Non-Supervisor Delegate to NEA RA
- ☐ Statewide, Supervisor Delegate to NEA RA
- ☐ Retired Delegate to NEA RA

Position / Membership Status

- ☐ Teacher or Education Support Professional
- ☐ Administrator or Supervisor
- ☐ Retired Member

***Candidates for Ethnic Minority Delegate to Annual Meeting, please indicate your ethnic minority designation.**

- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ Cape Verdean

3 **Bio / statement — please print — or use the online form at massteacher.org/nomform.**

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 and submit with this form.
- 3.** Type or print clearly, using both upper- and lowercase letters, as you expect the final statement to appear.
- 4.** Do not combine words or numbers with hyphens or slashes.
- 5.** “An,” “a” and “the” constitute one word.
- 6.** Abbreviations such as “NEA-RA” and “MTA” count as one word.
- 7.** A date represented as “October 1, 2020” shall constitute three words. The same date represented as “10/1/20” is only one word.
- 8.** Send this entire nomination form, including biography/statement and photo, to:
**MTA Governance and Administration Division,
2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor, Quincy, MA 02171-2119**
See nomination deadlines above. A photo the MTA has used within 2 years may be reused.

4 **Please select from the following and check the appropriate boxes.**

- ☐ 50-word (maximum) bio/statement enclosed.
- ☐ I am not submitting a bio/statement.
- ☐ I have emailed a photo to jconnelly@massteacher.org (high-resolution 300dpi).
- ☐ Photo enclosed.
- ☐ Use my 2024 or 2025 photo. MTA can only use past photos if published for 2024 or 2025 elections.
- ☐ I am not submitting a photo.

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.

Regional and Retired Ethnic Minority Delegates to Be Chosen

Regional and Retired delegates to the 2026 MTA Annual Meeting will be elected by members of the Statewide Retired District in February and March and in each region of the active membership in March and April in conjunction with NEA delegate/Director elections.

The nomination period for Regional and Retired Ethnic Minority delegates is now open. For retired delegate candidates, the deadline is 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 9, 2026. For regional delegate candidates among the active members, the deadline is 5 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 6, 2026. 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. The form may be submitted electronically. Alternatively, a paper form can be found on Page 24 of this issue of MTA Today.

The election period for retired members runs from Feb. 2, 2026, through March 13, 2026. For active members, it runs from March 2, 2026, through April 17, 2026. Online voting instructions for the ethnic minority delegate seats will be sent to all MTA members.

The MTA provides reimbursement of up to \$450 for eligible expenses incurred by each Regional and Retired Ethnic Minority delegate to the Annual Meeting.

The allocation of Retired Ethnic Minority delegates is two. The allocation of Regional Ethnic Minority delegates for the active membership 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 districts 10B and 44H, which each have two delegate seats.

There will be 50 seats for Regional Ethnic Minority delegates. All terms will last for one year. The regional allocations are: Region A, seven seats; Region B, six seats; Region C, seven seats; Region D, six seats; Region E, five seats; Region F, six seats;

Region G, six seats; and Region H, seven seats. Each regional candidate must be employed in education within the region in which the candidate seeks office. **T**

Retired Committee Has Four Seats Open

Four members of the Retired Members Committee will be elected by Statewide Retired District delegates to the 2026 MTA Annual Meeting in May.

Go to massteacher.org/nomform or see the December issue of the MTA Retired Reporter for details and the self-nomination form for these positions. The deadline for nominations is March 6, 2026. Terms last two years and begin on July 1. **T**

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 members to support candidates for state and federal office.

Elections will be held to fill the following seats on the Candidate Recommendation Committee: one seat each in Congressional Districts 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9, and two seats each in Congressional Districts 2 and 5.

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 or contact John Connelly in the MTA Division of Governance and Administration. He can be reached by calling 617-878-8305 or emailing jconnelly@massteacher.org.

The nomination form and a biographical statement of not more than 100 words must be received by Dec. 30.

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 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. 6, 2026) and must be returned no later than 5 p.m. on the last Friday in February (Feb. 27, 2026).

The CRC terms will begin on March 15, 2026. Members are eligible to be elected for two consecutive three-year terms. **T**

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 deadline for submissions to the Resolutions Committee is 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 9, 2026. Submissions must be made in writing and signed by the proposer. Please submit them by email to Mary MacDonald, the committee's staff consultant, at mmacdonald@massteacher.org. The committee may also propose resolutions.

