

MTA Today

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PROGRESS ON MANY FRONTS





2020/2021 HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

Friday, June 18 – Virtual Event

Last year's MTA Human and Civil Rights Awards dinner was canceled because of the pandemic. This year, we will honor the 2020 and 2021 award recipients together on one special evening!

Online registration begins in May. [Watch massteacher.org/hcr](http://Watch.massteacher.org/hcr) for details.

Since 1983, MTA's Human Relations Committee has reviewed nominations and selected the recipients of the annual Human and Civil Rights Awards. The annual HCR Awards Banquet, attended by educators from across the state, honors those who have shown extraordinary dedication to civil rights and human relations. Honoring those who dedicate themselves to equality for all is a proud tradition of the MTA.

MTA Today

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This edition also includes the Spring issue of *The MTA Advantage*

MTA'S MISSION STATEMENT

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

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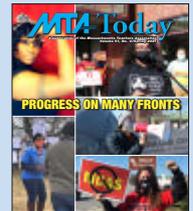
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ON THE COVER

As a turbulent year for students and educators heads toward the finish line, MTA members (clockwise from upper left) have kept up their activism, demanding that educators receive COVID-19 vaccines on a reasonable timetable; speaking out at DESE headquarters about the need to reopen schools safely; calling for an end to layoffs and an austerity mindset among public higher education executives; urging the cancellation of MCAS tests; and blasting the imposition of furloughs at Salem State University. Coverage is featured throughout this issue. The last installment of our five-part series on the history of the MTA begins on Page 3, and a story about members celebrating Education Support Professionals at the virtual MTA ESP Conference is on Page 5. Beginning on Page 17, readers will find a section about the 2021 MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates.



Cover photos by Bob Duffy and Laura Barrett and courtesy of the MSCA Salem State University chapter and Malden teacher Jennifer Hedington



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Quote-Unquote

"So as an educator, I would say to parents, there is an opt-out and if there is ever a time for parents to consider whether that opt-out makes sense for you, this is the time."

— Richard Carranza, then-chancellor of the New York City public schools, encouraging parents to opt their children out of state exams this year

During the 1990s, members led the fight to keep public education funding intact

By Laura Barrett

The MTA celebrated its 175th anniversary in November 2020. The past four issues of *MTA Today* have featured stories about our history from 1845 to 1990. In this edition we focus on the pivotal decade from 1990 to 2000, a time when the locus of much decision-making about public schools shifted from local communities to the state with the passage of the *Massachusetts Education Reform Act*. This final installment in the series is based on coverage in *MTA Today*.

■ ■ ■

A decade after the anti-government organization Citizens for Limited Taxation won Proposition 2½ in a 1980 ballot vote, the group was back again with an equally threatening initiative to slash state taxes and budgets by billions of dollars. The risk to public schools and public higher education posed by Question 3 was enormous.

The early polls were not promising. This time, the MTA organized as never before, engaging in a massive “No on 3” campaign throughout 1990 with other unions and parent and community groups.

MTA members were the backbone of the local actions, passing out leaflets, holding signs and organizing public forums. As was the case in a much later fight against a ballot initiative to expand the number of charter schools, many analysts felt that educators — among the most trusted professionals in our society — had a huge impact on the outcome simply by telling their friends, relatives and neighbors about the harm the measure would cause. In the end, Question 3 was resoundingly defeated, 60 percent to 40 percent.

“We did it!” wrote then-MTA President Rosanne Bacon. “It is a triumph of reason over anger. The message for us is clear. When we work together, we can win!”

The celebration was short-lived, however. A recession had taken hold, and when Republican Governor William Weld took office in January 1991, he was intent on cutting spending rather than raising taxes to address the threat. The cuts came quickly.



MTA file photo

The ability to mobilize unionized educators was on display during a huge rally on Beacon Hill in 1999, when more than 15,000 educators marched, chanted and rang bells, demanding to be heard on matters that affected them and their students.

The hit to public higher education was immediate and reverberated nationwide. In March 1991, the chair of the NEA’s National Council on Higher Education was quoted as saying, “It is a travesty and a disgrace for this indignity to be heaped upon such great public colleges and universities. It will set

the worst possible precedent because Massachusetts is viewed as a national leader in higher education.”

Furloughs were imposed on faculty and staff, and programs vital to students were slashed.

“Outraged faculty, librarians, staff, and students at the University of Massachusetts’ Amherst and Boston

“We did it!” wrote then-MTA President Rosanne Bacon. “It is a triumph of reason over anger. The message for us is clear. When we work together, we can win!”

campuses conducted ‘No Business as Usual’ for two days in mid-April to protest the continuing savage budget cuts against the university and public higher education,” an *MTA Today* article stated.

Public schools were also hit hard when the state slashed local aid, while municipalities were prevented from making up for the loss without a Proposition 2½ override. Low-income communities were impacted the most. In 1991, *MTA Today* reported that Holyoke’s elementary schools no longer offered music, art, physical education, foreign languages, guidance services, home economics or industrial arts.

According to that account, “Classes in Holyoke are jammed with up to 42 students,” the result of the layoff of one-third of the teaching staff of 750. “Next to the crammed classrooms are empty ones. Teachers in two of the three middle schools have no preparation time.”

Critics of public schools, burned by their loss on Question 3, were quick to blame educators. They clamored for “reform” and demanded salary givebacks to make up for the lost funding.

The MTA and the state affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers fought back, proposing funding increases and truly progressive plans for change. The MTA and others also aggressively pursued a lawsuit, first filed in 1978, to establish the state’s constitutional obligation to provide adequate funding to public schools in rich and poor communities alike.

These debates all came to a head in June of 1993.

On June 4, the House and Senate approved the massive *Massachusetts Education Reform Act*, which included an ambitious new funding system along with numerous policy changes.

Please turn to **Education Law**/Page 13

Reason for optimism — and time to take stock

As warmer weather is upon us and more people are becoming fully vaccinated against COVID-19, there is reason for optimism. Despite the hardships and frustrations of the past year, there are some hopeful signs that we are turning the corner — not only on the pandemic but in other ways as well.

It is time to take stock. As a union, where have we been? Where are we now, and where do we need to go?

In short, we have made significant gains, and we must continue to organize to reclaim

public education, our democracy, and a sense of shared purpose in our communities.

Here are some of the key victories you've won for students and educators this year:



Merrie Najimy
MTA President

Committee was foundational to giving our local associations the tools they needed to achieve the most crucial COVID-19 mitigation strategies in your buildings. You laid the groundwork for working in schools and on campuses that are healthier and safer.

- In public higher education, MTA locals and chapters banded together with unions that are part of the AFL-CIO as campuses saw cuts, furloughs and layoffs looming. We also took our case to the public with the Massachusetts Agrees media campaign. College and university executives maintained that reductions were necessary because of the pandemic — and despite level funding, they refused to protect jobs and programs. One UMass trustee even went so far as to claim that reserve funds should be spent only in an event on the magnitude of an asteroid striking the Earth. But the unions hit back with a bit of political theater, creating a huge “asteroid” and the message: “The asteroid has struck.” Point made.

- In coalition with other public-sector unions — including the Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts and AFT Massachusetts — the MTA and our locals built enough public pressure to win a start date and dedicated weekend vaccination days for school employees.

- With a nationwide effort from organized communities and labor, we saw the election of Joe Biden as president and Kamala Harris as vice president, an important step toward closing the book on four ruinous years for our country. We now have an administration in the White House that not only recognizes the threat of the pandemic but is acting on community and labor demands to provide hundreds of millions of vaccine doses and waves of desperately needed economic relief.

Yet our battles are not over. The pandemic continues to take a major toll. We still contend with the deaths of family members and friends. We are still working harder than ever. We still face an economic crisis, one that has created even greater uncertainty for people in financially precarious situations. And as a nation, we need to regain a sense of common purpose.

This all occurred as you kept doing everything possible to make pandemic education successful under heightened concern for your own health and safety — and while caring for your families.

Yet our battles are not over. The pandemic continues to take a major toll. We still contend with the deaths of family members and friends. We are still working harder than ever. We still face an economic crisis, one that has created even greater uncertainty for people in financially precarious situations. And as a nation, we need to regain a sense of common purpose.

Where do we go from here? The pandemic has laid bare how decades of tax cuts for the wealthy — coupled with wholesale disinvestment in the public good, be it in health care, education, housing or child care, to name just a few examples — are at the root of the systemic racism that plagues our country.

In all communities — but especially in Black and brown ones — our schools and other public spaces reflect this policy of disinvestment. Infrastructure is crumbling. Access to affordable child care is inadequate. Public transportation is unreliable. There is a dire lack of affordable housing. Too many families and individuals, including members of the MTA, struggle to earn a living wage. And too many high school graduates face an unjust choice: attend college and emerge in debt or go to work to try to ensure economic survival.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on our public colleges and universities — and it has been particularly devastating for students of color, as well as adjunct faculty members and the lowest-paid workers on our campuses.

Community colleges have seen the enrollment of first-year Black and Latinx students decline by one-third. At the nine state universities, 15 percent fewer Black first-year students have enrolled. This will significantly impact the financial stability of our

campuses as well as the future of our communities — and the consequences will be borne by public colleges and universities that had already been under-resourced for decades, even before the pandemic.

The way forward is to advance the common good principles that the MTA unveiled last summer. Our core values need to continue to guide us on every front, including our bargaining initiatives and our legislative priorities.

We need, for example, to ensure that the funding provided by the *American Rescue Plan Act* will supplement, not supplant, the resources promised by the *Student Opportunity Act* — the most far-reaching education equity initiative in our Commonwealth in decades. Throwing out a lifeline at a time of crisis is necessary, but our long-term work is to translate that relief into progressive and permanent public policy.

The state must commit to providing additional resources for public higher education in the budget for this coming year. We are urging a total increase of \$136 million over this year's funding levels, which represents the first-year investment called for by the *Cherish Act*.

We need to end high-stakes standardized testing systems such as MCAS and ACCESS *now* so that we can use the last weeks of the school year to reconnect with our students in meaningful ways. Until the state applies for an MCAS waiver and new U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona, a former teacher himself, acts to grant it, we will move ahead with our opt-out campaign.

We need to lobby cities and towns across Massachusetts to endorse and act on the PreK-12 ESP Bill of Rights, a document developed by MTA Education Support Professionals to call attention to the need for better pay, respect and educational opportunities.

As we near the end of this historically difficult year, I hope you recognize how important your union activism is and will continue to be.

The pandemic has challenged us in fundamental ways, but it has also made us a stronger MTA. We have the opportunity to build upon our gains, strive for more equitable communities, and keep our focus on the common good. Let's take it now and keep winning.

Letters policy

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

Virtual conference celebrates ESPs

By Jean Conley

Education Support Professionals from across the state gathered virtually for the 2021 MTA ESP Conference — and their focus was on fighting for respect and dignity through the PreK-12 ESP Bill of Rights, helping students traumatized by the COVID-19 pandemic, and celebrating the essential work of ESPs.

The event began on Friday, April 9 — when participants could meet individually with retirement consultants — and continued on Saturday, April 10, when the main conference took place.

Although the format did not allow for the social and networking opportunities that are a huge draw of in-person ESP conferences, a variety of professional development workshops and an opening session for everyone helped provide for an engaging and energizing event.

ESP Committee Co-Chair Jean Fay welcomed the group on Saturday. “While we are not together in person this year,” she said, “we are always together in spirit for our love of what we do.”

The pandemic year has reinforced ESPs’ crucial roles in the lives of students, she added, but it has also taught ESPs to be engaged in the political process — “because elections matter” — and in fighting systemic racism. ESPs, she said, “need to be co-conspirators” with students and colleagues who are people of color.

In addition, she reminded the audience of the need for self-care. “We already know we are superheroes,” Fay said. “But even superheroes need to take care of themselves.”

Participants learned about the many opportunities the MTA provides for ESPs throughout the year — including personal and professional development workshops; the ESP of the Year program; leadership weekends; and the ESP Bill of Rights campaign.

During the opening session, MTA President Merrie Najimy thanked the ESPs for getting up early to attend.

“You’re exhausted, I know,” she said, noting that the conference was held on the first weekend after many districts went back to full in-person learning for many grade levels.

Najimy lauded participants’ commitment to each other and to realizing that “in this space, we get our power from each other.”

Fighting for a living wage is at the top of the agenda for the MTA in the coming year, Najimy said, and leadership development tracks in the past few years have put ESPs in position to champion the campaign.

ESPs, Najimy continued, have been at the forefront of winning health and safety protocols in classrooms and on buses. They are also working together with other educators on contract campaigns — and winning on that front as well. “We all share the same struggle,” Najimy said.

She said that while the MTA’s PreK-12 ESP Bill



Photo by Bob Duffy

Education Support Professionals from across Massachusetts honored the 2021 MTA ESP of the Year, Susan Soares, during the virtual ESP Conference on April 10. Soares works at the Stratton Elementary School in Arlington, where she is a special education teaching assistant.

“Paraprofessionals in the district came together, and we started talking about common issues,” Soares said. “Money. Sick time. Job security. Subbing for teachers and constantly missing our own students. The list went on and on. As we discussed what the problems were, it became clear to me that the overarching issue was that paraprofessionals were not respected and were undervalued. This was my turning point, and it became my mission: for Arlington paraprofessionals to receive the respect and the fairness they deserved.”

of Rights is gaining traction, “adopting this in name only is not enough.”

“This has to become a fight at the bargaining table,” Najimy told the audience. “It has to become a fight in your municipality, in your town meetings, in your city halls, in the streets, and at the State House.”

MTA Vice President Max Page said that respect for all educators is at the center of organizing efforts, adding: “Respect comes in the material conditions of our members’ lives, in their working conditions, and in living wages.”

He also urged all members to be involved in the fight for fair treatment.

“This is the year for all of our locals to endorse the ESP Bill of Rights and then win living wages for all workers at bargaining tables across the state,” Page said.

For many participants, one of the high points of the annual conference is celebrating the MTA ESP of the Year — and the tradition continued on April 10. The crowd warmly welcomed 2021 ESP of the Year Susan Soares, who was introduced by her 2020 predecessor, Sonia Fortin.

