

MTA

A publication of the
Massachusetts Teachers
Association

TODAY



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Fighting for Education

Educators Stand up
for Their Work



Unions representing higher education workers in private and public universities and colleges turned out for a Feb. 19 rally in Boston.

MTA TODAY

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MTA TODAY (ISSN 08982481) is published by the Massachusetts Teachers Association. Subscription: \$2.65 of MTA members' dues is designated for MTA Today.

Periodicals postage rates paid at Boston, MA, and at additional offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: MTA Today, 2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor, Quincy, MA 02171-2119.

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COVER PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIC HAYNES

MTA A DIVERSE UNION
of EDUCATION
WORKERS

nea

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Defending Public Education



“**We are right to be infuriated and frightened and anxious - for our students, for our members and for our society.**”

MAX PAGE

I wrote this on March 20, the day that President Trump issued his executive order to dismantle the Department of Education. While patently illegal – only Congress can end an agency it created – Trump aims to demolish the department and then say Congress needs to take out the rubble. Destroying DOE has been on the docket for this administration since the first day. But it has been on the wishlist of the right for the past 40 years, since Ronald Reagan was president and conservatism started its move toward a political place of enabling and defending an authoritarian leader who seems at war on a daily basis with democracy, free speech and the public good.

In his famous essay from 1945, “Politics and the English Language,” George Orwell (he of “1984” fame) argued that “in our time, political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible ... designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind.”

You may hear about “waste, fraud and abuse” and “returning power to the states” and, as the title of the executive order cynically says, “improving education outcomes by empowering parents, states, and communities.”

But we as educators will not succumb to this abuse of language and the insult to our minds. It is crucially important to be clear about what we face.

Like Viktor Orbán, the dictator in Hungary, and authoritarians all over the world over the past century, Trump and his ilk intend to eviscerate public education. They seek to destroy what we believe is the foundation of democracy – free, universal public education that nurtures future adults who know truthful history, celebrate a diverse nation, and gain the knowledge and skills to be successful members of society, critical thinkers and active citizens. All those qualities are existential threats to authoritarian regimes, who seek docile citizens who have been filled with propaganda.

We are right to be infuriated and frightened and anxious – for our students, for our members and for our society.

But here are some of the scenes that went through my mind in rapid succession after I turned away from the reprehensible news:

I thought, as I often do, of the enormous privilege of having grown up in Amherst, nurtured and educated by the educators of the Amherst-Pelham Education Association, and then able to gift that experience to my three children.

I thought of the stunning victories against vouchers in deep-red Kentucky and Nebraska this past November, and the fact that two-thirds of Americans don’t want to end the Department of Education, because it protects and supports students with disabilities, low-income students, and students seeking to get a college degree or a vocational education.

Public education, one of our nation’s greatest commitments, was invented here in Massachusetts.

This is our heritage, and whose tradition you all carry forward. We were the first, and remain the finest, despite all that is challenging you and your schools and colleges today. We will not give up on a nearly 400-year heritage, especially to a tech oligarch and his MAGA client.

We will not give up the freedom to learn and the freedom to teach. ▮

Max Page, MTA President

HIGHER ED

WORKERS VOW TO PROTECT ACADEMIC FREEDOM

By **Scott McLennan** Photographs by **Eric Haynes**

Unions representing workers at UMass campuses, state universities and community colleges are organizing campaigns to address the fundamental changes bearing down on higher education through policy and funding initiatives of the Trump administration.

Various federal funding sources for colleges and universities remain in flux as the White House uses fiscal coercion to end diversity, equity and inclusion programs and tries to stanch other grants flowing to university research and work. The Trump administration's aggressive crackdown on immigration has left foreign students, faculty and staff uncertain about their ability to continue studying and working in this country. And most recently, the Trump administration has threatened students and colleges with harsh reprisals ranging from arrest, deportation and defunding for allowing legal protests related to the U.S.'s support for Israel in its war against Hamas that is devastating Gaza.

The MTA also is concerned about the fate of Pell Grants and other funding available

to low- and middle-income students who hope to attend college. An executive order signed by President Trump on March 20 seeks to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education, which oversees Pell Grants and other forms of financial aid, including the federal student loan and work study programs.

In a press conference after he signed the executive order, Trump stated that funding for programs such as Pell Grants and Title I aid to preK-12 schools would be "preserved," but his order emphasized that the Department of Education is not equipped to act as a bank. Trump later said the Small Business Administration could administer student loans.

Closing the Department of Education would require action by Congress.

The executive order states that any allocation of federal education funds is going to be contingent on a requirement that programs terminate "illegal discrimination obscured under the label 'diversity, equity and inclusion' or that address 'gender ideology'."

Responding to threats to higher education funding or mission, a coalition of MTA and AFT Massachusetts higher education affiliates is meeting weekly to develop plans for protecting public higher education in this

state. Union members also have engaged in campus-based and statewide actions to advocate for the funding to support students, maintain the integrity of academic work and uphold the values of the public higher education mission.

In seeking protection from any federal harm, higher ed unions are using contract bargaining, as well as advocacy around approval of the FY 2026 state budget and the beginning of a new legislative session.

“Education nurtures democracy and provides students with economic opportunities,” MTA President Max Page and Vice President Deb McCarthy said in a recent statement. “The Commonwealth’s five-campus UMass system, nine state universities and 15 community colleges act together as an engine of civic and economic strength,

one that drives the quality of life in our state.

“This is only possible as long as our colleges and universities stay true to a shared mission of welcoming inquiry, research and study from a broad array of perspectives, and ensuring that the views of individuals and communities that have been marginalized and oppressed are included in academic pursuits. Likewise, our campuses must be open to all individuals who are ready to pursue higher education.”

Members from several MTA higher education unions participated in a Boston rally on Feb. 19 with union members from private colleges and universities, all focused on protecting academic freedom as well as worker and student rights.

Bianca Ortiz-Wythe, a policy analyst at UMass Boston’s Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy, and a member of the Professional Staff Union, said at the rally that UMass administrators told the institute “to whitewash” any references to diversity, equity and inclusion from its work after the federal Environmental Protection Agency grant that funds her project came under federal scrutiny.

Ortiz-Wythe and her team are working to improve environmental and health conditions in East Boston.

“The project was intended to support work like providing training on participatory budgeting and environmental justice to build local capacity and

Students, staff and faculty from public and private colleges and universities around Boston rallied Feb. 19 to protest the initial waves of attacks on higher education by the Trump administration.





“ Our outstanding public higher education system is vital to the overall health of our communities ... We must protect it at all costs.”

MAX PAGE, MTA President

University faculty and students were among those speaking out against looming cuts in federal funding for research and other academic work.

strengthen community efficacy around environmental justice advocacy,” she said. “This work isn’t frivolous — it’s essential. Without it, issues like flooding and poor air quality continue to disproportionately harm working-class communities, and residents are left without the tools to fight back. But then we learned our grant was in jeopardy — because of Trump’s executive order on DEI. For three weeks our grant was in limbo. Recently, we were told we could start work, without any of the funds to actually do it.

“Additionally, we’ve been told to whitewash any mention of DEI, environmental justice, and the very principles that the grant was meant to uphold — erasing the reality of racial and social inequities in order to meet fascist, political demands. By dismantling the very infrastructure meant to address systemic injustice, they are ensuring that inequality is maintained and deepened.”

Tom Estabrook, president of the union representing employees funded by grants and contracts at UMass Lowell, has worked for nearly 30 years for the New England Consortium, which provides health and safety training to businesses, communities and industries. The National Institutes of Health has provided much

of the funding for the consortium’s work. The Trump administration’s efforts to freeze NIH funding is jeopardizing the health and safety training.