All resolutions submitted by the January deadline are considered by the Resolutions Committee. Any resolution that receives a majority vote in favor from the committee is brought before the Board of Directors at its meeting in March. To become the official position of the MTA, a resolution must be adopted by the delegates to the Annual Meeting. **T**

For a copy of the current MTA Resolutions, please visit massteacher.org/resolutions.

Bylaws and Rules Committee

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. 9, 2026.

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 Annual Meeting, which will be held May 8-9 in Boston. However, early submission by the Jan. 9 deadline provides an opportunity for a full hearing by the committee, consideration by the MTA Board and presentation 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. A template is available from the MTA Division of Governance and Administration upon request.

1. Specifically cite all articles, sections and lines of the Bylaws or Standing Rules that are to be changed or affected.
2. Set forth your proposal in two columns, comparing the proposed text opposite the present text. In the proposed language, underline amended or added

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

3. Accompany each proposed amendment with a written rationale on its purpose, impact and intent.
4. Include at the end of all proposals the submitter's name and local association information.
5. Provide your full name, address, telephone number(s), email 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 MTA Bylaws, Standing Rules and Resolutions is available to any member upon request and at massteacher.org/bylaws.

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 the MTA Division of Governance and Administration by mailing:

MTA
2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor,
Quincy, MA 02171-2119;
calling 617-878-8213; or emailing
mtagovernance@massteacher.org. **T**

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.

STATEWIDE RETIRED DISTRICT DELEGATES TO BE ELECTED

MTA Statewide Retired District delegates to the 2026 MTA Annual Meeting will be elected in conjunction with the NEA RA retired delegate elections.

The nomination period for Statewide Retired District delegates is now in process and will close at 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 9, 2026.

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. The form may be submitted electronically. Alternately, a paper form can be found on Page 24 of this edition of MTA Today.

The election period will run from Feb. 2 through March 13, 2026.

Online voting instructions for statewide retired delegates will be sent to retired MTA/NEA members.

Those who prefer to vote by paper ballot may request one, per the instructions provided.

The MTA reimburses up to \$450 for eligible expenses incurred by each Statewide Retired District delegate to the Annual Meeting.

The 2026 allocation of Statewide Retired District delegates will be based on the number of MTA/NEA retired members from the Statewide Retired District on record no later than Jan. 15, 2026. Terms will last one year.

The procedure for the election will be sent to any Statewide Retired District delegate candidate who requests a copy. **T**

Nominations for 2026 MTA Friend of Labor & Friend of Education Awards

Each year, the MTA honors individuals who have made significant contributions to the labor movement and public education in the Commonwealth by presenting the MTA Friend of Labor Award and the MTA Friend of Education Award.

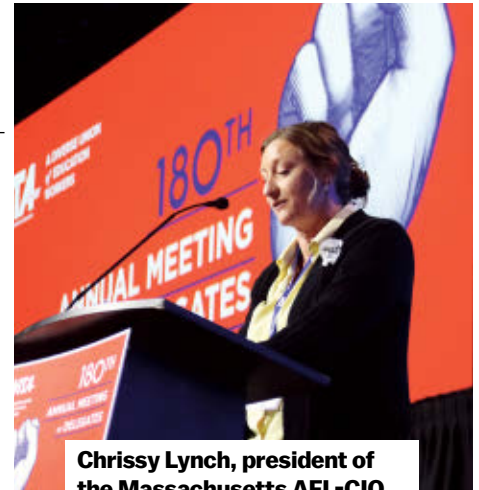
The policy/guidelines establish the purpose of the Friend of Labor Award as follows: to acknowledge specific and general contributions to the working people of the Commonwealth; to publicize these accomplishments to members of the labor community and to the general public; to thank the designated individual for their time, effort and skill in bringing about those accomplishments.

The purpose of the Friend of Education Award is identical, except

to acknowledge specific and general contributions to educators and students of the Commonwealth; and to publicize these accomplishments to the educational community and general public.

To nominate someone for either award, please include the following:

- The name, mailing address, email address, and title, if applicable, of the nominee and the award sought for them.
- A statement to support the nomination that summarizes the nature of the accomplishments and contributions of the individual to education and educators.
- Your name, email address, local association, mailing address and telephone numbers. **T**



Chrissy Lynch, president of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, received the 2025 MTA Friend of Labor Award.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SARAH NATHAN

Please send your nomination to **MTAGovernance@massteacher.org** no later than Wednesday, Feb. 11, 2026.