Fortin played a video tribute produced by colleagues of Soares, a special education teaching assistant at the Stratton Elementary School in Arlington, and ESP Committee Co-Chair Yahaira Rodriguez presented Soares with a gift from MTA Benefits.

Fortin described Soares as an “amazing and much-appreciated leader” in the Arlington Education Association, noting that she plays many roles in the AEA. “Her leadership shows through her vision, her determination, her kindness and the many hats she wears,” Fortin said.

Soares acknowledged the accolades from her fellow ESPs, exclaiming, “I love being part of the union!”

She recounted the success of the 2017-2018 membership drive in her community, which organized one of the last major non-union groups of ESPs in Massachusetts.

“Paraprofessionals in the district came together, and we started talking about common issues,” Soares

Please turn to **Unions**/Page 16

Time to reverse higher ed cuts

By Scott McLennan

The chaos unleashed by the coronavirus pandemic on college and university campuses more than a year ago was met with a wave of cooperation from staff and faculty unions. Many made painful decisions, juggling the needs of workers, students and communities amid financial uncertainty.

For the sake of saving workers' jobs for the long haul and preventing any long-term damage to campus programs, union members agreed to reduced hours and furloughs and to drastically different working conditions.

Yet as a clearer picture emerges of the true financial impact of the pandemic on public higher education, unions are stepping up their demand that campus executives pull back on austerity measures. In some cases, they say, administrators are exploiting the crisis to make unwarranted budget cuts.

The state is providing level funding for public higher education through June, and three packages of federal stimulus funds have provided significant revenues to public colleges and universities.

The most recent, the *American Rescue Plan Act*, is expected to deliver more than \$438 million to public colleges and universities in Massachusetts. The funds are in addition to the \$378 million allocated in two previous stimulus packages.



Photo by Scott McLennan

Protesters prepared for a "Bring Staff Back" demonstration at UMass Amherst on Feb. 26.

Many workers who were laid off or furloughed across the public higher education system during the early days of the pandemic, however, remain out of work or are still subjected to reduced hours.

The University Staff Association at UMass Amherst, for example, is fighting campus executives on two fronts — one to bring back staff members who remain on furlough and one to halt the increasing use of temporary employees to do bargaining unit work.

At Salem State University, the administration moved forward with furloughs for faculty and librarians despite the infusions of federal aid. The

university is set to receive more than \$19 million under the most recent bill. The two previous stimulus measures allocated roughly \$17 million.

At Quinsigamond Community College, union members who taught at the Children's School remain out of work, and the award-winning early education center remains closed. The Massachusetts Community College Council has been fighting the closure and reports that the college has provided no evidence of financial or health and safety problems that would support the action.

In March, Children's School teacher Erin Roache spoke before the Board of Higher Education, explaining that the center serves the community, including students attending the college, and trains educators. Why is it, she asked, that other early education centers around the state could remain open — and benefit from federal stimulus money — while the one at Quinsigamond remained closed.

"Providing affordable, high-quality early education and care is essential to removing barriers to equity within the Commonwealth," Roache told the board. "A major barrier to education for community college students is the lack of child care.

"Finding quality care on campus removes that barrier," she continued. "Pairing higher education and early education programs helps parents improve

Please turn to **Higher ed**/Page 11

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Educators focus on supporting students as in-person learning expands in schools

By Laura Barrett

As schools reopen to more in-person teaching and learning, exhausted MTA preK-12 members are holding it together while heading toward the finish line. They are focused on giving students the support they need as they hope for a better, safer and more satisfying year starting in the fall.

As educators, they have worked harder than ever to develop new modes of connecting with students through various phases of in-person, hybrid and remote learning. As unionists, they have pushed back against misguided state and district policies, winning important protections along the way.

“Member organizing and several rounds of bargaining have been key to winning adequate ventilation, surveillance testing and other health and safety accommodations,” said MTA President Merrie Najimy.

While the MTA was unable to push back the state’s overall timetable for increasing in-person learning to after April vacation, member advocacy helped gain more time for the 64 districts that were granted waivers.

“That reprieve was badly needed to give staff more time to become vaccinated and to work out the complicated logistics of changing how, where and when students are taught,” Najimy said.

Reactions to increasing in-person learning have run the gamut, from joy at finally being back with students in the classroom to frustration over challenging conditions. Resources and staffing levels make a big difference.

Take the case of two enthusiastic mid-career elementary teachers, Callie Walsh, a third-grade teacher in Malden, and Peggy Jeram, a fifth-grade teacher in Cambridge. Cambridge spends twice as much per pupil as Malden, and it shows in terms of how much staff the district has available to teach and support students in COVID-19 times.

Two days after Malden’s elementary schools were required to open more fully on April 5, Walsh said that 11 of her third-graders were still remote while nine were in the classroom, forcing her into the worst of both worlds — having to teach in person and remotely at the same time.

“I feel like I’m drowning,” Walsh said as she was driving home to take care of her own 14-month-old child. “While I’m thrilled to see more students in person again, every day is a mental battle. I don’t know how I can continue to do this without more support and training on how to balance the needs of the kids in front of me with the needs of the kids at home.”

Walsh described how difficult it is to be present for the students whose faces appear in little boxes on her computer screen while also addressing the ordinary needs and behaviors of those in front of



Photo by Bob Duffy

Bridget Reed, a teacher at Wakefield Memorial High School, gestured to the crowd during a March 25 demonstration at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s Malden headquarters to protest the state’s overreach on school reopenings and MCAS testing.



Photo by Laura Barrett

Will Karvouniaris, president of the Wakefield Education Association, highlighted educators’ opposition to MCAS during the demonstration.

her. Other MTA members also have described the simultaneous remote/in-person combination as the most difficult.

Jeram’s experience was different. She said it “felt like Christmas” to be back in her Cambridge

Walsh described how difficult it is to be present for the students whose faces appear in little boxes on her computer screen while also addressing the ordinary needs and behaviors of those in front of her. Other MTA members also have described the simultaneous remote/in-person combination as the most difficult.

classroom with students after more than a year of remote teaching.

“I was so excited to see them,” she said. “It’s like riding a bicycle. You’re back in your classroom and you know what to do. I felt real joy.”

She added that having been vaccinated made all the difference in her feeling that it was safe enough to be back.

Although some of Jeram’s students also had chosen to remain remote, her school had enough resources, or foresight, to divvy up assignments in a way that the fifth-grade teachers either taught in person or remotely — but not both at the same time.

Cambridge fourth-grade teacher Solana Herron-Smith had a similar experience, citing the benefit of having enough staff to focus on students in small breakout rooms during periods of remote instruction

Please turn to **Helping students**/Page 8

Helping students is educators' top priority

Continued from Page 7

and not having to be responsible for both the children in front of her and those on screens at the same time. "Teamwork made the dream work," she said.

All school employees faced the challenges of changing modalities this year. Sherry Bienvenue, a kindergarten aide in Chicopee, described the dizzying experience of being moved to different schools and classrooms, as well as shuttling between in-person and remote instruction.

These changes were driven by poor air quality in one building, a surge in coronavirus cases in November and, finally, the state's reopening order.

While she described the building she is now assigned to as "clean and well run," on balance she believes the students and staff would have been better off with remote instruction all year. "I could see the stress in the students' faces, even above their masks," she said. "They know something's not right. We have stickers on the floor and they are told they have to stand on the dot. They are constantly washing their hands and being told to pull up their masks. When they went home in November and returned in January, some of them cried because they missed their mommies. There were too many changes."

Everyone interviewed for this article shared one common sentiment: resentment toward the state for usurping local decision-making and failing to confer with the affected educators.

Will Karvouniaris, president of the Wakefield Education Association, said his district already had been moving toward reopening more fully when Education Commissioner Jeffrey Riley's in-person mandate was handed down.

"The precedent of them taking away control from school committees is almost nauseating," Karvouniaris told *MTA Today*. "We've worked so hard on communication within the district. The superintendent and I used to be on opposite sides of a lot of things. Now it seems like we call each other 44 times a day. The only thing the mandate has done is unify us at the local level even more."

At a rally protesting the state's overreach, Chelsea School Committee



Dozens of MTA members rolled up their sleeves for a vaccination campaign on social media that was based on the World War II-era effort featuring Rosie the Riveter. From left to right are Worcester paraprofessional Elsa Trinidad, New Bedford teacher Takeru Nagayoshi and Revere teacher Chelsea Brandwein-Fryar.

All school employees faced the challenges of changing modalities this year. Sherry Bienvenue, a kindergarten aide in Chicopee, described the dizzying experience of being moved to different schools and classrooms, as well as shuttling between in-person and remote instruction.

member Roberto Jimenez Rivera fired up the crowd when he strongly condemned the mandate as "an undemocratic power grab."

School district leaders were also uncharacteristically outspoken. Twelve Middlesex County superintendents wrote a strongly worded letter that concluded, "Your declaration without a thoughtful plan only exacerbates the challenges we face in schools and belies the current reality of the situation in which we find ourselves."

Some of the concerns about reopening would have been blunted if Governor Charlie Baker had prioritized vaccinating educators in Phase 1, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. He also inexplicably refused to approve a union-backed plan to have firefighters and ambulance workers vaccinate school employees in their own districts.

Baker's alternative was to set aside four weekend days for school employees at mass vaccination sites, with the last one scheduled for April 11 — more than a week after elementary

schools were ordered to open. Many members did not wait that long, instead scrambling to get their first shots locally as soon as they became eligible on March 11.

Despite the tug-of-war with the Baker administration, the health risks and the challenges of educating students during the pandemic, MTA members have risen to the occasion.

They advocated for vaccines through a social media campaign based on the World War II-era Rosie the Riveter poster showing a strong woman with her sleeves rolled up, ready to do her job. The slogan for this campaign was "I'm ready!" — meaning ready for the vaccine. But it easily could have been the slogan used in the original poster: "We can do it!"

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Case for opting out of MCAS tests is stronger than ever

By Laura Barrett

What if they held the MCAS and nobody came? This year, because state education officials have refused to seek a waiver from federal testing obligations, opting students out of high-stakes testing makes more sense than ever.

Sara Dion, an elementary school teacher in Medford, explained why she was holding an anti-MCAS sign at a protest outside Department of Elementary and Secondary Education headquarters in Malden on March 25. “After we’ve been remote or hybrid the whole year, kids are struggling to be connected to school,” she said. “This isn’t a time to be throwing a standardized test at them.”

Ricardo Rosa, an associate professor at UMass Dartmouth and a member of the New Bedford Coalition to Save Our Schools, said that parents become receptive to the opt-out message when they learn that there will be no negative consequences for students, educators or schools this year.

“Parents need to feel that what they are doing is in the norm,” he said. “In Massachusetts, there is a history of civil disobedience that is very powerful to talk about.”

Members of Rosa’s group, along with a statewide coalition of education justice organizations, held three parent forums, one entirely in Spanish. In New Bedford, they talked to hundreds of families through

door-to-door canvassing and have planted about 150 signs in front yards. They are also holding weekly meetings with other assessment reform activists to provide parents with opt-out information and support one another’s efforts, including a standout in Bourne.

Some locals are acting on their own. Cambridge Education Association members produced an opt-out flier in several different languages and an anti-MCAS button with the words “conscientious objector” on it. They also asked the School Committee to pass an anti-MCAS resolution — and on April 9, they walked into school together in a show of solidarity.

Members of the South Shore Education Justice Alliance held a powerful forum on March 4 featuring testimonials from two mothers whose children suffered emotional harm from being judged by a standardized test. For many, the MCAS is a racial justice issue. One educator who sees it that way is Sarah McLaughlin, a middle school teacher in Melrose and a member of MTA ALANA (African, Latino, Asian and Native American) Educators.

“MCAS testing does not value multiculturalism or the antiracist movement,” McLaughlin said. “MCAS has not increased our knowledge or changed the alleged ‘achievement gap.’ Instead, it has further divided groups and created a system of oppression.”

While MTA members can inform parents of their opt-out rights, it is up to parents to decide whether

to act. Amanda Ceide, speaking at the Malden rally, explained why she believes that this year, in particular, the tests are too narrow to capture what has been important.

“Our children have lost a lot more than what can be shown with that MCAS score, but they also have gained a lot more,” she said. She said that her oldest son has spent more time practicing his guitar this past year, and both of her children learned about the responsibility of owning a “COVID puppy.”

“These skills could not be captured by the MCAS, which is why I am encouraging families and educators to take a stand together to tell DESE that our kids are not numbers on a piece of paper,” Ceide said. “This is not the year to be giving a standardized test that we know causes harm. Continuing to traumatize kids during a pandemic is not something our society should allow.”

For more information on #CancelMCAS efforts, please visit massteacher.org/testing.



Photo by Laura Barrett

Medford teacher Sara Dion joined a protest outside DESE headquarters.

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Higher ed actions feature cross-campus solidarity

Continued from Page 6

their life opportunities while also supporting the developmental needs of their children — both essential to ending intergenerational poverty.”

MCCC members at Greenfield Community College remain concerned that the school is without a library director, and administrators there are not moving to fill the position. Instead, they have folded those important duties into another job.

“It’s troubling to see campus executives and trustees exploit the pandemic to make and sustain damaging cuts to our public colleges and universities,” said MTA President Merrie Najimy.

But unions on community college, state university and UMass campuses have been fighting the cuts and have won some important battles. Union jobs in various student support services at Bristol Community College that were cut in 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic, are being restored.

UMass Lowell executives tried to effectively close the Labor Studies Center there by keeping its director — a member of SEIU 888 — on indefinite furlough. In return, members of the UMass Unions United coalition and its allies organized a campaign that resulted in not only bringing the director back from furlough, but adding a staff member to the center.

MCCC members at Springfield Technical Community College waged a high-profile campaign



From left to right, MSCA Salem State University members Guillermo Avila-Saavedra, Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello and Amy Smith were among those rallying on March 18 to #SayNoToFurloughs. The demonstrators were supported by colleagues from several other state university campuses.