Estabrook debunked the argument that the consortium’s work qualifies as “wasteful government spending,” which Trump and Elon Musk, the billionaire CEO who has led efforts to dismantle federal programs, have cited as they slash federal programs and the federal workforce.

“Every dollar spent on safety can yield a \$6 return on investment,” Estabrook said. “Our work is effective and well worth the federal support. But my critical work and the work and livelihoods of many of the 140 members of my union local are at risk from the actions by the Trump administration. These attacks on federal funding are an attack on me, my coworkers and working people broadly. At UMass Lowell, the Trump administration’s actions against federal research funding agencies have halted important studies of transnational human trafficking in Global South countries and of HIV prevention among Black and transgender women. This is an outright attack on vital research to protect the health and well-being of underserved communities.”

MTA unions are demanding their respective campus administrations join

workers in speaking out against the Trump administration’s tactics that are threatening to undermine higher education.

So far, the nine presidents of the state universities have signed a letter supporting state Secretary of Education Patrick Tutwiler’s commitment to making public colleges and universities inclusive and accessible to all, and to support traditionally marginalized students.

Protecting public higher education also will require action by state elected officials.

The MTA has requested that legislators use \$200 million from the Fair Share revenue surplus fund to establish a reserve fund that can be used to fill any voids left by cuts in federal funding.

This is in addition to several bills aimed at reducing the cost to attend public colleges and universities and to pay competitive wages for faculty and staff.

“Our outstanding public higher education system is vital to the overall health of our communities and state economy,” Page said. “We must protect it at all costs.” **T**



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Educators Unsettled by Threat of Federal

FUNDING CUTS

By **Mary MacDonald**

Educators say they're unsettled, but not intimidated, by a new administration in Washington that has threatened to withhold federal funds if schools continue to uphold diversity and equity programs.

Protecting their students and colleagues is job one, said several MTA members recently, when asked about the wash of executive orders and statements coming from the Trump administration that seek to undermine public education.

An executive order that describes the dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education, signed by President Trump on March 20, quickly drew a federal lawsuit from an educator union and two school districts in Massachusetts – Somerville and Easthampton. Trump signed the order after Linda McMahon, the new Secretary of Education, cut half of the department's workforce.

The Department of Education provides funding for programs that include Pell Grants for low-income university students, Title I funds for schools aimed at countering the impact of student poverty, and funds for students in preK-12 who have special education needs.

These funds are critical, local presidents said, and they have active constituencies. It's too early to tell if

the federal funds will be cut. But in his executive order, Trump wrote that any allocation of federal education funds would be contingent on a requirement that programs terminate "illegal discrimination obscured under the label 'diversity, equity and inclusion' or that address 'gender ideology'."

Already, the administration has tried to claw back some existing grant programs. One, which provided funds for Education Support Professionals in Boston, Springfield and Holyoke to become trained as licensed teachers, was reinstated by a temporary restraining order. The program provides \$6 million for teacher preparation pipeline grants in Massachusetts. The lawsuit, filed by Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Campbell, restored the nationwide program under a temporary action by a judge until the case can be heard.

Nick Cream, president of the Holyoke Teachers Association, said the program is popular and sorely needed. The program, he said, is a good fit because paraprofessionals are closely tied to the community. And in Holyoke, which has a large Puerto Rican population, many ESPs speak Spanish. "You can have someone who is already comfortable and well-versed in a community and now you're



Educators and MTA leaders, including President Max Page, gathered outside a Revere middle school in March as part of a series of "walk-ins" throughout the state to protest federal actions.

going to get them the education, skills and training they need to be teachers.”

In response to the threat of federal funding cuts, and interference in public education, many local unions are fighting back. They’re working with their communities to strengthen bonds with community organizations, particularly those that work with youth and with immigrant families. And they’re letting their communities and students know that they’re not hiding.

“Keeping our heads down is not going to support our students,” said Jane Chapin, a co-president of the Revere Teachers Association. Among other initiatives, her local is working to organize support for a Safe Zone Schools policy in Revere,

which would set up parameters for how schools would respond to a request for student records or enforcement action by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The NEA has a template on its website for a Safe Zone School policy.

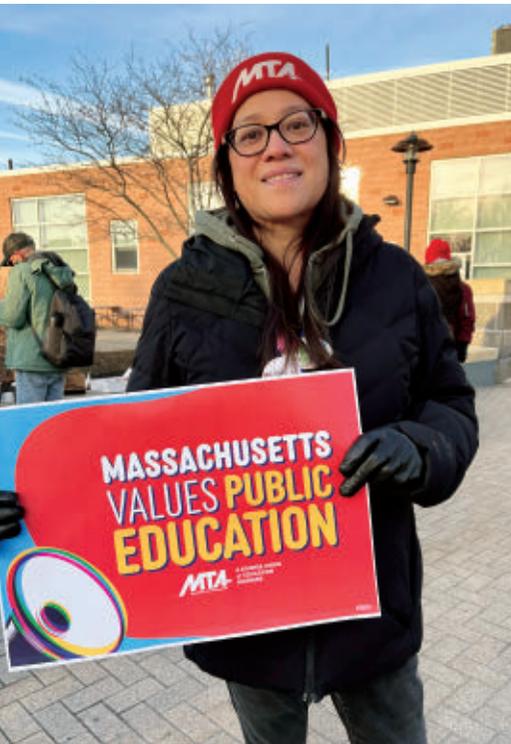
The School Committee has not yet approved the policy, but Chapin said she thinks community and educator pressure will succeed. “It sends a message to the community: You’re safe at school. We want you to come to school.”

She worries that students are afraid and not coming to school, in communities throughout Massachusetts, because of the anti-immigrant rhetoric from the

new administration. In one of his first actions, Trump removed a policy that generally protected schools, churches and other community areas from immigration enforcement sweeps.

“The current administration has been very clear about their intentions,” Chapin said, of the potential for federal funding cuts and immigration enforcement. “And they’ve proven, time after time, that they plan to follow through. We must act. We must organize.”

A series of educator walk-ins at preK-12 schools throughout Massachusetts have taken place over the past six weeks, including cities near Boston and small communities in western Massachusetts. In these events, educators have pledged



Roxanne Campbell, left, and Jane Chapin, right, of the Revere Teachers Association, were among the educators who participated in a "walk-in" in early March to stand up for student and educator rights.

“I absolutely think the districts should be fighting back. Not only is it a financial concern; it's a human rights issue.”

KIRSTEN FRAZIER Educational Association of Worcester

to stand up for their right to teach and their students' right to learn.

On social media, locals are sharing their resolve. Hampshire Regional Education Association, which represents educators at a regional district in Westhampton, posted a message in late February that said: “In light of recent federal actions regarding immigration and gender identity, the members of the HREA executive board declare that we are committed to ensuring that our school is a place where all students can learn and feel a sense of belonging.”

In its federal lawsuit targeting the closure of the Department of Education, the organization Democracy Forward

included as plaintiffs the Easthampton and Somerville public school districts and the American Federation of Teachers — Massachusetts.

The NEA, meanwhile, is among a group of education allies that have sued the administration over the Department of Education layoffs.

The loss of federal funding could mean millions for districts, for services that are vitally needed for students.

“I absolutely think the districts should be fighting back,” said Kirsten Frazier, an educator with the Educational Association of Worcester. “Not only is it a financial concern; it's a human rights issue. We need to protect our students and our educators. If it means fighting back in the courts, then that's what we need to do.”