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SOLIDARITY

S C H O O L

TRAINING & POPULAR EDUCATION THAT MEETS THE MOMENT



Take part in a dynamic series of trainings and popular education workshops designed to meet the urgency of our political moment with clarity, courage and collective action. Rooted in a commitment to justice and liberation, these sessions equip educators with the tools, analysis and strategies to challenge oppressive systems and build power in their schools, campuses and communities.

We aim to strengthen solidarity across movements through political education, skill-building and community dialogue. Solidarity School is a space to learn, unlearn and take collective action for a more just and liberated world. Solidarity School trainings and workshops aim to build a fall cohort who will reconvene in person to share experiences of moving learning into action.

FALL 2025 WORKSHOPS

NOVEMBER 13

THURS. 4 - 5 p.m. VIRTUAL

Know Your Rights & Reentry in Uncertain

Times: Navigating the Classroom & U.S. Immigration for Returning Faculty.

NOVEMBER 15

SAT. 10 - 4 p.m. LOCATION: MTA Office in Worcester: 12 East Worcester St., 2nd floor.

Civil Disobedience & Nonviolent Direct Action.

NOVEMBER 17

MON. 4 - 5 p.m. VIRTUAL

Teaching in the Fire: The History of Educator and Union Resistance in Repressive Times.

NOVEMBER 20

THURS. 5 - 6 p.m. VIRTUAL

Standing Strong: Allyship in Action for Detained Immigrants.

NOVEMBER 20

THURS. 5 - 7 p.m. VIRTUAL

Safe to Learn: Defending LGBTQ+ Students in Uncertain Times.

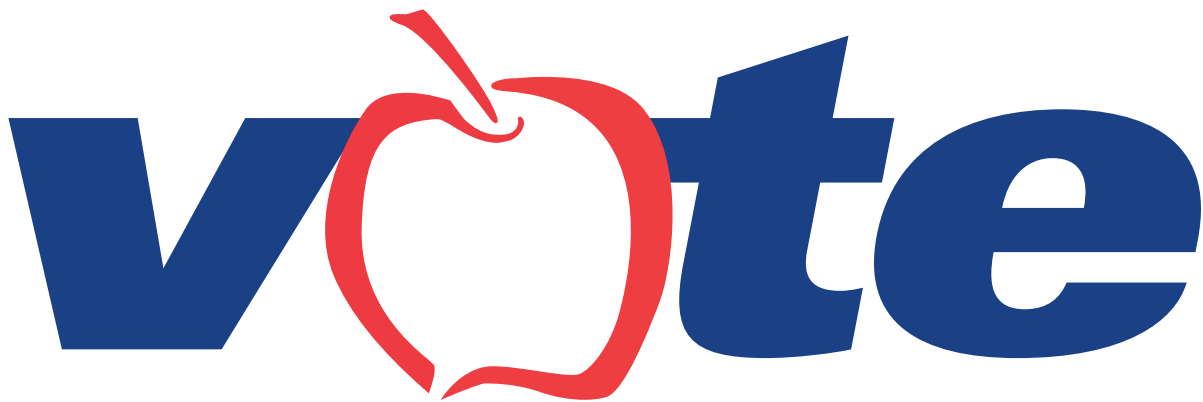
DATE TBD

p.m. LOCATION TBD

Classrooms of Resistance: Teaching Truth in Authoritarian Times.

SCAN THE QR CODE
TO REGISTER
<https://l.ead.me/mtasolidarity>





VOICE OF TEACHERS *for* EDUCATION

**We Need
Real Allies
in Public
Office.**



massteacher.org/votepac

VOTE is the MTA's Political Action Committee (PAC).

At a time when public education, our democracy and rights are under attack, we need to count on allies in public office for the difficult fights ahead.

Voluntary contributions to VOTE from MTA members make it possible to support pro-public education and pro-union candidates for public office in state and local elections.

Recurring contributions are most helpful for this need.

Please consider making a contribution to the VOTE PAC today.

Your generous contribution to the VOTE PAC will help us stand with elected officials who will stand with us.

MTA's VOTE (Voice of Teachers for Education) is the MTA's Political Action Committee and collects voluntary contributions from association members and uses those contributions for political purposes, including but not limited to making contributions to, and expenditures on behalf of, friends of public education who are candidates for state and local office. Contributions to VOTE are voluntary. Making a contribution is neither a condition of employment nor membership in the association. Members have a right to refuse to contribute without suffering any reprisal. Although MTA's VOTE requests a monthly recurring contribution of \$10, this is only a suggestion. A member may contribute more, or less, than the suggested amount or may contribute nothing at all. Contributions or gifts to MTA's VOTE are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. The VOTE PAC is not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee. This communication is intended for MTA members only. Any access to this communication outside of MTA membership is unintended and unauthorized by the MTA. Paid for by MTA VOTE PAC.