Photo Courtesy of MSCA Salem State University Chapter

when the school cut seven popular career-path programs last spring. The college’s Board of Trustees ultimately restored five of the programs and is still reviewing the fate of the other two.

Activists have also concentrated on health and safety concerns. While Governor Charlie Baker refused to prioritize higher education workers for access to COVID-19 vaccines, there were some campus-level victories in terms of securing personal protective equipment for workers whose jobs require them to be in person. A coalition of unions at UMass

Lowell also formed a Health and Safety Committee, which now meets regularly with administrators to assess what is happening on campus.

“We have seen many instances throughout the pandemic where campus management and trustees have not acted in the best interests of students, workers and our communities,” said MTA Vice President Max Page. “The good news is that our members have remained energized and are working across unions and across campuses to protect the quality and mission of public higher education.”

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Education law reshaped state policy

Continued from Page 3

On June 15, the Supreme Judicial Court ruled in favor of the MTA-backed plaintiffs in the case, *McDuffy v. Robertson*, determining that the state had failed to meet its constitutional duty to provide an adequate education to all students.

Three days later, Weld signed the education bill into law, to mixed reviews from the MTA. “This bill may be far from perfect,” wrote MTA President Robert Murphy, “but it gives a strong impetus to improve student performance, to stabilize and increase school funding and to enhance our own opportunities for professional excellence, while still protecting the basic due process rights of all educators.”

To this day, the 1993 law has shaped virtually all aspects of public education in Massachusetts. Key provisions are as follows:

Foundation budget. For the first time, the system set spending requirements for every district, specifying the minimum local contribution and how much the state must allocate to bring all districts to “foundation.” This led to a doubling of state funding for public schools, from \$1.3 billion in 1993 to \$2.6 billion in 2000, with most of the new money going to low-income districts. The additional resources were a tremendous help in the early years, though eventually the formula failed to keep pace with rising costs. Last year, the foundation budget was substantially updated in the *Student Opportunity Act*.

Student standards. For the first time, the state had a mandate to establish learning standards by grade level, leading to the creation of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

State assessment system. The law also required the creation of an “assessment system,” though that system largely rests on a series of standardized tests: the MCAS. At first these tests were just administered in grades four, eight and 10, but more levels were added later. Among other problematic applications, MCAS results are used to identify “underperforming” schools and districts and to determine which students are qualified for diplomas.



Deep staffing cuts in the early 1990s left computer labs unused and classes with more than 35 students in Rockland’s elementary schools. A sweeping law enacted in 1993 helped alleviate funding shortfalls and contained numerous policy provisions.

Photo by Andrew Linebaugh

Just cause dismissal. The law abolished the teacher tenure system and replaced it with a “just cause” dismissal standard for teachers who had attained Professional Teacher Status.

Certification. The act established a process for certification — now called licensure — that has undergone several modifications since 1993 but still retains some of the original features. It required aspiring teachers to pass qualifying exams, now called the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure.

Recertification. For the first time, recertification was required. Teachers were — and still are — required to be recertified every five years by participating in mandated professional development.

Charters and school choice. The state’s interdistrict choice program was expanded. The act also allowed the creation of privately run but publicly funded charter schools, though it initially capped the number at 25 statewide. The expansion of charter schools has been hotly contested ever since, most recently with the defeat of Question 2 in 2016.

School councils. Principals in each building were required to establish school councils that include parents, teachers, community members and, at the high school level, students.

The MTA spent much of the rest of the 1990s implementing, challenging or modifying various portions of the law. Some of the changes were welcome, while others, including the MCAS requirements, are still controversial.

The MTA’s ability to mobilize members was also on display throughout the decade. A large rally in 1992 was topped by an even bigger one in 1999 — likely the largest in the MTA’s history. An estimated 15,000 to 20,000 educators shut down Beacon Hill on June 16, 1999, marching, chanting and ringing bells as they gathered at the State House.

Specific policy proposals catalyzed the rally, but the energy behind it was fueled by the demand that educators be heard on matters that affected them and their students. Their slogan was clear: “If you want to know how to make schools work better, ask a teacher.”

This is the last article in our five-part series on the MTA’s history. Future writers will need time to put the last two decades into perspective. Given our state’s importance in establishing public schools and the MTA’s role in fighting for the rights and interests of educators, their students and the common good, we will always have a compelling story to share with future generations.

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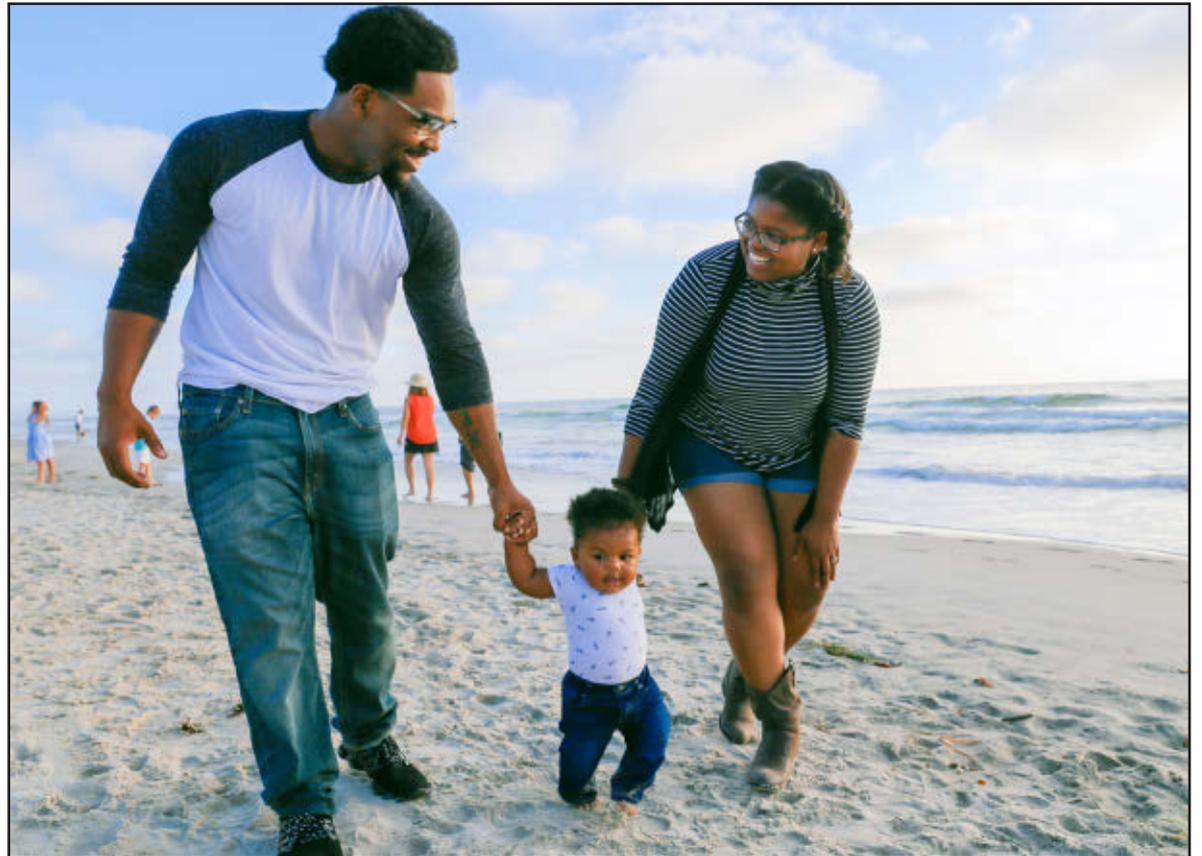
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While COVID-19 has taught us many things, MTA Benefits learned early on that hundreds of members were evaluating their benefit plans and looking for solutions to fill gaps in their insurance coverage. One of those gaps may be disability insurance.

Due to increased demand, MTA Benefits negotiated another **all-member open enrollment period**, which is available through May 7.

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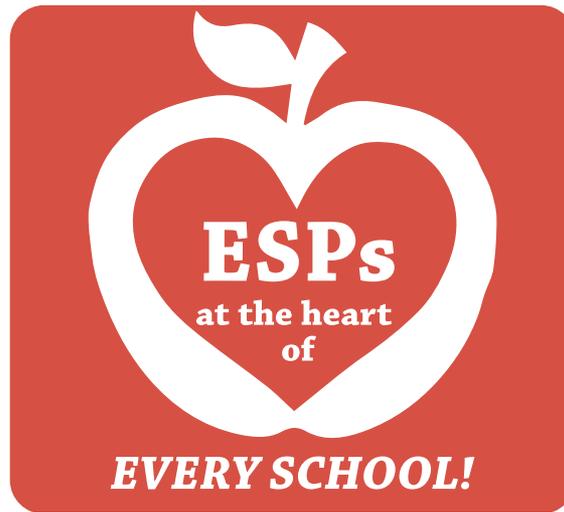
Unions 'give everyone the power to have a voice'

Continued from Page 5

said. "Money. Sick time. Job security. Subbing for teachers and constantly missing our own students. The list went on and on. As we discussed what the problems were, it became clear to me that the overarching issue was that paraprofessionals were not respected and were undervalued. This was my turning point, and it became my mission: for Arlington paraprofessionals to receive the respect and the fairness they deserved."

She thanked past and current AEA leaders, the negotiating team that worked to secure the unit's first contract, and her husband and children. She went on to pay tribute to her late father and grandfather, both airline union members. She said she hoped they were "looking down with a smile" because they taught her that "unions create fairness and give everyone the power to have a voice."

Workshops at the conference covered a wide range of topics.



Titles of the sessions included "Creating Space to Talk about Race," "Building Inclusivity: Supporting LGBTQ+ Students and Families,"

and "Resilience Road Show: Building a Trauma-Informed Community."

The MTA campaign for the PreK-12 ESP Bill of Rights was also a key subject. Former ESPs of the Year Fortin and Joni Cederholm outlined the history of how the effort emerged from a wide-ranging survey of ESPs.

They urged all ESPs to bring the document back to their locals and their towns and cities, with the goal of getting districts across the state to endorse it.

"We won't give up until the PreK-12 Bill of Rights becomes a reality," Cederholm said. "We're going to be loud, vocal, and we're going to make it happen!"

For more information about MTA Education Support Professionals and to become involved in the MTA PreK-12 ESP Bill of Rights campaign, please visit massteacher.org/esp.

Get involved!

Volunteer to serve on an MTA committee

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MTA to hold virtual Annual Meeting

By Jean Conley

The 2021 MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates will be held on Friday, April 30, and Saturday, May 1 — and it will be a virtual event for the second year in a row.

The delegates will vote on important association business, including the proposed MTA budget for fiscal year 2021-2022, and elections will be held for three seats on the association’s Board of Directors. In addition, four Retired Members Committee seats will be filled by a vote of the delegates representing the Statewide Retired District.

The biographical statements of candidates for the Board are on Page 19, and a list of candidates for the Retired Members Committee is on Page 22.

The delegates will also consider a number of proposed amendments to the association’s bylaws, resolutions and standing rules; participate in an issues forum; take up new business items; hear leadership reports; and honor a number of educators, activists and education allies.

All new business items must be received via email by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, April 28. They should be sent to MTAGovernance@massteacher.org.

The meeting will be called to order at 1 p.m. and last until about 5 p.m. on Friday. It will resume at 9 a.m. on Saturday. Elections will begin at the conclusion of whichever item of business is being transacted at 11 a.m. on Saturday and end no less than 25 minutes later.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impossibility of holding an in-person meeting, the Board of Directors is recommending that the delegates adopt special meeting rules.

The proposed special meeting rules impose some limits on agenda items and debate. They are intended to maximize the amount of business that can be achieved in the time allocated. More information about the special rules can be found at massteacher.org/annualmeeting.

Action on proposed amendments to the bylaws, resolutions and standing rules was deferred in 2020. The held-over proposals will be considered this year, along with new ones.

The meeting will include leadership reports by MTA President Merrie Najimy, Vice President Max Page and Executive Director-Treasurer Lisa Gallatin.

Outstanding educators, activists and education allies will receive recognition. Due to time constraints, the honorees will not address the delegates directly. Instead, award recipients’ self-submitted videos will be posted on the MTA website.

Jennifer Hedrington, the 2021 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, is one of the educators who will be recognized.

A member of the Malden Education Association, Hedrington has been a seventh-grade math teacher



Jennifer Hedrington



Susan Soares



Jennifer Berkshire



Jack Schneider



Chicago Teachers Union



Alan Geller



Julia Koehler



Regina LaRocque



Carlene Pavlos



Jodi Sugerman-Brozan

in Malden for the past 11 years. Since being named Massachusetts Teacher of the Year in October, Hedrington has handled remote teaching at the Ferryway School during a difficult year for students, educators and families while also juggling a busy schedule resulting from her award.

Susan Soares, a special education teaching assistant in Arlington who was recently named the 2021 MTA Education Support Professional of the Year, also will be recognized. Soares was surprised with the news that she had been chosen during a virtual meeting of the Arlington Education Association on March 23.

MTA and local association leaders and members were on hand for the surprise, and many offered warm congratulations for Soares, who led a unionization drive for her fellow paraprofessionals in 2017-2018, organizing one of the last major nonunion groups of ESPs in Massachusetts.

This year’s Friend of Education Awards will be presented to Jack Schneider and Jennifer Berkshire, whose book, “A Wolf at the Schoolhouse Door: The Dismantling of Public Education and the Future of School,” offers a powerful analysis of the profit-seeking forces out to undermine public education.

Berkshire is a freelance journalist and advocate who writes about the intersection of race, public education and the remaking of the urban landscape. She teaches in the journalism program at Boston College and in the Labor Studies program at UMass Amherst, co-hosts the *Have You Heard* podcast and was the creator of the *EduShyster* blog.

Schneider is an assistant professor of education at UMass Lowell, where he leads the Beyond Test Scores project. His work broadly explores the influence of history, culture and rhetoric in education

policy. Schneider writes frequently about education for publications such as *The Atlantic*, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*.