Frazier, who oversees the Gay Straight Alliance club at her school, said educators can show support for students who are LGBTQ+ by letting them know that they have a safe place in school. “The simplest thing is just to let them know you're there and are a safe person to talk to.”

Frazier, who uses they/she as pronouns, said they aren't going anywhere in their email signatures. “Until they tell me I have to take them out, they're going to be there.” **T**

For information on the Safe Zone School policies, please visit nea.org/resource-library/safe-zone-school-districts.

For MTA resources on immigration rights, please visit massteacher.org/protect.





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School of GRADUATE, ONLINE AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

Katherine Monteiro

Weymouth Educators' Association member is MTA ESP of the Year. By **Mary MacDonald** Photograph by **Jonathan Ng**



“ I am completely honored and humbled. This is so incredible.”

KATHERINE MONTEIRO

Monteiro is a registered behavioral technician and a mentor for ESPs.

One of her colleagues, Lisa Wiklund, said in a nomination letter: “Katie is always speaking out in support of better policies to help our students, including making sure that the educators working with them have the appropriate training to be the best supports they can.”

The announcement on March 8 took Monteiro by surprise. She looked startled when she saw the crowd at MTA headquarters in Quincy, and said later she was appreciative of the honor.

“I’m completely honored and humbled,” she said. “This is so incredible. I never expected this.”

To read more about Monteiro and about previous ESPs of the Year, please visit massteacher.org/esp.



Katherine Monteiro, a mentor to Education Support Professionals in leadership development and a member of the Weymouth Educators' Association, is the 2025 MTA ESP of the Year.

A registered behavioral technician, Monteiro was a key advocate for her union siblings in the most recent contract

round, serving as negotiating chair of the ESP unit and encouraging 20 to 25 ESPs to attend each session as silent representatives. She is a mentor in the ESP Leadership Mentoring Program, which provides one-on-one support to emerging union leaders.

Monteiro joined the Weymouth local nine years ago, when she started a position with the elementary schools as an RBT.



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Mitigate the Risk of Damage During High Winds

High winds can be dangerous and are capable of causing significant damage and disruption. Powerful gusts can uproot trees, damage roofs and send debris flying, causing property damage and power outages. Educators Insurance Agency offers the following tips to help you prepare for the wind and keep your family and property safe.

PREPARE TODAY

Perform regular property maintenance. Care for trees and shrubs near your home to reduce the risk of debris damage during high winds. Remove or cut back dead and dying trees to help prevent potential hazards and improve the safety of your property.

WHAT IS A HIGH WIND WARNING?

A high wind warning is issued when sustained winds reach or exceed 40 mph for an hour or longer, or when wind gusts reach or exceed 58 mph for any duration.

BEFORE THE STORM

Shut doors and tape windows and glass doors. Use storm shutters or plywood nailed to window frames to protect windows from airborne debris. Close all interior doors to help reduce wind damage. Move items inside, including bikes and outdoor furniture, as they may blow around during the storm and cause damage. Do not store gas-powered articles inside your home; secure them outside. Fill your car and generator with gas and keep extra fuel handy in approved containers and in a safe location. Park your car in the garage. Prepare an emergency kit and emergency plan.

DURING THE STORM

Stay indoors and keep away from windows. Move to an interior room, if possible. Listen to weather updates. Have a battery-operated radio handy in the event of a power outage. Wait to go outside until there is confirmation that high winds are no longer a threat to your area. Keep your refrigerator doors closed to keep food as cold as possible and prevent thawing in case the power goes out.

AFTER THE STORM

Inspect gas, electrical and water lines for damage. Look for structural damage such as foundation cracks.

Document any property damage with photos and videos and save receipts for immediate repairs made to prevent further damage.

Stay out of the damaged buildings until it is safe to go inside them.

Avoid touching power lines and assume all downed power lines are live.

Log all post-event cleanup efforts and expenses.

IF THERE IS FLOODING

Clean up pools of water.

Dry damp areas to prevent mold and mildew.

Move damp items outdoors when safe to prevent mold growth.

Move items away from damp areas.

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.



THE MTA Advantage

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

Get Financially Fit During April, 'Financial Literacy Month'

April is as good a time as any to take a good look at the state of your finances and actually do something about it. It's the month when federal and state taxes are due, and is known as "Financial Literacy Month."

Budgeting for a Strong Foundation

Let's start with the family budget – an accurate, working budget is needed. Save all statements, bills, receipts, etc., and figure out where your hard-earned cash is going. Don't forget to include items like presents, donations, subscriptions, etc. Next let's look at your goals and savings. If you own a home, that means the

budget requires not only an amount for personal savings and retirement contributions, but a separate household maintenance fund, as well as an emergency fund in case your income is ever reduced. Think about all the other things you save for – tuition, vacation, replacing a car, buying a first house or making renovations to an existing home – the list can be long and daunting. Now go back to the budget to see what can be reduced to increase savings.

Managing Your Debt

Most Americans also carry a fair amount of debt. Don't look away – let's look at it in detail. If you're like most people, you probably have revolving

credit card debt, with account balances that probably increased substantially in recent years. Those with student loan debt may only be able to make minimum payments at the moment. Let's look at your options for effectively managing that high-interest credit debt.

Reducing Expenses and Mitigating Risks

If there are enough temporary reductions you can find in your budget to chip away at it, that's the best strategy. Don't reduce your retirement contributions, insurance, or home maintenance savings, but just about any other monthly expenditure is worth considering, because remember, the belt-tightening is only temporary.

Borrowing against your home or withdrawing funds from a retirement plan probably are not your best alternatives. Credit card debt is unsecured debt. There is no collateral. If you borrow against your home to pay it off, you'll have converted your unsecured debt to secured debt, meaning you've put your house on the line if you fail to make payments. Withdrawing funds from a retirement account carries an opportunity cost. The withdrawal you make to pay down debt may take a long time to replenish, and during that time the money isn't there to be invested. In other words,

continued on page 18





Free Benefits and Resources for Members

MTA Benefits is proud to show our appreciation for educators by offering the following free benefits and resources for members.

Identity Theft Protection

MTA members receive a complimentary Essential Individual Plan from SecurusID, powered by Aura. This plan includes full-service identity restoration with a certified specialist on non-credit reporting forms of ID theft, including financial, medical, benefits, insurance, phone, utilities and government documents. It also includes family fraud, acts of terrorism and lost wallet coverage. Family plans are available starting at \$3 per month and cover up to 11 family members.

NEA Complimentary Life Insurance

MTA/NEA active, staff, reserve and life members are eligible for NEA Complimentary Life Insurance, which includes coverage of up to \$1,000 in term life insurance; up to \$5,000 in accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) coverage; \$50,000 in AD&D insurance for

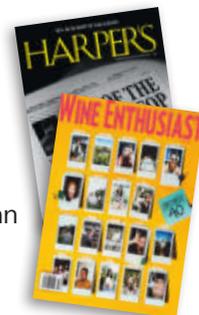
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Debt and Student Loan Counseling

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Elder Care Referral Services

The stress of caregiving takes a toll on Americans both personally and professionally. ElderBenefit offers resources to help members find senior care services for their loved ones, including elder law referrals, estate sale referrals, in-home caregiver or companion services, senior living options and veterans' resources.

For more information on these and other programs offered by MTA Benefits, visit mtabenefits.com.