Nomination Papers Available

/ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

NEA Directors and Alternate NEA Directors*

Two NEA Director seats will be filled by a vote of the active members in March and April, in tandem with NEA statewide and regional delegate elections. These members serve on the NEA Board of Directors and concurrently on the MTA Board. These seats have three-year terms, beginning Sept. 1, 2026, and expiring Aug. 31, 2029, in accordance with the NEA's fiscal year. Vacancies for up to five Alternate NEA Director seats also will be filled. Each candidate must be an active NEA member**, as determined by the NEA Constitution and Bylaws, for at least two years immediately preceding the election. 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 electoral district. The policy on eligibility and procedures for the direct election of NEA Directors and Alternate NEA Directors is available upon request. **T**

For information on nominations and elections, please contact John Connelly of the MTA Division of Governance and Administration by calling 617-878-8305 or emailing jconnelly@massteacher.org.

*In accordance with Article IX, Section 2B of the MTA Bylaws, all members of the Board of Directors (including officers; Regional, Statewide Retired and At-Large Executive Committee members; 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 offices as indicated.

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

Call for Nominations

NEA Foundation Awards for Teaching Excellence

Nominations are open for the 2027 NEA Foundation Awards for Teaching Excellence. All current members of an NEA local affiliate or bargaining unit are eligible, including teachers, Education Support Professionals, and higher education faculty and staff. The MTA Executive Committee will choose the MTA nominee. Awardees are honored each year at the NEA Foundation's Salute to Excellence in Education Gala.

Applicants should email mtagovernance@massteacher.org for information and application materials.

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3. Paid Distribution Outside the Mails	0	0
4. Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS	0	0
c. Total Paid Distribution	87,664	89,458
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1. Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies	450	452
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I certify that 50% of all my distributed copies (electronic and print) are paid above a nominal price.

17. The Statement of Ownership will be printed in the Fall 2025 issue of this publication

18. Signature and title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager or Owner:
Amanda Torres-Price, Director of Communications

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).

Retirement Planning

You only retire once. You should not be expected to be an expert in something you will never do again. Take advantage of the valuable services provided by our retirement consultants, who are available to MTA members without charge.

Consultations

All consultations are held by appointment only during the hours listed. Members are advised to call selected MTA consultants in advance to schedule an appointment.

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 be aware that the MTA consultants do not have records of your service, so members are advised to bring that information along to meetings.

Quincy Office

Peter Mili - virtual on weekdays.
Contact: pmili@massteacher.org or 617-878-8256.

Patricia Thompson - virtual on weekdays.
Contact: pthompson@massteacher.org or 617-878-8766.

Ray Thompson - in person on weekdays.
Contact: rthompson@massteacher.org or 617-878-8255.

Holyoke Office

Ron Lech - in person third Saturday of each month. Contact: rlech@massteacher.org or 413-537-2335.

Middleton Office

Barbara Callaghan - in person second Saturday of each month.
Contact: bcallaghan@massteacher.org or 617-878-8760.

Billy McDonald - in person third Saturday of each month. Contact: wmcdonald@massteacher.org or 617-878-8764.

Raynham Office

Larry Abbruzzi - by phone second Saturday of each month.
Contact: labbuzzi@massteacher.org or 508-824-9194.

Nancy Mikels - in person third Saturday of each month. Contact: nmikels@massteacher.org or 617-878-8765.

Pittsfield Office

Cathy Grady - in person second Saturday of each month. Contact: cgrady@massteacher.org or 617-878-8762.

Worcester Office

Mike Whittier - in person third Saturday of each month. Contact: mwhittier@massteacher.org or 617-878-8516.

Higher Education Members

Please contact your nearest regional retirement consultant. **T**

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LAST WORD

Jason Eppskrier **Stoneham Education Association**

“ We need parents alongside us in the fight for critical funding for our schools. As educators, we can speak to the day-to-day realities in our schools and the harmful effects of budget cuts, but we need parents who have ‘skin in the game’ to get our message out to the broader community. Parents are powerful allies, not only because they have children in our schools, but they will be directly affected by increased property taxes that result from a winning override. This is a simple connection, but too often overlooked. Educators and parents working together are a powerful alliance, and we need each other to succeed.”

PHOTOGRAPH BY SARAH NATHAN