The Friend of Labor Award will be presented to the Chicago Teachers Union, which has led the way for the MTA and other education unions around the country in centering racial and social justice in its fight for the common good.

Under former President Karen Lewis, who died in February, the union launched fights against school closings, radical disparities in resources and other policies that hurt students. The first Chicago educators’ strike in 25 years took place in 2012, and the CTU, with community and parental support, continues working today to advocate for the city and schools that students deserve. The award gives special recognition to Lewis, but the CTU under current President Jesse Sharkey continues to offer inspiration and lead the way in unionism.

This year’s President’s Awards will recognize the generosity of, and partnership with, five medical and public health and safety professionals who have spent decades fighting for environmental, racial and social justice, along with dignity and fairness for workers.

Najimy said she was grateful to the recipients for the “crucial knowledge they brought to the MTA, helping us navigate the health and safety world throughout this pandemic” and for “assisting us in centering worker, student and family rights to health and safety in our buildings.

“They made a commitment to the MTA even though they are not members,” she said. “They understood that their commitment was to the common good.”

Please turn to **Delegates**/Page 19

Candidates declared elected



Rosa Lopez-Whitehill



Jonathan Wolan



Cherian Armstrong



Barry Davis



Jody Sheehan



Kristen Martin



Christine N. Turner



Thomas Estabrook

Contests set for Board and Retired Members Committee seats

Elections will take place at the 2021 Annual Meeting of Delegates for three district seats on the Board of Directors and four seats on the Retired Members Committee.

With no statewide or at-large contests, only delegates from districts 14D, 28D, 19G and the Statewide Retired District will be voting in the elections.

The candidates for the Retired Members Committee are listed on Page 22.

Contests for district seats on the Board are as follows:

District 14D: Am Cecil Fuoti and Nancy Clougherty, both of the Framingham Teachers Association.

District 28D: Nancy Aykanian of the Westwood Teachers Association and Donna M. Grady of the Franklin Education Association.

District 19G: Daphnee Balan of the Somerville Teachers Association and Robert (Bobby) Travers, Jr., of the Cambridge Education Association.

All other Board candidates have been declared elected under the election waiver in the MTA Bylaws. The provision states that if there is only one candidate for an open position, the election will be waived and the candidate is declared elected. Terms begin July 1 and last for three years.

The Board candidates declared elected because of the election waiver are:

At-Large Director for Ethnic Minority Membership: Rosa Lopez-Whitehill, Pembroke Teachers Association

District 7B: Bria Hanson, Fitchburg Education Association

District 9B: Alana Stern, Wachusett Regional Education Association

District 10B: Hannah Weinsaft, Educational Association of Worcester

District 35C: Jonathan Wolan, Whitman-Hanson Education Association

District 42C: Cherian Armstrong, Monomoy Regional Education Association

District 32D: Kaitlin Tafe, Braintree Education Association

District 30E: Bernadette Murphy, Sharon Teachers Association

District 23F: Barry Davis, Haverhill Education Association

District 24F: Jody Sheehan, Danvers Teachers Association

District 25F: Kristen Martin, Revere Teachers Association

District 44H: Joe Nardoni, Massachusetts Community College Council

District 46H: Christine N. Turner, Massachusetts Society of Professors, UMass Amherst

District 47H: Thomas Estabrook, UMass Lowell Grant and Contract Funded Employees

Board candidates who supplied photos are pictured on this page. In contested races, biographical statements and photos of Board candidates appear on Page 19.

MTA SC2021
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Limited onsite opportunities may be available in early August on the campus of UMass Amherst. Stay tuned! UMass Amherst is not a sponsor or co-sponsor of the MTA Summer Conference.

Biographical statements of candidates for Board of Directors

BOARD OF DIRECTORS **DISTRICT 14D**

Am Cecil Fuoti, Framingham

I am a foreign language teacher and have been involved since the beginning of my career. I see what we face and what we must overcome in order to be successful. I am driven to advocate for my students and educators. I hope I can count on your vote!



BOARD OF DIRECTORS **DISTRICT 14D**

Nancy Clougherty, Framingham

Hi! I have been working as an elementary ESL teacher for the Framingham Public Schools for 10 years. I want to join the Board so that I can help the MTA fight for respect for educators and economic and social justice for all educators, students and our communities!



BOARD OF DIRECTORS **DISTRICT 28D**

Nancy Aykanian, Westwood

The MTA must support locals with contracts and grievances while protecting public education by fighting for equitable funding and against privatization, that “wolf at the schoolhouse door.” As director representing 28D, I’ll keep you informed about what’s happening politically at the state level and actively support you and your local.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS **DISTRICT 28D**

Donna M. Grady, Franklin

I’m Donna Grady. I ask for your VOTE for re-election to Board seat 28D. Our response to member and local needs as an Association should be top priority. Respectful, collaborative, two-way communication is what is needed and what I will continue. We are stronger together as one voice. Thank you.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS **DISTRICT 19G**

Daphnee Balan, Somerville

I’m a Somerville paraprofessional and equity specialist. I came to the union through the paraprofessional contract campaign. Through organizing we won a 20 percent increase and job security, something many thought impossible, and transformed our union. I will bring that same passion, energy and focus on justice/equity to the MTA.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS **DISTRICT 19G**

Robert (Bobby) Travers, Jr., Cambridge

I am a committed educator and union leader in Cambridge. Whether it’s at school or a union meeting, I’m focused on what is best for our students and colleagues. On the MTA Board of Directors, I will be a fierce advocate for members of 19G. VOTE Bobby Travers!



Delegates to gather virtually for MTA’s 2021 Annual Meeting

Continued from Page 17

The award recipients are Dr. Julia Koehler, an expert in infectious diseases at Boston Children’s Hospital; Alan Geller, a senior lecturer on social and behavioral sciences at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health; Carlene Pavlos, executive director of the Massachusetts Public Health Association; Dr. Regina LaRocque, a faculty member of the Division of Infectious Diseases at Massachusetts General Hospital; and Jodi Sugerman-Brozan, executive director of the Massachusetts Coalition for

Occupational Safety and Health.

The proposed MTA operating budget of \$49,727,962 for fiscal 2021-2022 will be presented and voted on. The Advisory Budget Committee, the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors have proposed annual dues of \$483 for full-time active members, which represents a \$3 increase from the current year. Under the proposed budget, dues for secretaries, clerks and custodians would be \$290; dues for aides, food service personnel and other Education Support Professionals would be \$145.

In addition, the proposed Public Relations/Organizing Campaign budget 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; aides, food service personnel and other Education Support Professionals would pay \$6.

Read more about this year’s award recipients and watch videos of them at massteacher.org/annualmeeting.

Amendments to bylaws are proposed

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #1, submitted for 2020: Bylaw Article III, Section 1. D. — Membership, Affiliate Membership, Requirements of Membership. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

- (1) All local and county affiliates composed of active members shall include in their Bylaws a provision for unification of the local, the state Association and National Education Association (NEA) memberships;
- (2) All affiliates must remit the prescribed dues (See Article IV, Sections 2F & 3A).
- (3) All local affiliates shall continue to be organized and operated in a manner consistent with the purposes of the local and the state Association.
- (4) Every local and county affiliate shall submit annually, prior to July 1:
 - a list of its officers and their addresses, and
 - a statement setting forth all amendments or changes in its Bylaws or other governing instruments made during the preceding year.
- (5) All local affiliates shall update their current membership lists by December 31 of each year.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

- Add new paragraph (6) at end of section:*
- (6) All local affiliates shall submit to MTA by November 30 each year the contact information for all employees in the bargaining unit in the same electronic form as provided by the employer to the affiliate under state law.**

Impact Statement

Local associations are now entitled, by statute, to a list of contact information for all employees in their bargaining unit. This information is to be supplied in electronic format by the employer. This amendment would require local associations to forward that information, in the same electronic format, to the MTA by November 30 of each year.

Submitted by:

2020 MTA Executive Committee

2020 Bylaws and Rules Committee:

Recommends Adoption (6-0)

2020 Board of Directors:

Recommends Adoption (57-0)

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #2, submitted for 2020: Bylaw Article XI, Section 1. A. — Discipline, Disaffiliation and Recall, Discipline/Disaffiliation by Executive Committee, Cause. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

- A. Cause
- (1) Members and/or affiliates that fail to comply with standards and procedures as set forth in these Bylaws shall be subject to admonishment, censure, suspension, expulsion or disaffiliation as prescribed in these Bylaws.
 - (2) Members who fail to comply with the standards and procedures as set forth in the constitution and Bylaws of the affiliated local may be excluded by the local from membership as long as those documents do not conflict with the MTA Bylaws.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

- A. Cause
- (1) Members and/or affiliates that fail to comply with standards and procedures as set forth in these Bylaws shall be subject to admonishment, censure, suspension, expulsion or disaffiliation as prescribed in these Bylaws.
 - (2) Members and/or affiliates that willfully fail to comply with MTA policies shall be subject to admonishment, censure or suspension.**
 - ~~(3)~~ **(3) Members who fail to comply with the standards and procedures as set forth in the constitution and Bylaws of the affiliated local may be excluded by the local from membership as long as those documents do not conflict with the MTA Bylaws.**

Impact Statement

This amendment would subject those members and affiliates that willfully fail to comply with MTA policies to admonishment, censure, or suspension.

Submitted by:

Kerry Costello, Andover

Continued in following columns

Proposed Bylaw Amendment #2 — continued from previous columns

2020 Bylaws and Rules Committee:
Recommends Rejection (6-0)

2020 Board of Directors:
Recommends Rejection (32-25)

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #3, submitted for 2020: Bylaw Article IV, Section 2., A. — Finance, Dues, Active Members. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Proposed additional language:

Add after item (8):

(9) Local Affiliate Variance of Per-Member Dues At its discretion, a local affiliate may charge individual active members an annual MTA dues rate that differs from those described above; this does not apply to NEA dues. Each local affiliate must remit its total overall dues obligation as assessed.

Impact Statement

This amendment would give locals the flexibility to allocate MTA dues payments among their membership in accordance with a schedule set locally. There would be no change in MTA's revenue, as the total amount of MTA dues owed by each local would not change. NEA dues and the schedule for NEA member payments would not be affected.

Submitted by:

2020 Task Force on Progressive Dues Structure: Anneta Argyles, Professional Staff Union (Co-Chair); Dave Gross, Retired (Co-Chair); Leslie Marsland, University Staff Association; Dan Monahan, Cambridge; Mary Schmitt, Fitchburg

2020 Bylaws and Rules Committee:

Recommends Adoption (6-0)

2020 Board of Directors:

Recommends Adoption (46-10)

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #4, submitted for 2020: Bylaw Article IV, Section 2., A. (4)a. — Finance, Dues, Active Members, Reduction in Force or Unpaid Leave. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

- (4) Reduction in Force or Unpaid Leave
- a. The annual dues of active members laid off due to a reduction in force or who are on a full-time, unpaid leave of absence shall be 15% of the annual dues of full-time active members.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

- (4) Reduction in Force or Unpaid Leave
- a. The annual dues of active members laid off due to a reduction in force or who are on a full-time, unpaid leave of absence **for an entire membership year** shall be 15% of the annual dues of full-time active members.

The annual dues of active members who are on an unpaid leave of absence for 8 weeks or more shall be 75% of the annual dues of full-time active members until such time as the duration of the unpaid leave of absence renders the member's employment equivalent to that of a half-time member, at which point 50% of the annual dues of full-time active members will be assessed.

Impact Statement

This amendment would reduce the amount of MTA dues paid by members who are on unpaid leave for eight weeks or more to 75% of their normal full-time rate. If the member continues on unpaid leave until the point that their yearly employment is equivalent to or less than half of a full contract year, their MTA dues would be reduced to 50% of their normal full-time rate.

Continued on next page

Amendments to bylaws are proposed

Proposed Bylaw Amendment #4 — continued from previous page

Submitted by:
2020 Task Force on Progressive Dues Structure: Anneta Argyres, Professional Staff Union (Co-Chair); Dave Gross, Retired (Co-Chair); Leslie Marsland, University Staff Association; Dan Monahan, Cambridge; Mary Schmitt, Fitchburg

2020 Bylaws and Rules Committee:
Recommends Adoption (6-0)

2020 Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (51-2)

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #5, submitted for 2021: Bylaw Article IV, Section 2. A. (2) — Finance, Dues, Active Members, Part-Time Dues. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

(2) Part-Time Dues

a. The annual dues of an active member, who presents evidence of part-time employment, which is at one-half (1/2) or less than one-half (1/2) of a full-time position in a given school system, shall be 50% of the annual dues of full-time active members.

b. The annual dues of an active member who is employed by the University of Massachusetts Trustees or Board of Higher Education who presents evidence of part-time employment which is less than one-half (1/2) of a full-time position, shall be an amount equal to 20.4% of the annual dues of full-time active members, except that the dues for part-time active members who teach less than three (3) credits per semester shall be 10.2% of the annual dues of full-time active members.

c. The annual dues of an active member who presents evidence that his or her employment was terminated prior to February 1 of a school year in a given school system shall be 50% of the annual dues of full-time active members.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

(2) Part-Time Dues

a. The annual dues of an active member, who presents evidence of part-time employment, which is at one-half (1/2) or less than one-half (1/2) of a full-time position in a given school system, shall be 50% of the annual dues of full-time active members.

b. The annual dues of an active member, who presents evidence of part-time employment, which is more than one-half (1/2) up to eight-tenths (8/10) of a full-time position in a given school system, shall be 75% of the annual dues of full-time active members.

b c. The annual dues of an active member who is employed by the University of Massachusetts Trustees or Board of Higher Education who presents evidence of part-time employment which is less than one-half (1/2) of a full-time position, shall be an amount equal to 20.4% of the annual dues of full-time active members, except that the dues for part-time active members who teach less than three (3) credits per semester shall be 10.2% of the annual dues of full-time active members.

e d. The annual dues of an active member who presents evidence that his or her employment was terminated prior to February 1 of a school year in a given school system shall be 50% of the annual dues of full-time active members.