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

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



Save on Summer Adventures with MTA Benefits

By Diamond Coleman

Summer is the perfect time to relax, explore and create unforgettable memories with family and friends. With MTA Benefits, members can enjoy a wide range of exciting activities while saving money. Check out these fantastic deals and make the most of your adventures this summer.



Red Sox

As part of the Boston Red Sox's annual Educator Appreciation initiative, MTA members can attend select games at a discounted price, including the June 11 matchup against the Tampa Bay Rays. In

addition, members can receive an exclusive Red Sox quarter-zip pullover on a first-come, first-served basis.

Pickleball Fun at Rt. 12 Pickle

Combining elements of tennis, ping pong, and badminton, pickleball is easy to learn and incredibly social. Rt. 12 Pickle in West Boylston offers a welcoming, climate-controlled environment with eight indoor courts, group and private lessons, clinics and leagues. Enjoy a game with friends or join a match and make new ones. MTA members can get 10 percent off either an annual family or individual membership, priced at \$625 and \$425, respectively.



Coastal Views with Essex River Cruises

Immerse yourself in the tranquil beauty of the Essex River with Essex River Cruises & Charters. Cruise through the breathtaking salt marshes and discover the area's rich wildlife. As you sail, you'll learn about local history and stories, all while being surrounded by charming restaurants, antique shops and cultural landmarks. These cruises provide the perfect summer escape, rain or shine. MTA members enjoy a \$5 discount.



Hersheypark

Hersheypark, Pennsylvania's largest amusement park, offers year-round fun for the whole family. During the park's summer season, from May 22 to Sept. 7, you can enjoy thrilling rollercoasters, an entire waterpark, meet-and-greets with Hershey characters, visits to ZooAmerica, and more. Even better, MTA members can save 45 percent when they purchase one-day tickets.



continued on page 18



Get Financially Fit During April, 'Financial Literacy Month'

continued from page 15

the cost can add up to a lot more than just the funds you withdrew. Let's try hard to avoid that.

Seeking Professional Guidance for Debt Plans

For anyone whose credit cards are nearly maxed out, or who has only been able to make minimum payments for a long time, talk to MTA Benefits' nonprofit partner, Cambridge Credit Counseling, about a debt management plan. Rather than settling a debt, which costs a lot more than the 50 cents-on-the-dollar you may be imagining, or taking out a consolidation loan, a debt management plan



will allow you to repay your credit card balances in full, but usually at significantly lower interest rates, such as 8 percent, compared to 24 or 25

percent. Debt management plans are usually completed in roughly 41 months, though they can take up to 72 months to make the payments more affordable. A management plan could give your budget the breathing room it needs.

Before another Financial Literacy Month has come and gone, and before the head-long rush to the end of the school year has begun, take a few hours to take control of your finances and create a strategy to reach your financial goals, whatever they may be. You'll be glad you did.

Visit cambridge-credit.org/mta for more information.

Save on Summer Adventures with MTA Benefits

continued from page 17

Craft Brewery Tours with Pioneer Valley Brews Cruise

Start your summer with an enjoyable adventure through the scenic Pioneer Valley in western Massachusetts. The Pioneer Valley Brews Cruise provides an immersive tour of local craft breweries, offering a taste of the region's vibrant craft beverage scene. Whether you're a beer lover or simply seeking a one-of-a-kind experience, these curated tours, which feature breweries, wineries and distilleries, are ideal. MTA members receive \$10 off per booking when they show their member ID card at tour check-in.

MTA Benefits provides members with wonderful opportunities to enjoy a wide range of summer activities at discounted prices. Whether you're looking to relax or explore, these exclusive offers make it easier to create memorable experiences with your loved ones, all while saving money. Make the most of your summer with these great deals and enjoy everything the season has to offer.

Details on all the benefits and discounts mentioned in this article can be found at mtabenefits.com.



AVIS **Budget**

Maximize the benefits of your Massachusetts Teachers Association membership by driving with Avis and Budget! **Save up to 35% off*** base rates on every journey.

Reserve with Avis

Book with Budget



*See terms and conditions.



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Endless Adventures,
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FROM TEACHER AIDES

Charting the History of “Paraprofessional” Labor in Education

By **Nick Juravich** Photograph by **Eric Haynes**

Over the past decade, MTA Education Support Professionals have been on the march across Massachusetts. Contract victories have reset our sense of possibility as poverty pay has given way to significant raises, job security and the respect ESPs deserve. As a proud MTA member and the author of a new book on the history of “paraprofessional” labor in education, I have celebrated these wins, both for what they deliver in the present and for how they renew a fighting tradition among ESPs. Decades ago, the first generation of paraeducators reimagined what administrators called “aide” work, linking their labor to struggles for jobs and freedom in their schools, communities and unions. In doing so, they showed how public education and educator unionism could, and should, promote equality, opportunity and the common good for students, workers and their communities.

With apologies to my professional home in Boston, I recently published a book that is primarily a study of the American Federation of Teachers and its New York City local, the United Federation

of Teachers. That said, working in and with our MTA union family helped me to better understand the significance of this history as I was finishing this book. ESPs don’t need a historian to tell them they’ve had to do too much with too little for too long, but conversations with ESPs and organizers have convinced me that this history offers a rich font of context and ideas as we fight for what we deserve in the present and defend public education for the future.

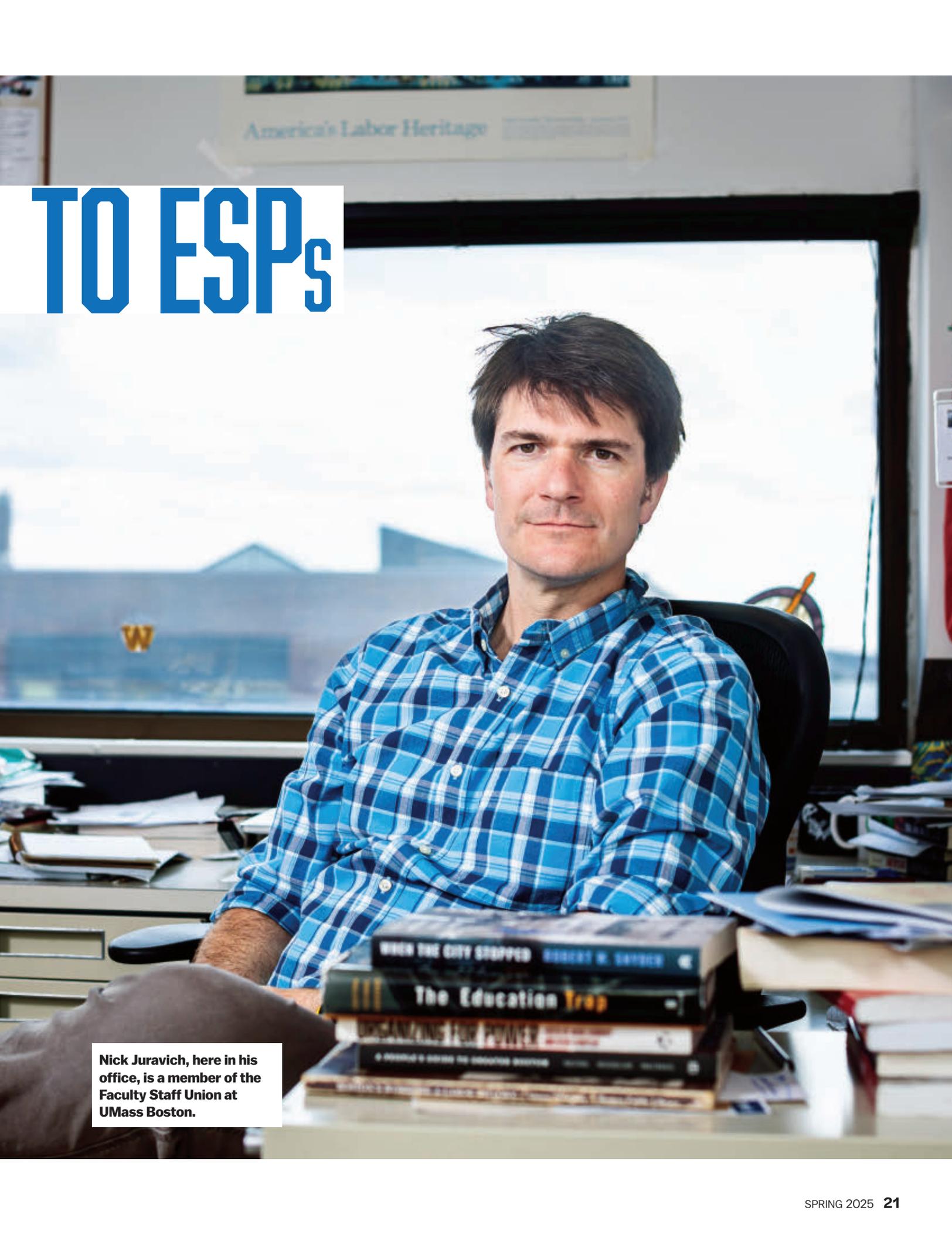
To start, where did these paraprofessional/ESP jobs come from? The answer begins with the baby boom. As the national K-12 student population nearly doubled between 1949 and 1969, administrators scrambled to staff schools. One idea, promoted by the Ford Foundation, was the hiring of “teacher aides,” envisioned as local mothers who would work for a pittance doing menial, administrative, care and disciplinary work while credentialed teachers lectured in front of classrooms of 40 students (or more). Crucially for the bosses, the plan was cheaper than hiring more teachers, already unionizing in the late 1950s.