Impact Statement

Part-time members who are employed between 0.51 and 1.0 FTE currently pay full dues. The proposed amendment would reduce that assessment to 75% of full-time dues for members who are employed above 0.5 FTE and below 0.8 FTE. This may result in a reduction in MTA dues revenue.

Submitted by:
2021 Task Force on Progressive Dues Structure: Anneta Argyres, Professional Staff Union (Co-Chair); Dave Gross, Retired (Co-Chair); Leslie Marsland, University Staff Association; Heike Mertens-Tuplin, Weymouth; Dan Monahan, Cambridge; Mary Schmitt, Fitchburg

2021 Bylaws and Rules Committee:
Recommends Adoption (7-0)

2021 Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (54-0)

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #6, submitted for 2021: Bylaw Article IV, Section 2. A. (8) — Finance, Dues, Active Members, Dues Reduction Based on Employment Date. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

(8) Dues Reduction Based on Employment Date

The annual dues of an active member who presents evidence of employment that starts after November 14, February 1 or April 14 of a school year in a given school system shall be, respectively, 75%, 50% or 25% of the member's annual dues for that school year. This section does not apply to part-time active members employed by the University of Massachusetts Trustees or Board of Higher Education.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

(8) Dues Reduction Based on **Employment Enrollment Date**

The annual dues of ~~an a~~ **a new** active member who ~~presents evidence of employment that starts enrolls for the first time~~ **presents evidence of employment that starts enrolls for the first time** after November 14, February 1 or April 14 of a school year in a given school system shall be ~~respectively, 75%, 50% or 25%, respectively,~~ **respectively, 75%, 50% or 25%, respectively,** of the member's annual dues for that school year. This section does not apply to part-time active members employed by the University of Massachusetts Trustees or Board of Higher Education.

Impact Statement

Dues would be assessed from the date when a new member joins the MTA rather than from the date of initial employment, eliminating the need for a new member to pay in a sum of back dues when first enrolling in the MTA. This may result in a reduction in MTA dues revenue, but it may also encourage reluctant potential members to join up.

Submitted by:

2021 Task Force on Progressive Dues Structure: Anneta Argyres, Professional Staff Union (Co-Chair); Dave Gross, Retired (Co-Chair); Leslie Marsland, University Staff Association; Heike Mertens-Tuplin, Weymouth; Dan Monahan, Cambridge; Mary Schmitt, Fitchburg

2021 Bylaws and Rules Committee:
Recommends Adoption (5-2)

2021 Board of Directors:
Recommends Adoption (47-1)

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #7, submitted for 2021: Bylaw Article IV, Section 2. A. (8) — Finance, Dues, Active Members, Dues Reduction Based on Employment Date. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

(8) Dues Reduction Based on Employment Date

The annual dues of an active member who presents evidence of employment that starts after November 14, February 1 or April 14 of a school year in a given school system shall be, respectively, 75%, 50% or 25% of the member's annual dues for that school year. This section does not apply to part-time active members employed by the University of Massachusetts Trustees or Board of Higher Education.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

(8) Dues Reduction Based on Employment Date

a. The annual dues of a **new preK-12** active member who presents evidence of employment that starts after November 14, February 1 or April 14 of a school year in a given school system shall be, respectively, 75%, 50% or 25% of the member's annual dues for that school year.

b. The annual dues of a new Higher Education active member who presents evidence of employment beginning during the indicated month shall be prorated as indicated:

- July – 100% of the annual dues**
- August – 91.7% of the annual dues**
- September – 83.3% of the annual dues**
- October – 75% of the annual dues**
- November – 66.7% of the annual dues**
- December – 58.3% of the annual dues**
- January – 50% of the annual dues**
- February – 41.7% of the annual dues**
- March – 33.3% of the annual dues**
- April – 25% of the annual dues**
- May – 16.7% of the annual dues**
- June – 8.3% of the annual dues**

This section does not apply to part-time active members

Continued on next page

Amendments to bylaws are proposed

Proposed Bylaw Amendment #7 — continued from previous page

PRESENT TEXT:

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

employed by the University of Massachusetts Trustees or Board of Higher Education.

Impact Statement

Higher education professionals who are hired throughout the school year currently face a potentially hefty dues bill when they enroll in the MTA. This amendment prorates their dues by the month in which they begin employment, reducing the dues assessed in their first year of membership. This may result in a reduction in MTA dues revenue, but it may also encourage reluctant potential members to join up. According to MTA staff, this amendment may result in an approximately \$68,000 drop in dues revenue. It will also result in a substantial increase in the amount of staff time required to manually calculate and process initial-year member dues.

Submitted by:

Sherry Horeanopoulos, Association of Professional Administrators; C.J. O'Donnell, Massachusetts State College Association

2021 Bylaws and Rules Committee:

Recommends Adoption (6-1)

2021 Board of Directors:

Recommends Rejection (35-17)

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #8, submitted for 2021: Bylaw Article VII, Section 6. C. — Nominations, Elections & Terms of Office, Statewide Retired District Director(s), Election. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

C. Election

(1) The only candidates shall be those nominated in accordance with Section 6B above.

(2) A maximum of two Statewide Retired District Director(s) shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates by the delegates representing the Statewide Retired District.

If the number of candidates is equal to the number of seats to be filled, the election shall be waived and the candidate(s) declared elected.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

C. Election

(1) The only candidates shall be those nominated in accordance with Section 6B above.

(2) A maximum of two Statewide Retired District Director(s) shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates by the delegates representing the Statewide Retired District. **The candidate(s) receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected.**

If the number of candidates is equal to the number of seats to be filled, the election shall be waived and the candidate(s) declared elected.

Impact Statement

The current language is silent on the number of votes required to be elected (majority vs. plurality). The proposed amendment would stipulate that the Statewide Retired District Directors shall be elected based on the highest number of votes received. This amendment will make the election of the Statewide Retired District Directors consistent with the election of the other Board members.

Submitted by:

MTA Credentials and Ballot Committee: Deb Mousley, Co-Chair, Methuen; Pam Rivers, Co-Chair, Agawam; John Gunning, Stoughton; Paula Higgins, Malden; Kelli Malke, Chicopee; Kathleen O'Donoghue, Medford; Jasmine Ortiz, MCCC; Andrew Wendt, Leicester Paraprofessional Association

2021 Bylaws and Rules Committee:

Recommends Adoption (7-0)

2021 Board of Directors:

Recommends Adoption (52-0)

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #9, submitted for 2021: Bylaw Article VII, Section 3. D. (4) — Nominations, Elections & Terms of Office, Regional, Statewide Retired and At-Large Executive Committee Members, Election. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

D. Election

(4) One At-Large ESP Executive Committee member shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of Delegates by all delegates. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. In the event that a majority is lacking on the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held between the two highest vote-getters.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

D. Election

(4) One At-Large ESP Executive Committee member shall be elected by **majority vote of the delegates** at the Annual Meeting of Delegates ~~by all delegates~~. ~~The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected.~~ In the event that a majority is lacking on the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held between the two highest vote-getters.

Impact Statement

The current language is contradictory in that it refers to both plurality and majority. The proposed amendment would remove the contradiction and stipulate that the At-Large ESP Executive Committee member shall be elected based on a majority vote. This amendment will make the election of the At-Large ESP Executive Committee member consistent with the election of the other At-Large Executive Committee members.

Submitted by:

MTA Credentials and Ballot Committee: Deb Mousley, Co-Chair, Methuen; Pam Rivers, Co-Chair, Agawam; John Gunning, Stoughton; Paula Higgins, Malden; Kelli Malke, Chicopee; Kathleen O'Donoghue, Medford; Jasmine Ortiz, MCCC; Andrew Wendt, Leicester Paraprofessional Association

2021 Bylaws and Rules Committee:

Recommends Adoption (6-0)

2021 Board of Directors:

Recommends Adoption (55-0)

Proposed Bylaw Amendment #10 is on the next page

Candidates for MTA Retired Members Committee

Four vacancies for two-year terms commencing July 1

The election will be held at the 2021 Annual Meeting of Delegates. The delegates representing the Statewide Retired District will vote in the Retired Members Committee election. Candidates are listed in ballot order. Their biographical statements were printed in the March/April edition of the *MTA Reporter*.

Phyllis Neufeld

Seth Evans

Beverly Saccocia

Sally Sennott

Richard Liston

Dale Melcher

Rafael Moure-Eraso

Amendments to standing rules are proposed

The following is Proposed Amendment #1, submitted for 2020, to the Standing Rules: Rule 6, Order of Business and Debate, Section 15. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Multicolored sets of cards shall be available at each microphone. Each card shall have the microphone number on it. These cards shall be used by the delegates to gain recognition from the Presiding Officer to speak from the floor. Speakers for and against shall be alternated. Instructions for the use of the cards shall be printed on the reverse side of the colored cards.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Multicolored sets of cards shall be available at each microphone. Each card shall have the microphone number on it. These cards shall be used by the delegates to gain recognition from the Presiding Officer to speak from the floor. ~~Speakers for and against shall be alternated.~~

When debate begins, yellow cards will be recognized in order, up to a maximum of five (5) yellow cards, followed by rotation of red/green/yellow or green/red/yellow, and so on. If at any time there are no yellow cards, the standard green/red or red/green progression will continue until more yellow cards are raised, at which time the yellow/green/red or yellow/red/green order will resume.

Instructions for the use of the cards shall be printed on the reverse side of the colored cards.

Impact Statement

Only the first five yellow cards will be given priority, after which yellow cards will go into rotation with debate.

Submitted by:

Sue Doherty, Needham

2020 Bylaws and Rules Committee:

Recommends Adoption (6-0)

2020 Board of Directors:

Recommends Adoption (42-12)

The following is Proposed Amendment #2, submitted for 2020, to the Standing Rules: Rule 7, Resolutions, Section 1. The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

Section 1. Proposed resolutions to be acted upon at a Meeting of Delegates shall be submitted in writing, signed by the maker, to the Resolutions Committee in one of the following ways: Proposals submitted prior to 5 p.m. on the second Friday in January shall be acted upon by the Resolutions Committee, and if approved by a majority vote of the committee, shall be recommended to the Meeting(s) of Delegates, after having been presented to the March meeting of the MTA Board of Directors for its recommendation. If disapproved by the Resolutions Committee, the maker shall be notified prior to 5 p.m. on February 15.

Proposals submitted after 5 p.m. on the second Friday in January and prior to the conclusion of the first business session of the Meeting(s) of Delegates, shall be acted upon by the Resolutions Committee, and, if approved by a majority vote of the committee, shall be recommended to the meeting of the delegates. If disapproved by the Resolutions Committee, the maker shall be notified at the conclusion of the Resolutions Committee meeting.

Any proposed resolution not approved by the Resolutions Committee may be resubmitted to the committee for consideration in the following year.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Section 1. Proposed resolutions to be acted upon at a Meeting of Delegates shall be submitted in writing, signed by the maker, to the Resolutions Committee ~~in one of the following ways: Proposals submitted prior to 5 p.m. on the second Friday in January. Any proposed resolution shall be acted upon by the Resolutions Committee, and if approved by a majority vote of the Resolutions Committee; shall be recommended to the Meeting(s) of Delegates, after having been presented to the March meeting of the MTA Board of Directors for its recommendation. If disapproved by the Resolutions Committee, the maker shall be notified prior to 5 p.m. on March 1-February 15.~~

~~Proposals submitted after 5 p.m. on the second Friday in January and prior to the conclusion of the first business session of the Meeting(s) of Delegates, shall be acted upon by the Resolutions Committee, and, if approved by a majority vote of the committee, shall be recommended to the meeting of the delegates. If disapproved by the Resolutions Committee, the maker shall be notified at the conclusion of the Resolutions Committee meeting.~~

Any proposed resolution not approved by the Resolutions Committee may be resubmitted to the committee for consideration in the following year.

Impact Statement

Proposed changes to MTA resolutions must be received by 5 p.m. on the second Friday in January for consideration at that year's Annual Meeting.

Continued in following columns

Proposed Standing Rule Amendment #2 — continued from previous columns

Submitted by:

2020 MTA Resolutions Committee: Matt Bach, Andover (Chair); Michelle Corbin, Massachusetts State College Association; Brenda Dunn, Springfield; Thomas Estabrook, UMass Lowell (GRACE); Brian Fitzgerald, Wareham; Sonia Fortin, Sudbury; Amy Morin, Lexington; Yahaira Rodriguez, Worcester

2020 Bylaws and Rules Committee:

Recommends Adoption (6-0)

2020 Board of Directors:

Recommends Adoption (49-7)

Proposed amendment to bylaws

The following is Proposed Bylaw Amendment #10, submitted for 2021: Bylaw Article I, Name — The present text is in the left column. Proposed revisions are indicated by bold text and strikethroughs in the right column.

PRESENT TEXT:

The name of this organization shall be the Massachusetts Teachers Association, hereinafter referred to as the Association.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

The name of this organization shall be the Massachusetts ~~Teachers~~ **Teachers Educators'** Association, hereinafter referred to as the Association.

Impact Statement

This amendment would change the name of our organization to the Massachusetts Educators' Association. The impact of this amendment on the MTA and its membership cannot be overstated. It will profoundly affect the identity of this organization and whom it represents. We have a 175-year history of democracy and inclusion and, on one hand, this action epitomizes everything we stand for in terms of representing every person who involves themselves in education. On the other hand, it will result in the expenditure of a great deal of work, time, and money in order to resolve legal, financial, and public relations issues that will include such things as:

- 1) Complete rebranding and trademarking our new corporate identity.
- 2) Legally changing our name on all corporate, legal, financial, contract and tax documents.
- 3) Revision of all internal documents including the Standing Rules, Bylaws, Policies and Resolutions.
- 4) Overseeing changes in contractual relationships between this organization and every organization we do business with, including approximately 400 locals and chapters.

All of these things can be accomplished, but they will require careful thought and deliberate action on a meticulously planned timetable.

Submitted by:

Yahaira Rodriguez, Educational Association of Worcester

2021 Bylaws and Rules Committee:

Recommends Adoption (7-0)

2021 Board of Directors:

Takes No Position (38-21)

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.

They also may be submitted by the end of business on Friday at the Annual Meeting of Delegates. In addition, the committee may propose resolutions.

All resolutions submitted are considered by the committee, and those submitted in time are also brought before the Board of Directors. To become an official position of the MTA, a resolution must be adopted by the delegates at the Annual Meeting.

The proposed revisions printed in this edition of *MTA Today* were recommended by the Resolutions Committee in 2020. The Board voted on March

21, 2020, to recommend passage by the delegates. They were not brought before the Annual Meeting in 2020 because the COVID-19 pandemic led to a shortened convention.

In 2021, no new resolutions were submitted by the January deadline, so the approved 2020 resolutions are being brought forward for consideration at the 2021 Annual Meeting. Please note that 20 out of the 25 resolutions were submitted by the MTA's LGBTQ Committee in an effort to make sure the language of these principles includes all genders and gender identities.

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

All current resolutions are posted on the MTA website. To review the resolutions and bylaws, please visit [massteacher.org/resolutions](https://www.massteacher.org/resolutions).

Proposed amended Resolution A-3 Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is entrusted with providing the supervision and direction for Massachusetts public schools. The MTA also believes it is crucial that individuals who are appointed demonstrate a record of commitment to public education and not have a vested interest in organizations that would benefit from the dismantling of public education.

The MTA further believes that appointees to the constitution of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education must reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of our public school students and include other historically marginalized groups. (99, 09, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution B-9 Health Awareness and Education

The Massachusetts Teachers Association recognizes that sensitive and comprehensive health education can be a positive force in promoting physical, mental and social health. The MTA urges school systems to assume an important role in developing and implementing courses in this area. The MTA believes that school systems should establish and support quality comprehensive health programs, including sex education programs that are medically accurate and gender-affirming and that include information on birth control and family planning, parenting skills, prenatal care, communicable and infectious diseases, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS prevention, incest and sexual abuse, the effects of substance abuse during pregnancy, and problems associated with and resulting from preteen and teenage pregnancies; as well as other programs that include information on violence and mental health. The MTA further recommends the continued development and implementation of programs designed to cultivate respect for the human mind and body and the full range of sexualities and gender expressions. Teachers must be qualified and licensed to teach health and must be legally protected from censorship and lawsuits. (69, 75, 79, 81, 85, 87, 94, 99, 09, 17, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution B-29 Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that special efforts must be made by school districts to meet the needs of adolescent parents to live productive lives in our society. The MTA recommends that special programs be implemented to include:

- Flexible scheduling and attendance policies to assist pregnant adolescents and adolescent parents in completing their education.
- Adequate guidance in continuing education and productive employment.
- Promotion of sound health principles regarding nutrition, substance abuse, exercise, family planning and parenting skills.

(d) Establishment of child-care services.

The MTA further believes that adolescent ~~mothers and fathers~~ parents should not be discriminated against or denied equal educational opportunities. (89, 02, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution C-2 Education for Homeless Children

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that education must be provided for all children, including those without a permanent legal address. The MTA advocates the right of all students to an education, adequate housing and health care. The MTA recognizes the need for cooperation among school and community groups in meeting the needs of homeless children, including the need for a stable education environment. The MTA recognizes the disproportionate rate of homelessness among LGBTQ+ children, children of color and low-income children. The MTA seeks and supports legislation to ensure equal educational opportunities for all children. The MTA believes that the state must fully finance the cost of implementing these programs. (89, 94, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution C-3 Equal Opportunity in Extracurricular Programs

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that at all educational levels each student must have an equal opportunity to participate in extracurricular programs. The MTA urges that school committees and boards of trustees provide funding for equity in facilities, equipment and staff for ~~both male and female students regardless of gender, gender identity, or expression.~~

The MTA further believes that students who participate in intercollegiate athletics should receive compensation. In cases where the financial impact of the student's participation has a notable impact on the revenue of the institution, compensation may extend beyond alleviation of tuition and fees. Students receiving such compensation should have the right to unionize under relevant labor laws. The MTA urges intercollegiate athletic associations to alter their rules accordingly. (79, 01, 19, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution C-4 Benefits of Recess

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that elementary school children benefit from having recess. Recess is an unstructured time that allows children to play and to release energy and stress. Daily recess provides children the opportunity to develop and improve social skills and it provides them a break from the academic rigors placed on them. The MTA recommends daily recess of at least 15 20 minutes for children in grades K-5. (05, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution C-7 School Facilities: Design, Construction and Function

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that school facilities must

Continued on next page

Amendments to resolutions are recommended

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be conducive to teaching and learning. The physical environment must allow for a variety of needs, including the number of students, physical characteristics of students, changes in teaching methods, presentation of instruction, and an increased use of school facilities. The MTA also believes that all school facilities must be well constructed, safe, energy-efficient, aesthetically pleasing, accessible, functional and adaptable to persons with disabilities. The MTA supports building designs that prioritize the safety, dignity and privacy of students and student athletes of all genders. The MTA supports ecologically conservative facility designs including heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. The MTA believes that the community, parents/guardians and education employees should play an advisory role in designing these facilities. The MTA also believes that stable and sufficient funding must be provided for the design, construction, maintenance and operation of the school facility. These principles should apply equally to preK-12 schools and buildings used by public higher education institutions. (11, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution C-11 Disciplinary Policies and Restorative Practices

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that students learn best in a safe and peaceful environment. Safe and peaceful learning environments need to be supported by consistent and effective disciplinary procedures in combination with preventive and restorative practices built through strong community relationships.

The MTA believes that frequent disruptions can only be effectively addressed by comprehensive approaches that dedicate sufficient resources for the development of systemwide solutions involving multiple stakeholders. These solutions must balance protecting the learning environment from disruption, protecting students and staff from risks posed by students who have a history of violent or threatening behavior, and protecting the rights of all students to dignity and fair treatment. This should include proper notification to school staff of the risks posed by students with a demonstrated history of violent or threatening behavior.

The MTA opposes disproportionately relying on punitive and zero-tolerance measures that contribute to the “school-to-prison pipeline” in which children are funneled out of public schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Zero-tolerance policies that criminalize minor infractions tend to have an adverse impact on low-income children, students with disabilities and students of color. Policies that criminalize or excessively penalize students for minor infractions have disparate impacts on students of color, low-income students, students with disabilities, transgender, gender nonconforming and other LGBTQ+ students. (76, 77, 78, 81, 89, 99, 08, 18, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution C-18 Foster Care

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that children are entitled to live in a caring, non-abusive and nurturing environment. The MTA urges that foster care placement be based on the needs of the child as determined by those professionals working with that child. The MTA further believes that no individual should be prohibited from becoming a foster parent based on age, color, gender, marital status, nationality, race, religion or sexual orientation race, ethnicity, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, immigration status, age, physical and mental ability, marital status or social class. The MTA opposes any policy or legislation that would threaten quality foster care to children by mandating such prohibitions. (91, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution C-19 Rights of the Child

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that children in all societies should enjoy basic fundamental human rights and educational opportunities. The

MTA urges all its members and affiliates to adhere to and expand on the principles outlined in the United Nations’ Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

The right:

- to affection, love and understanding.
- to adequate nutrition and medical care.
- to free education.
- to full opportunity for play and recreation.
- to a name and nationality.
- to special care if handicapped for differences in physical and mental ability.
- to be among the first to receive relief in times of disaster.
- to be a useful valued member of society and to develop individual abilities.
- to be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood fellowship.
- to enjoy these rights regardless of race, ethnicity, color, gender, gender

identity and expression, sexuality, religion, national or social origin or social class. (79, 80, 86, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution C-20 Quality Health Care for Children

The Massachusetts Teachers Association firmly believes that all children have the right to quality health care regardless of their parents’ employment status or income level. The MTA advocates universal access to quality comprehensive health care for all children of the Commonwealth to promote their optimal health and well-being. The MTA recognizes the importance of gender- and sexuality-affirming medical care and culturally proficient medical providers to address the specific health needs of marginalized student populations. The MTA will work in partnership with parents, health care professionals and members of statewide and community organizations in providing health education, community service programs and public health initiatives. (99, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution C-23 Child Labor

The Massachusetts Teachers Association recognizes that many of our students feel obligated to neglect schoolwork for wage labor and, therefore, urges employers and school officials to fulfill their obligations diligently under Massachusetts labor laws.

Furthermore, the MTA deplors the use of child labor anywhere in the world and abhors forcing any child to spend his/her childhood working work for wages rather than exercising the right to attend school. (00, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution D-9 Mentor and Induction Programs

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that professional peer support systems, such as mentor and induction programs, must be utilized solely for the development of professional expertise.

The MTA believes that the planning, implementation and evaluation of such programs must be cooperatively developed and negotiated with the local association.

Qualifications of mentor licensed educators teachers and Education Support Professionals and the duties and responsibilities of all parties must be clearly defined and uniformly administered.

The criteria and process for selection of mentor licensed educators teachers and ESPs must be negotiated with the local association. Participation must be voluntary. The state and local school committees and boards of trustees also have the obligation to provide hold-harmless protection.

The MTA believes that mentor licensed educators teachers and ESPs must be compensated for all additional responsibilities and that the program must be fully funded by the state.

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Amendments to resolutions are recommended

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The MTA also believes that mentor licensed educators teachers and ESPs must ~~have reduced teaching loads and must~~ be given release time during the regular school day to fulfill their mentor-related activities.

The MTA further believes that the formative assistance provided by such programs must be independent of any summative evaluation. Any documentation or discussion that results from the mentoring relationship must be confidential and must not be included in the participant's personnel files. (89, 02, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution D-14 Teacher Licensure of Appointment of Coaches

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that the essence of interscholastic sports is to promote the growth, health, character and participation of all students. The MTA supports the concept that all athletic coaches who are responsible for this facet of education shall be teachers educators licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, or Education Support Professionals, and that they shall be subject to the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement in the system in which they are employed as coaches. (84, 09, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution D-17 National Licensure

The Massachusetts Teachers Association supports voluntary professional national licensure by which the profession grants recognition to an individual who has met qualifications specified by the profession. The MTA supports the establishment of appropriate assessment procedures by which individuals demonstrate exemplary practice in pedagogy and in subject matter areas, supports the establishment of appropriate standards for the issuance of licenses to all individuals who meet these standards, and supports national professional organizations, such as the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), which is composed of a majority of practicing public school teachers educators and which maintains a roster of those who have been certified/licensed. The MTA further supports the periodic evaluation of such licensure procedures to ascertain whether discrimination bias is perpetuated based on cultural, economic, gender, racial or age, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, immigration status, age, disability or social class by the requirements for licensure. (01, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution F-6 Compensation for Substitutes

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that substitutes perform a vital function in the continuity of daily education, are essential to the maintenance of daily operations, and should be compensated fairly and treated with respect.

~~The MTA further believes that substitutes in long-term assignments should receive additional pay reflecting the added work intrinsic in such a role.~~

The MTA further encourages the use of experienced, qualified educators as both per-diem and long-term substitutes. Compensation should be commensurate with the substitute's responsibility and experience and with the duration of the assignment. (18, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution F-24 Right to Privacy and Access

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

(a) The right of an employee to access ~~his or her~~ their own personnel records.

(b) The right to be notified of any addition to an employee's personnel records prior to placement of those materials in the personnel records.

(c) The right to respond to any record, and to challenge inaccurate, distorted or misleading records.

(d) The right to provide or withhold consent on the release of such records.

(e) The right to be notified of these rights by educational institutions.

(f) The right to be guaranteed the existence of only one personnel file per employee.

(g) The right to confidentiality of medical records.

(h) The right to refuse any type of test for drugs.

(i) The right to refuse any type of test for HIV/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)/sexually-transmitted disease.

(j) The right to be free from fingerprinting as a condition of employment.

(k) The right to refuse any type of polygraph or lie detector test.

(l) The right to bargain over the employer's use of any electronic surveillance technologies, including computer monitoring software. (88, 89, 90, 09, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution F-29 Equitable Support for Collective Bargaining

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that solidarity among all members of a bargaining unit is integral to supporting and defending public educators through collective bargaining. ~~The MTA supports requiring~~ The MTA strongly encourages all members of a bargaining unit to become dues-paying members of that unit ~~or to pay a fair share fee~~ to sustain the benefits that all members receive under the collective bargaining agreement. The MTA opposes any measure that undermines this solidarity, ~~such as so-called right-to-work legislation.~~ (16, 17, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution F-31 Pay Equity/Comparable Worth

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that all educational personnel should be paid on the basis of the requirements, skills and worth of their jobs and that factors such as ~~gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity~~ race, ethnicity, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, immigration status, age, disability physical and mental ability, marital status or economic condition ~~social class~~ should never play a role in determining salary. The MTA encourages efforts by collective bargaining units to gain salary levels appropriate to the skills, value, responsibility and requirements of their jobs. The MTA further believes that all efforts should be made to attain accurate and unbiased forms of job evaluation and to raise the pay of those jobs that are presently undervalued. (95, 99, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution F-32 Diversity

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that the diversity of our society enhances the lives of all individuals. The similarities and differences among people in regard to race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, immigration status, age, physical and mental ability, size, occupation, marital or parental status or ~~economic status~~ social class form the fabric of our society. The MTA also believes that education should raise the awareness and understanding of the qualities that individuals and members of ~~a group~~ diverse groups possess. The MTA urges that inaccuracies and biases be identified and corrected. The MTA further believes that basic education should reflect our multicultural society. In addition, the MTA believes that the contributions of ~~diverse ethnic~~ historically marginalized groups should be recognized and become a part of the established curriculum. (00, 07, 11, 21)

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Amendments to resolutions are recommended

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Proposed amended Resolution F-34 Right to a Civil Marriage

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes in the right to civil marriage for lesbians and gay men people regardless of gender, gender identity or expression. The MTA opposes any efforts at the local, state or national level to deny or restrict this right. (05, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution I-3 Hate-Motivated Violence

The Massachusetts Teachers Association believes that hate-motivated violence, including but not limited to physical and verbal violence, as well as digital and technology-based violence, against individuals and groups because of their race, ethnicity, color, national origin, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, immigration status, age, disability, physical and mental ability, size, marital status or social class economic condition, is unconscionable. The MTA also believes that the threat or promotion of such violence is similarly reprehensible.