However, the moment the first “aides” went to work, they began to rethink and remake these jobs. Despite being designated “non-professional,” their labor was clearly educational, as both they and the teachers they worked with realized immediately. In addition, these aides brought local knowledge into classrooms from communities and carried information from schools back to parents, developing new conduits for learning and communication. Some of them, after a year or two, expressed interest in advancing within the educational workforce as teachers, counselors or social workers.

It was these three overlapping qualities that drew the attention of civil rights organizers in U.S. cities, particularly New York. In Harlem and on the Lower East Side, community organizations advocated for the hiring of “parent aides” in schools, with the express goal of desegregating the educational workforce, creating jobs for Black and Puerto Rican New Yorkers, and making schools more responsive to the communities they served. Their ideas went mainstream with the passage

America's Labor Heritage

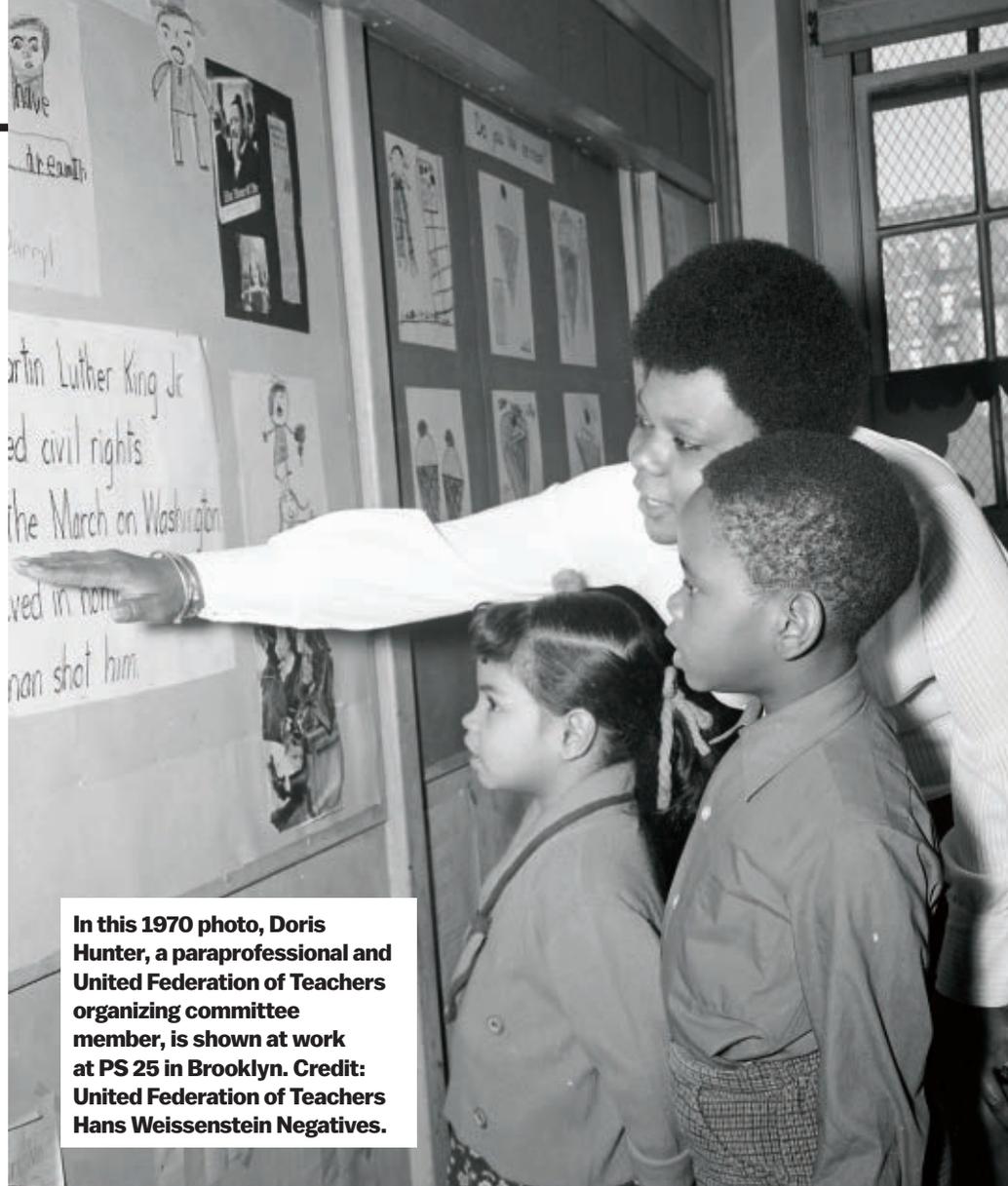
TO ESPs



Nick Juravich, here in his office, is a member of the Faculty Staff Union at UMass Boston.

of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965. Best known for creating the Title I program to support students living in poverty, the ESEA also encouraged the hiring of educators from their communities, to implement the “maximum feasible participation” of poor and working-class people in the systems that governed their lives. Using federal funds, New York City alone hired 10,000 new “paraprofessional” educators between 1967 and 1970. Nationally, nearly half a million of these workers entered schools between 1965 and 1975.

The hiring of “paras” paralleled the rise of teacher militancy (in both the AFT and our own National Education Association) and the rapid growth of collective bargaining for teachers. As locals fought for their early contracts, the presence of new paraeducators in the classroom posed a question: Would these new workers want to join “teacher” unions, and would these unions, which asserted teachers’ professionalism in their campaigns, welcome them? Debates raged, too extensive to recount here, though it should be a point of state pride that one of the first union leaders to argue that paras belonged in “teachers” unions was Lynn’s own Rose Claffey. What I learned in my research, however, is that what mattered most was the everyday solidarity that teachers and ESPs built on the ground once paras started work and teachers got over the shock of having new adults in their classrooms. Shared labor led to mutual recognition and appreciation, and when the time came for ESPs/paras to elect their collective bargaining agents – a process often accompanied by simultaneous votes among teachers as to whether to expand their unions to include these workers – it was this solidarity that overcame fear and distrust, as well as divides of race, class and geography.



In this 1970 photo, Doris Hunter, a paraprofessional and United Federation of Teachers organizing committee member, is shown at work at PS 25 in Brooklyn. Credit: United Federation of Teachers Hans Weissenstein Negatives.

“ Shared labor led to mutual recognition and appreciation ... ”

NICK JURAVICH

Tens of thousands of paras joined teacher unions in the 1970s, winning major raises, job security and paths to advancement. Their presence in these unions did not guarantee continued solidarity with teachers, but it did establish a baseline for future organizing.

Ten years ago, I put some of what’s above into a blog post for the Labor and Working-Class History Association, where Jessica Wender-Shubow, then the president of the Brookline Educators

Union, found it. Jess wrote to me wondering if this history could help the Brookline School Committee understand “paraprofessionals’ struggles as part of efforts to achieve racial equity and justice.” As she explained, the school committee – like many in liberal Massachusetts towns – professed a commitment to these values in general, but they had no idea where ESPs, or their jobs, came from. Brookline was not alone; decades of top-down, market-based “education reform” had not only



UFT paraprofessionals picket at the New York City Board of Education, spring 1970. Credit: United Federation of Teachers Photographs.

public education, but also for the wider public to whom we appeal as unionized educators. If linking this labor to struggles for racial and economic justice sounds unexpected, it's worth saying that civil rights leaders – Bayard Rustin, A. Philip Randolph and Coretta Scott King among them – made this case a generation ago. If the raises ESPs seek today of 30 percent or more seem like a lot to school committees, let us recall that New York City's paras won a 140 percent increase in their first contract in 1970, gains mirrored around the nation in the decade that followed.

Back in December, Holly Currier, a member of the MTA ESP Committee, helped me put together a virtual book launch. Afterward, as we discussed the gains paras have made, she noted that fighting for “living wages” is, of course, essential, but it shouldn't be the limit of what we seek. The solidarity we've seen among educators on picket lines and in contract campaigns across the state need not stop at “raising the floor,” but opens the possibility of new collaborations in classrooms, unions and communities. At a time when the entire public sector is under attack in the name of “efficiency,” ESPs in Massachusetts are renewing a tradition of advancing equality, for everyone, students and educators alike. **T**

Nick Juravich is a member of the Faculty Staff Union at UMass Boston, where he is an assistant professor of history and labor studies and the associate director of the Labor Resource Center. He is the author of “Para Power: How Paraprofessional Labor Changed Education.” (University of Illinois Press, 2024)

sidelined ESPs and their history but replaced the broad visions for public education they promoted in the 1960s and 1970s with narrow interventions guided by elite administrators and consultants.

In Brookline, ESPs campaigned for years to change this narrative, and their struggle showed me just how powerful recovering this history could be. At a rally attended by hundreds in June of 2023, BEU paras and teachers shared the stage with Heather McGhee, then promoting her book “The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together.” McGhee's book builds on a general history of the public goods lost when Southern cities shuttered pools and libraries rather than integrate them to argue that we need an expansive

definition of the public good, one that rejects the “zero sum” logic of scarcity so long promoted by neoliberal policymakers. Moderating this event, I argued that ESPs and their labor fit squarely into this narrative. Rather than quibbling over miniscule raises, what would it look like if school committees understood the hiring and promotion of working-class educators – more often women of color than in any other school position – as part of an effort to reach and educate all our students, to improve our relationships with their communities, and to create jobs that provide stable careers to individuals and allow them to act as anchors of public service in their towns and cities?

This, I believe, is one key way in which the history is useful: not just for MTA educators who believe in the power of

**FIRST
WEDNESDAY**

RETIREE SPEAKER SERIES



All events are virtual,
on Zoom.

3 - 4:30 p.m.

Registration is
required. Zoom link
will be sent a few days
before the event.

Registration
information will
be posted at
[massteacher.org/
retired](https://massteacher.org/retired).



MAY 7 Meeting the Challenges for Educators of Color
Phyllis Neufeld, Marguerite Foster-Franklin, Joe Zellner & Rhonda Hall-Reynolds

Responding as retirees to the challenges facing educators of color, the Retired Members Committee asked ourselves what we could do to help. Our conversations with retirees of color led to several actions, including a collaboration with the New Member Committee and the Ethnically Marginalized Affairs Committee to create the “Mentoring of New Educators of Color” program, which pairs each mentee with a retired educator of color mentor. Join us to hear more about our work to increase the involvement of retirees of color and the stories of our mentors and mentees as they navigate(d) the field of education.

JUNE 4 Books Not Bombs: A Look at Education Funding
Jonathan King, Ph.D., co-chair of Massachusetts Peace Action

Do you ever wonder why we seem to have enough money for the military but not enough for schools? Given the historic dependence of public schools on local property taxes and state-level programs, many educators and parents are not aware of the federal funding component. Though currently smaller than state and local sources, this reflects the diversion of critical human needs investments to war and weapons budgets rather than education. The Books Not Bombs campaign identifies paths to increasing public education funding by cutting wasteful and dangerous military spending.

**STAY TUNED FOR
UPCOMING SESSIONS!**

Delegates to Gather for Annual Meeting

By **Mary MacDonald**

The 2025 MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates will be held in person on May 2 and 3 at the MassMutual Center in Springfield. Once again, virtual participation will be available for those who request it in advance.

The meeting is the 180th since the MTA was founded in 1845.

The agenda includes all essential business, including union elections and approval of the association's operating budget for fiscal year 2025-2026, which begins July 1.

The first session will begin at noon on Friday, May 2. The agenda for that day includes action on proposed amendments to the MTA Standing Rules and Bylaws, as well as New Business Items with and without budgetary implications.

On Saturday, May 3, the meeting resumes at 9 a.m. The election of candidates is expected to begin at 11 a.m., after action on the proposed budget, and will include both virtual and in-person voting.

If action on the budget goes beyond 11 a.m., the elections will take place immediately following it.

Delegates from District 16G and the Statewide Retired District will vote to elect their district directors on the MTA Board of Directors. Positions on the Retired Members Committee have been filled by waiver, under MTA Bylaws, as have numerous positions on the Board of Directors and Executive Committee. Please see an article on Page 26 for a list of the members elected by waiver.

The recognition portion of the meeting will be held on Saturday morning.

The 2025 MTA Friend of Education Award will be presented to Stacy Davis Gates, president of the Chicago Teachers Union and a vice president of the American Federation of Teachers. Davis Gates is

a longtime union leader in Chicago and Illinois who in 2019 helped lead a 15-day strike by Chicago teachers that resulted in a contract providing smaller class sizes, a nurse and social worker in every public school and sanctuary protections for immigrant families.

The 2025 MTA Friend of Labor Award will be presented to Chrissy Lynch, president of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO. Lynch was unanimously elected as the president of the labor organization after serving as secretary-treasurer and chief of staff. She ran the political and legislative departments of the AFL-CIO for 15 years prior.