The MTA opposes any act that infringes upon the civil and human rights of any person. The MTA supports all efforts to make schools sanctuaries for vulnerable groups, in addition to the creation of communities that support those efforts. The MTA further believes the federal, state and local governments and community groups must oppose and eliminate hate-motivated violence and that current events and/or economic conditions should not diminish such opposition. (07, 17, 21)

Proposed amended Resolution I-6 The MTA, an Equal Opportunity Employer

The Massachusetts Teachers Association, an equal opportunity employer,

shall continue its practice of recruiting, hiring, training and retaining minority persons from historically marginalized groups through the implementation of its affirmative action practices plan. The MTA shall accelerate its affirmative action program for women and minorities. (95, 21)

Proposed New I-8 after I-7, and renumber the remainder of section I

Proposed new Resolution I-8 Advancement of Transgender and Non-Binary Educators

The Massachusetts Teachers Association supports gender diversity and affirming policies and practices toward transgender, non-binary and agender people in education in recruiting, hiring, job postings, salary and wage determinations, and promotion procedures, and it endorses equal opportunity employer practices. (21)

Proposed amended Resolution I-20 Respect for and Support of All Families

The Massachusetts Teachers Association recognizes that the composition of families in our society has changed. The MTA believes that the long-term, committed, stable relationships of families are of fundamental importance to children. The MTA encourages, supports and acknowledges the inclusion of all types of families and family structures in our schools, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, creed or sexual orientation/gender color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, immigration status, age, physical and mental ability, marital status or social class. (99, 21)



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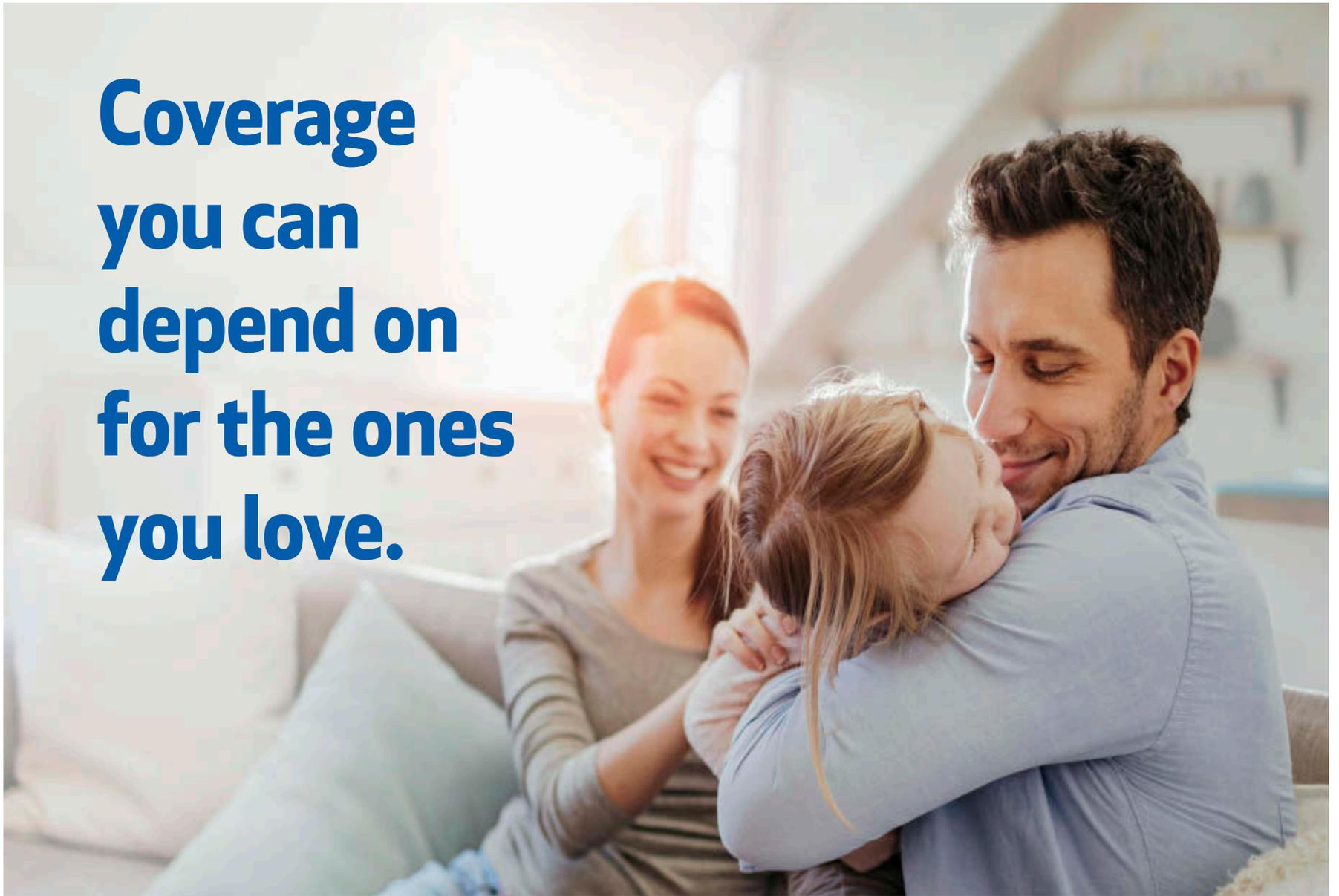
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DT240421

Obituaries

Maureen C. Angelini, 88, of Leominster. Taught science in the Leominster Public Schools. Jan. 23.

Priscilla J. Belcher, 92, of Braintree. Was an elementary and special education teacher for the Hanover Public Schools for 25 years. Taught at the Cedar and Center elementary schools. Jan. 21.

Lois H. Brown, 94, of Lenox and Worcester. Taught art and special education in West Hartford, Connecticut, as well as in Attleboro and Lenox, where she taught at the Lenox Dale, Cameron and Morris schools. Feb. 13.

Ronald A. Cerasoli, 82, of Grafton. Taught chemistry at Westborough High School for more than 30 years and served as head of the Chemistry Department. Jan. 20.

Margaret Conrad, 97, of Westwood. Was a geography teacher at Dedham Junior High School for many years. Jan. 29.

Marie T. Creedon, 95, of Milford. Was a middle school social studies educator in the Milford Public Schools. Feb. 7.

Thomas G. Fratto Sr., 70, of Reading. Taught math at Cambridge Rindge and Latin for more than 30 years before retiring in 2007. He was also an adjunct professor at UMass Boston for 40 years. Feb. 16.

Thomas A. Greland Jr., 84, of Marshfield. Taught business classes at Silver Lake Regional High School in Kingston. He also coached high school softball and taught driver education, retiring in 1998. Feb. 3.

Eleanor Hammond, 96, of Bourne. Taught Latin in Northfield and Greenfield and then taught Latin and history at Middleborough High School before becoming a school librarian. Feb. 2.

Jacqueline M. Hobday, 85, of Taunton. Was an elementary teacher for the Taunton Public Schools for 36 years, retiring in 2004. Feb. 7.

Morton I. Kaufman, 92, of Sharon. Was a teacher and then an elementary school principal in the Sharon Public Schools for more than 30 years. Feb. 3.

Marcia H. MacMillan, 80, of Braintree. Taught special education for many years in the Brockton Public Schools. Jan. 29.

Mary C. O'Rourke, 103, of Agawam. Was a middle school teacher in the Agawam Public Schools for more than 25 years. Jan. 9.

John A. Pacheco, 73, of Plymouth. Taught history in the Plymouth Public Schools before becoming a government relations specialist for the MTA. He joined

the staff of the NEA in 1991 and served as the national political director before retiring. March 3.

Edna Payne, 82, of Natick. Was an educator in the Ashland Public Schools for many years. Jan. 13.

Daniel M. Punched, 91, of Rockland. Was a science teacher at the Broad Meadows Middle School in Quincy for 25 years. He served as head of the school's Science Department. Jan. 6.

Elena Swain, 87, of Abington. Worked for many years as an educator in the Brockton Public Schools, specializing in reading development. Feb. 1.

Eloine D. Vieira, 82, of New Bedford. Was a business teacher at Apponequet Regional High School in Lakeville. She was a professor emerita and department chair at Bristol Community College for many years, and she had served as president of the Massachusetts Business Educators Association. Feb. 5.

Patricia A. Weisgerber, 69, of Weymouth, formerly of Randolph. Was an elementary and special education teacher in the Weymouth Public Schools for 24 years. Jan. 3.

Helen M. Woods, 94, of North Andover, formerly of Wakefield and Melrose. Was a Spanish educator for the Saugus Public Schools. Feb. 2.



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Classifieds

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TO THE MOON AND BACK — A Massachusetts-based nonprofit dedicated to substance-exposed children and their families recently teamed with Meg Donnelly for a reading of their book “Sam the Superhero and His Super Life.” Share with your first- and second-grade classrooms at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEGcYmuj8tQ>.

LOOKING FOR FOURTH- AND FIFTH-GRADE EDUCATORS to test the Amazing Me Program in their classrooms during April and/or May and/or June. Amazing Me is a curriculum to build self-esteem and body confidence and reduce appearance-based bullying and teasing.

Teachers are compensated for participating. Email AmazingMeProgram@gmail.com.

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REGIONAL RETIREMENT CONSULTATIONS AVAILABLE

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

All consultations are held virtually and by appointment only during the hours listed.

WORCESTER — Edward Nelson: first Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Central Office, 12 East Worcester St., second floor, Worcester; 508.791.2121, or at home, 774.239.7823.

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

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

FITCHBURG — Karen Melanson: second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Fitchburg Teachers Association office, 245 River St., Fitchburg. Call 978.660.4359.

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

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

LYNNFIELD — Peter Mili: third Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Northeast Office, 50 Salem St., Building B, Lynnfield; call 617.460.6589. Barbara Callaghan: fourth Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Northeast Office, 50 Salem St., Building B, Lynnfield; call 978.660.4171.

PITTSFIELD — Ward F. Johnson: second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Berkshire Office, 188 East St., Pittsfield; 413.499.0257, or at home, 413.443.1722.

RAYNHAM — Raymond Thompson: third Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Southeast Office, 756 Orchard St., third floor, Raynham. Call Thompson at 617.347.4425.

HIGHER EDUCATION AT-LARGE — Edward McCourt, 781.325.2553.

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



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Coordinated action helps build union power

By Scott McLennan

The MTA Bargaining Summit, held virtually in late February, emphasized how local associations can strengthen their positions in contract negotiations by organizing beyond their own membership.

“The other side is already coordinating, so we better be coordinating, too,” said Justin Fox-Bailey, who leads a multi-union bargaining coalition for educators in Washington state.

Fox-Bailey joined the summit to share his experiences as similar coalitions take shape among the MTA’s preK-12 and higher education locals.

“It’s not about ceding power, but more about consensus and making a choice to work together to gain power,” he said. “Collective pressure raises the standards for everyone.”

That kind of pressure is building throughout Massachusetts.

The summit highlighted victories resulting from collaboration and important campaigns that have gained traction because of the work that MTA members are doing with allies in communities and at the state level.

MTA President Merrie Najimy said that the bargaining summits began as a way to involve more members in actual contract negotiations and to promote the value of open bargaining.

“That was the start of democratizing bargaining,” Najimy said. “We want to keep that work moving forward, and that means working with each other in coordinated bargaining across the state.”

The 2021 summit, held on Feb. 27, was the MTA’s sixth such event.

Speakers addressed four types of collaboration: among different units within a single local, among different locals that share an employer, among locals with comparable employers, and among statewide stakeholders.

Kinga Borondy and Dayshawn Simmons, members of the Somerville Teachers Association, described how classroom teachers in one unit supported the local’s Education Support Professionals unit in its fight for a living wage.

2021 BARGAINING SUMMIT

400 Locals, 1 MTA: Strength Through Solidarity



Simmons explained that in the past, the two bargaining units had existed in silos, which did not reflect the true relationship between classroom teachers and ESPs.

“I know how essential ESPs are to my classroom,” Simmons said.

ESP launched a community outreach campaign that addressed the lack of respect they faced and the low wages they had to live on, Borondy said. The participation of classroom teachers in the campaign signaled to the employer that picking a fight with one bargaining unit was picking a fight with all 800 members of the STA.

“We shifted power to our side and were able to change the narrative,” Borondy said. That led to a significant boost in the starting pay for ESPs in Somerville.

Adam St. Jean, a member of the faculty union at UMass Lowell, recounted how the university administration tried to “divide and conquer” workers based on which union they belonged to.

“By forming a strong coalition, we demonstrated that we refused to be divided,” he said.

After a rolling rally in May 2020 that involved several unions and went from UMass Lowell to the home of Chancellor Jacquie Moloney, the university rescinded some of the furloughs it had intended to impose two months earlier, at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

UMass unions have formed a coalition that spans all of the system’s campuses in order to more effectively advocate on health and safety issues, which workers continue to face because of the prevalence of the coronavirus in the Commonwealth.

“We started making joint demands backed by joint actions,” St. Jean said.

Sudbury educator Sonia Fortin highlighted a statewide campaign to win support for the MTA PreK-12 ESP Bill of Rights.

“Eighty-four percent of the ESPs make less than \$30,000 a year,” said Fortin, who was named the 2020 MTA ESP of the Year. “It took me nine years to earn a living wage. ESPs statewide are organizing around issues of pay and professional recognition.”

MTA Vice President Max Page pointed to the issues of racial justice and climate education, as well as an initiative to demand a nurse and librarian in every school, as ripe for statewide collaborative action.

Locals represented at the summit met in regional breakout rooms, sowing the seeds for collaborative work. MTA locals have been stitching together educator action networks within their regions, using them to gain strength at their individual bargaining tables.