The President's Award will honor U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York. Representative Ocasio-Cortez was elected to Congress in 2018, defeating a longtime incumbent in a primary election. She recently was re-elected to a second term. A leader of the national progressive movement, Ocasio-Cortez refuses to accept contributions from corporations and is a strong advocate for public education and environmental protection.

The delegates also will recognize

Katherine Monteiro, the MTA Education Support Professional of the Year. Monteiro is a member of the Weymouth Educators' Association and a registered behavioral technician who works in elementary schools.

The delegates will consider a proposed MTA operating budget of \$58,692,057 for the coming year.

A vote is scheduled for Saturday morning, according to a preliminary agenda.

The Advisory Budget Committee, the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors have proposed annual dues of \$550 for full-time active members. This is an increase of \$14.

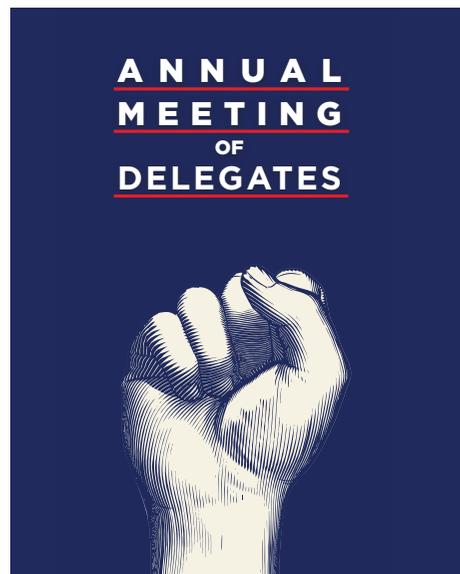
Dues for the category of secretaries, clerks and custodians would be \$330 under the budget proposal, an increase of \$8.25.

Dues for ESPs, including food service personnel and paraeducators, would be \$165, an increase of \$4.

Retiree annual dues remain at \$30 under MTA Bylaws.

In addition to the operating budget, the proposed Public Relations/Organizing Campaign budget of \$1,844,860 will be considered. The recommended general dues assessment for the PR/Organizing budget is \$20. For secretaries, clerks and custodians, the assessment would be \$12. Paraeducators, food service personnel and other ESPs would be assessed \$6.

For additional information on the Annual Meeting, please visit massteacher.org/annualmeeting.



Candidates Seek Offices at MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates

Three seats on the MTA Board of Directors are contested this year, with four people applying for two open seats representing the Statewide Retired District and two people vying for the District 16G seat.

Bonnie M. Page, Joe Herosy, Gerry Ruane and Robert (Bob) Miller submitted nomination papers for the Statewide Retired District seats. Two seats are available with three-year terms that begin July 1, 2025.

Competing for the District 16G seat on the Board are Christy Nickerson, a member of the Woburn Teachers Association, and Diana B. Marcus, a member of the Burlington Educators Association. This seat also is for a three-year term that begins July 1, 2025.

Their biographical statements appear on Page 27 of this edition.

Candidates Declared Elected

Multiple candidates for MTA offices have been declared elected by waiver under the election waiver provision in the MTA Bylaws, because only one person submitted nomination papers for a particular seat.

Elected for a three-year term beginning on July 1, 2025, were the following members:

Executive Committee

Region D, Gayle Carvalho,

Quincy Education Association

Region E, Cynthia Roy,

Bristol-Plymouth Teachers Association

Region H, Anneta Argyres,

Professional Staff Union

Board of Directors

District 10B, Tina Mansfield,

Educational Association of Worcester
 District 36C, Kimberly Gibson,
 Brockton Education Association
 District 41C, Nicole Roberge,
 Wareham Education Association
 District 29D, Sherene Michlin,
 Needham Education Association
 District 39E, Keith Michon Jr.,
 Fall River Educators Association
 District 40E, Lori R. Silveira,
 New Bedford Educators Association
 District 12F, Julie Taggart,
 Tewksbury Teachers Association
 District 17G, Kristine Barker,
 Waltham Educators Association
 District 20G, Kim Auger,
 Everett Teachers Association
 District 49H, Andrew Gorry,
 Professional Staff Union

Vacancies to be Filled

The seat for Region B on the Executive Committee and the seats for Districts

33C, 13F, 45H and 48H on the MTA Board also have terms ending in 2025 but no candidates submitted nomination papers by the deadline. Therefore, the interim process for filling vacancies will take place shortly after the Annual Meeting. Members in the affected region and districts will be notified of the nomination and election process as well as the timeline.

Candidates Declared Elected to the Retired Members Committee

Four members were elected to the Retired Members Committee by waiver and will serve a two-year term. They are as follows: Maureen Colgan Posner, Springfield; Dale Melcher, Northampton; Phyllis Neufeld, Burlington; and Amy Wolpin, Florence.

Each will serve a term that begins July 1 and ends June 30, 2027. **T**

CANDIDATES DECLARED ELECTED



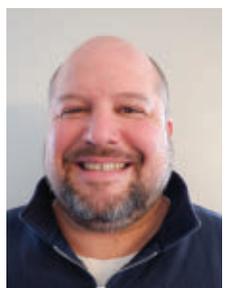
Kristine Barker



Gayle Carvalho



Sherene Michlin



Keith Michon Jr.



Nicole Roberge



Cynthia Roy



Lori Silveira



Julie Taggart

Biographical Statements of MTA Candidates

BOARD OF DIRECTORS District 16G seat

CHRISTY NICKERSON
Woburn Teachers Association



Christy Nickerson, veteran educator and widowed mother of two, is a proven labor leader. This Woburn co-president distinguished herself during their 2023 strike, helping unseat an anti-education mayor, and has spoken on MTA panels and at Labor Notes. Approachable and communicative, she will be a unifying advocate for District 16G.

DIANA B. MARCUS
Burlington Educators Association



I have served as a local president, NEA Director, MTA Board member, and on numerous MTA committees. Committed to uniting educators, I believe in strengthening our union through collaboration, respect and shared purpose. Together, we can heal our divisions and build a stronger, more effective MTA.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS Statewide Retired District, two seats

BONNIE M. PAGE
MTA Retired



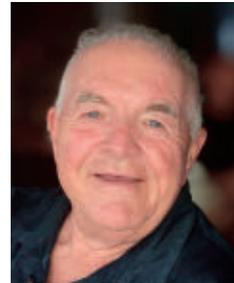
Please vote for me for the MTA Board because I will represent you and fight for our issues such as increasing the COLA, making sure our pensions are fully funded, and increasing our membership. It is important that we elect people who will be there for ALL retirees.

JOE HEROSY
MTA Retired



I will continue to fight for the working class. Our collective struggle for liberation is under attack. Let's unite around the fundamental goals of MTA: strengthening public education and better conditions for all, especially the most oppressed – a society of the people, by the people and for the people.

GERRY RUANE
MTA Retired



I am asking for your vote to represent retirees on the MTA Board. I want to work toward providing more opportunities for retirees in MTA and see that MTA focuses on retired issues and issues that directly affect educators in today's challenging classrooms. Thank you for your support.

ROBERT (BOB) MILLER
MTA Retired



As a member of the "Mass Retirees" I worked on the successful campaign to end the WEP and GPO. I am committed to raising the COLA base for retirees and keeping the cost of our health insurance down. I look forward to representing retirees and hope to earn your vote.

Proposed Amendments to the MTA Bylaws

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #1. It would revise Article IV, Section 1.C, Budget; and Section 2, Dues, A. Active Members, (1) Full-Time Dues. The present text is in the left column. Proposed changes are shown as strikethrough (removed) and by underlined text (added) in the right column.

Article IV: Section 1.C and Section 2.A (1), Budget, Dues

PRESENT TEXT

Article IV – Section 1. Budget

C. The annual dues of active members and the budget of the Association shall be recommended to the Annual Meeting of Delegates by the Board of Directors. The budget must be approved by a majority of the delegates voting at the Annual Meeting of Delegates.

The adoption of the budget will automatically determine the annual dues for active members rounded to the next higher dollar amount.

Article IV - Section 2. Dues

Full-time dues and part-time dues percentages are based upon membership category.

A. Active members

(1) Full-time dues

Except as provided herein, the annual dues of active members shall be the amount approved by the Annual Meeting of Delegates.

PROPOSED AMENDED TEXT

Article IV – Section 1. Budget

C. The ~~annual dues of active members and the~~ budget of the Association shall be recommended to the Annual Meeting of Delegates by the Board of Directors. The budget must be approved by a majority of the delegates voting at the Annual Meeting of Delegates.

~~The adoption of the budget will automatically determine the annual dues for active members rounded to the next higher dollar amount.~~

Article IV - Section 2. Dues

Full-time dues and part-time dues percentages are based upon membership category.

A. Active Members

(1) Full-Time Dues

Except as provided herein, the annual dues of active members shall be the amount approved by the Annual Meeting of Delegates.

The full-time dues shall increase each year by 2.5% and will be reflected in the budget that delegates vote on at the Annual Meeting. The Delegates may, by majority vote, approve a larger increase. The Delegates may, by two-thirds vote, approve a lesser increase.

The annual dues for active members will be rounded to the next higher dollar amount.

IMPACT STATEMENT

This amendment would establish a baseline annual dues increase of 2.5% for active, full-time members, with a majority vote of the delegates required to adopt a higher increase, and with a two-thirds majority vote of the delegates required to adopt a lesser increase.

SUBMITTED BY

Max Page, MTA President, local: Massachusetts Society of Professors

Deb McCarthy, MTA Vice President, local: Hull Teachers Association

BYLAWS AND RULES COMMITTEE

Recommends Adoption (8-0)

MTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Recommends Adoption (40-15)

Amendments to Resolutions are Recommended

MTA Resolutions are the association's statements of principle on issues relating to members, public education, the welfare of students and human and civil rights.

Resolutions may be submitted by any member to the Resolutions Committee by the second Friday in January. The committee members also may propose resolutions.

All resolutions submitted are considered by the committee, and those approved by a majority vote of the committee are recommended to Annual Meeting delegates after having been presented to the Board of Directors.

To become an official position of the MTA, a resolution must be adopted by the delegates at Annual Meeting. The proposed revisions printed in this edition of MTA Today have been recommended by the Resolutions Committee. The Board also voted on March 29 to recommend passage by the delegates.

A section of the current resolution that has a line through it is proposed for deletion; a section that is underlined is a proposed addition.

All current resolutions are posted on the MTA website at massteacher.org/resolutions.

Proposed Revised Resolution B-20

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that physical activity is essential to good health. Therefore, a comprehensive program of physical education – one that is developmental, sequential, cooperative in nature and culturally sensitive – should be provided daily in grades pre-kindergarten through 12 in or on a facility designed for that purpose.

The MTA urges individuals and families to renew their commitment to make daily quality health and physical education a part of their lives and in every school curriculum.

Physical education programs that require 225 minutes per week for middle and high school levels and 150 minutes per week for the elementary level would ensure well-rounded students, both academically and physically.

The MTA believes the inclusion of a comprehensive, skills-based health education program is a necessity in all grades, kindergarten through 12, to educate students of the Commonwealth to improve lifelong health.

Required time for health education students in PreK-2 should include a minimum of 40 hours, and for students in grades 3-12, a minimum of 80 hours of instruction per academic year.

There shall be no substitution of other instruction or activities for physical education or health education.

Coursework for health and physical education shall be regulated under the SHAPE National Physical Education Standards and the National Health Education Standards 3rd edition, an initiative of the National Consensus for Health Education.

Health and physical education shall be only taught by licensed health and physical education teachers.

~~The MTA further believes that such programs should be planned, directed and taught by licensed physical education teachers.~~

The MTA further believes that quality health and physical education programs are the best health insurance and K-12 students should not be denied daily access to either program. (92, 99, 09, 25)

Proposed Revised Resolution F-15

RETIREMENT

The Massachusetts Teachers Association shall continue to seek improvement in the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System and strongly disapproves of any action by the state Legislature or by the Congress of the United States or local governing bodies which would reduce retirement rights and benefits of Massachusetts educators.

The MTA supports a retirement system that provides for:

- Retirement security for retirees through a defined-benefit pension plan that is guaranteed for life, including cost-effective disability and survivor benefits;
- Automatic cost-of-living adjustments for retirees and beneficiaries that reflect actual increases in the cost of living;
- Purchase of credit for all approved leaves; and
- Full funding of the pension liability by the state.

Furthermore, The Massachusetts Teachers Association recognizes the importance of securing retirement contributions, from public higher education employers, for their part-time faculty members who teach at least two courses per semester across public institutions of higher education. Such benefits must be equal to those of other employees of the Commonwealth who work 20 or more hours per week.

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

The MTA further believes that domestic partners should have available to them the same retirement benefit options as are available to married individuals. (90, 99, 01, 09, 19, 25)

New Poetry Collection Published by MTA Member

Max Heinegg, a member of the Medford Teachers Association, recently published his second volume of poems. "Keepers of the House," published by Lily Poetry Review, is inspired by his work as an English teacher at Medford High School. A 27-year educator, Heinegg is the poet laureate of Medford. ▮

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While you're there, make sure to update your personal contact information and view your membership and dues status. ▮

In Memory, State Representative CAROL DOHERTY

The MTA expresses its sincere condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Carol Doherty, an ardent supporter of public education, who died on Feb. 15.

Carol had been a state representative in Massachusetts since 2020 and was a former president of the MTA, serving for two terms from 1980 to 1984. She previously was the president of the Taunton Education Association and served on the Taunton School Committee. Carol knew firsthand the challenges educators face having taught and worked as a guidance counselor for many years.

As a state representative for a district that includes Taunton and Easton, she sponsored many education bills, and this year was a co-sponsor of legislation that would ensure greater transparency and disclosure of fees in 403(b) retirement plans.

"A dedicated unionist, she fought tirelessly for working families, ensuring that preK-16 educators had a voice in shaping Massachusetts' public education system," said MTA President Max Page and Vice President Deb McCarthy in a statement. ▮

To read the full statement from the MTA, please visit massteacher.org/news/2025/02/doherty.



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Correction

An article on Native American tribal land acknowledgments published on Page 28 in the winter edition of MTA Today incorrectly described the sequence of events that led to Tisquantum's return to New England. He first was captured in 1605 and taken to Europe, then taken to Maine. He eventually escaped and returned to his homelands in 1619, 14 years after his initial capture.

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All consultations are held by appointment. Members are advised to call or email 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 the 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 to meetings.

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LAST WORD

Kathy Greeley

Retired, former English teacher
in Cambridge



Public education is the foundation of a healthy democracy. Unfortunately, this critical institution is under attack like it has never been before. As educators, parents, grandparents, union and community members, we must fight back against the privatization of our education system. Nor can we just defend the status quo. Ending the MCAS graduation requirement was just a first step. It is time for us to reimagine what we want and need our schools to do and be so all our children in Massachusetts feel welcome, included, seen and prepared for the future.”

PHOTOGRAPH BY SCOTT MCLENNAN