“It begins with sharing information between locals,” said Gardner Education Association Co-President Debra Leone, whose union is part of the Central Massachusetts Educator Action Network.

THE MTA Advantage

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

These two programs mean cash for buyers and sellers

Spring is traditionally the busiest season for homebuying in Massachusetts, with more hospitable weather, flowers in bloom, grass sprouting and houses once again looking their best. Spring is also the right time to sell, as demand rises among buyers looking to secure a home well before summer ends.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, homebuying has been brisk, as it was before the coronavirus hit. Since 2019, prices have risen almost 12 percent statewide¹. Buyers have been switching from smaller, more urban apartments and condos to houses where they gain living space, a higher quality of life, or even a better home office setup. And those who have been fortunate enough to retain their jobs amid the current economic challenges are taking advantage of historically low mortgage rates.

Even more pronounced than the homebuying surge has been the refinancing boom. Many fully employed education professionals have been taking advantage of low interest rates, a result of the pandemic, allowing them to refinance into rates as low as 2 percent. The simple calculation that homeowners should be doing is determining whether they can drop their current interest rate a full percentage point, which makes the refinance closing costs worthwhile.

Other homeowners have taken advantage of low rates to take cash out of their homes for major expenses, including renovations, higher education costs, debt payoffs and vacation home investments. As the demand for homeownership has outstripped supply, home equity across the country has been reported to be at its highest ever.



Whether you are in the market for a new home or are looking to leverage your current home's value for a lower monthly payment or to take cash out, this is a great time to initiate a transaction. Low mortgage rates often more than offset any residual expenses of home buying or refinancing, especially when working with a mortgage lender that might be offering certain discounts.

MTA Benefits has endorsed and fully vetted a local and direct mortgage lender offering exactly these services. **Mid-Island Mortgage**, which has been

in business since 1959 and has an office in Woburn, offers MTA members exclusively low rates and incredible mortgage discounts on lender fees and closing costs, up to \$3,000 in total.

Learn more at www.mtabenefits.com/mortgage. To get a quick quote or have a consultation, call Mid-Island Mortgage Vice President Teresa Balian at 617.665.7770 or email mtabenefits@mortgagecorp.com.

That's not the only way you can save when buying or selling a house, however. MTA members can take advantage of a real estate savings program that isn't available to the typical consumer. MTA Benefits and **Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Commonwealth Real Estate** have partnered to allow MTA members to earn cash back on the sale or purchase of a home. For example, if you sell a \$500,000 home, you will earn \$2,500 after closing, or 20 percent of the service fee collected. You'll be partnered with an experienced real estate professional who will help you navigate one of life's monumental transactions in a competitive marketplace. For more information on this exclusive benefit, visit www.mtabenefits.com/bhhs.

¹ <http://realestate.boston.com/buying/2020/12/22/experts-predictions-us-mass-housing-2021/>

Are your children in college or applying soon? Your Parent PLUS loans may be forgiven.

When they receive the response to their application for federal student aid, many parents of college-bound students are aghast when they discover what they're expected to contribute. It looks like a typo — or a series of typos! So many zeroes. So much money. The loan many parents turn to is the federal Parent PLUS loan, a way to bridge the gap between what your son or daughter can borrow and what the college actually costs. At first glance, that gap can look a lot like the Grand Canyon.

(continued on page 2)



MTA Benefits' travel deals are now better than ever

There's light at the end of the tunnel. As we see the relaxation of emergency measures in the coming months, there's hope that we'll soon emerge from our long COVID-19 hibernation.

We're all pandemic-weary souls to some degree, but we're getting ready to go out and see new things. Last year, 72 percent of Americans¹ put off their summer vacations. The result of this pent-up demand is a predicted 37.5 percent increase in travel spending this year — and another 14 percent increase in 2022². **If you're thinking about planning a getaway this year, now is the time to beat the rush!**



Don't forget that MTA members are eligible for savings that include access to discounted hotels, car rentals, destination activities and more.

When it comes to booking a hotel, for example, you'll save on everything from five-star resorts to economy lodging. And many rooms come with free cancellation privileges right up until a few days before you arrive — so you don't have to worry if your plans change or if you just change your mind.

MTA members get cash back on hotels

We recently launched our new cash-back platform, giving members additional savings whenever they book a stay at one of 900,000 hotels worldwide.

You've never heard of getting cash back on a hotel booking?

This is a first in the hotel industry, and MTA Benefits is the first to offer this exclusive benefit. Our benefit partner Access[®] is among the largest travel wholesalers in the world. Our decade-long relationship with Access allows us to get the best prices and pass along those discounts in the form of cash back. Check it out for yourself. You'll usually find lower prices on the MTAB website than you'll find at sites such as Expedia[®], Kayak[®] and Hotels.com[®].

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Are your children in college or applying soon? Your Parent PLUS loans may be forgiven.

(continued from page 1)

Fortunately for MTA members, repaying only a portion of those PLUS loans before the remaining balance is forgiven is a possibility. That can have a significant impact on the way we approach borrowing.

The Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, or PSLF, has been fraught with problems since the first borrowers became eligible for forgiveness in 2017. The U.S. Department of Education under Betsy DeVos seemed to slow down the application review process intentionally. Many loan servicers had improperly or recklessly advised borrowers and enrolled their loans in repayment plans, rendering the loans ineligible for forgiveness after 120 payments.

The federal government has now created a temporary relief opportunity for people who were improperly advised. Approval rates are still low, and myths and misinformation abound on the internet about what it takes to qualify. So it comes as no surprise that very few MTA parents who are carrying or about to take out Parent PLUS loans are aware of the forgiveness option. But fear not. It can be done!

MTA Benefits presents free webinars on student loan management, and a good deal of the content is devoted to Parent PLUS loan forgiveness — including how to qualify, how to place the loans in the right repayment plan, how to incorporate the PSLF option into the college application process, and potentially how to incorporate it into your retirement planning. The Biden administration is also reviewing opportunities to improve the PSLF program, and ongoing updates are provided in our webinars. Why not join us? Visit www.mtabenefits.com/webinars for upcoming dates.

TWO KEY UPDATES

- 1** As many of you know, the federal student loan payment holiday has been extended to Sept. 30. If you're a PSLF candidate, you shouldn't make voluntary payments at this time. Prepare your budget with an eye toward resuming payments in October.
- 2** Though it's still uncertain which of the student loan relief options being discussed by the Biden administration will emerge, this is probably not the time to pursue a private loan consolidation, since any relief granted will only apply to *federal* student loans.

For more information, visit www.cambridge-credit.org/mta.



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

Tip Sheet

All discounts listed in the Tip Sheet can be found at mtabenefits.com.

Save on outdoor fun

After a year unlike any other, warm weather and the ability to enjoy time outdoors can't come soon enough. As always, MTA Benefits' discount vendors provide great savings and have tons of fun waiting for you.

Adventurers, rejoice! If the thrill of zipping along the treetops of New England sounds like the perfect activity, there are several discounts for you. Western Massachusetts is a zip line lover's dream. With **Zoar Outdoor Canopy Tours** and **Berkshire East Zip Line Canopy Tours**, both in Charlemont, and **Catamount Aerial Adventure Park** in South Egremont, you could spend an entire weekend atop the trees. Zoar Outdoor offers a \$10 discount for MTA members and their immediate family members on weekdays in May, June, September and October, or a \$5 discount at any other time. Both Berkshire East and Catamount offer a \$10 discount. **Boundless Adventures** in Berlin offers both zip lines and rope bridges, and you'll save 50 percent on two full-price tickets. You might prefer an adventure on the water rather than in the trees. If so, **Moxie Outdoor Adventures** in Maine provides members with a 10 percent discount on whitewater rafting trips on the Kennebec River.



Zoos

For a more laid-back activity, a trip to the zoo is ideal for a spring or summer day. **Southwick's Zoo** in Mendon will be bringing back its Drive-Thru ZooFari in addition to traditional walk-through admission. Southwick's offers a \$2 discount for MTA members and their families. Zoo New England, comprising **Franklin Park Zoo** in Boston and **Stone Zoo** in Stoneham, offers members a \$30 membership discount or a 50 percent discount on regular admission.

Rediscover Boston with discounts on many different types of sightseeing tours. **Boston by Foot** and **PhotoWalks** provide a variety of walking tours throughout the city. Boston by Foot will take you on an art deco tour through the Back Bay or through one of Boston's "hidden" neighborhoods, Bay Village. If children from 6 to 12 years old are part of your group, try the Boston by Little Feet tour. Save \$2 on a regular-priced adult ticket (limited to two). PhotoWalks will take you on a tour — and teach you how

to compose stunning pictures, whether of Beacon Hill's 19th-century Victorian charm or the North End's restaurants and cafes. Members save \$5 on each adult ticket. **Urban AdvenTours** offers a unique tour of the city — by bicycle! Choose the Emerald Necklace tour for a trip through Boston's most famous green spaces. This includes Boston Common and the Public Garden, the Rose Kennedy Greenway and the Arnold Arboretum. Or choose the all-encompassing City View Tour, which takes you through the North End, the Charles River Esplanade, Fenway Park, Copley Square, Long Wharf, and many other places. MTA members and family save 10 percent in the bike shop as well as on tours and rentals.



Theme Parks

Theme parks are a summer tradition for many people — and fortunately, there are many in the area. Even better is the fact that they love to support MTA members by offering great discounts. Head to New Hampshire for some fun at **Candia Springs Adventure Park**, **Canobie Lake Park**, **Story Land** and **Water Country**. If you'd like to make a vacation of it, Crayola Experience and Hersheypark, both located in Pennsylvania, also offer MTA member discounts. In Massachusetts, old favorites such as **Edaville USA** and **Six Flags** continue to support members with special rates. Visit www.mtabenefits.com for up-to-date discount and purchasing information.

Sometimes, low-key fun in the backyard or at a local park is all we really need. **Boing! Toy Shop** in Jamaica Plain can help you stock up on all the supplies you need to keep the children busy. From bubbles and kites to balance bikes and pogo sticks, you'll find everything you need to fill those endless summer days. And if you're heading to the beach or the pool, don't forget sand molds, pool floats and swim goggles.

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

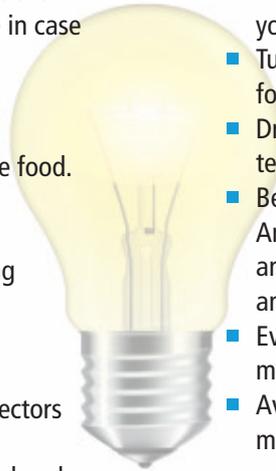
Don't be in the dark about power outages

A message from Liberty Mutual Insurance

Power outages are inconvenient and become increasingly problematic the longer they last. Staying prepared will keep you safe and comfortable in case of an emergency.

Before you get the flashlights out

- Keeping coolers and extra ice in your home will help preserve food.
- Store nonperishable food and bottled water in case of a prolonged outage.
- Make sure you have easily accessible flashlights with working batteries. Keep spare batteries just in case.
- A battery-powered radio will keep you updated on weather announcements or warnings.
- Check the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors regularly to make sure they are functioning properly.
- Keep a seven-day supply of any required medications on hand and have a first aid kit readily available.
- Keep your car's gas tank at least half full at all times.



- If the outage extends beyond a day, prepare a cooler with ice for your perishable goods.
- Turn off and unplug all electrical equipment and appliances except for one light so you will know when the power is back on.
- Dress in layers to maintain your body temperature if the indoor temperature begins to drop.
- Be cautious when using any alternative source of heat or electricity. And to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning, never use a generator or any gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal-burning device inside any partially or fully enclosed area.
- Evacuate your home and go outside immediately if your carbon monoxide or smoke alarm goes off.
- Avoid driving, if possible, as traffic lights might be out and roads may be jammed.

When the lights come back on

- Avoid all electric power lines, as touching a live wire could be fatal. Report any downed lines to the appropriate authorities.
- Throw away food from your fridge if it has a temperature of more than 40 degrees Fahrenheit or has a bad odor or color.

It's all about protecting what's important to you. To learn more about Liberty Mutual Auto and Home Insurance or to get a free, no-obligation quote, call 1.800.290.4872 or visit libertymutual.com/mtabenefits.

When the lights go out

- Keeping your fridge and freezer doors closed can prolong the shelf life of perishable goods up to four hours in the fridge and 48 hours in the freezer.
- Keep food covered in a dry, cool spot at all times to prevent bacterial growth.

MTA Benefits' travel deals are now better than ever

(continued from page 2)

Many factors influence hotel rates, so sometimes you'll find a killer rate with only a small amount of cash back. But at other times, you'll find a great rate and cash-back rewards that will take your breath away. For those who consistently book hotels using this program, the savings over time can be substantial.



Here's how it works:

- 1 Log in or Register:** Go to mtabenefits.accessdevelopment.com and click HOTELS.
- 2 Search:** Choose your destination and travel dates. You'll find hotels listed at the public price, the discounted price for MTA members and with the cash-back amount you'll earn.
- 3 Select:** Choose the hotel you want based on the brand, amenities, location, or even the amount of cash back available. Save a little or a lot; it's up to you.
- 4 Book:** Pay for your stay, then watch for the cash-back amount to be credited back to your credit or debit card after your stay.

Remember that your travel discounts include savings of up to 50 percent on some of the world's best brands for car rentals, entertainment, activities, flights, cruises and more. You'll also find local deals, with savings at more than 60,000 popular restaurants, 200,000+ shopping locations and 50,000+ recreation and entertainment opportunities across the nation.

So, what are you waiting for? Get the most for your vacation dollars. To learn more, visit mtabenefits.accessdevelopment.com or call 800.336.0990.

¹ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelgoldstein/2020/09/03/72-of-americans-skipped-summer-vacation-this-year-will-2021-pick-up/?sh=601c98fc3bd4>

² <https://www.jtbusabusinesstravel.com/2021-global-travel-forecast-what-impact-will-the-pandemic-make/>

All program and pricing information was current at the time of publication (April 2021) and is subject to change without notice. To find out what may have changed, please call MTA Benefits at 800.336.0990.