



MTA Today

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A SUMMER OF ACTION





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MTA Today

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This edition also includes a section listing the MTA's candidate recommendations for the Massachusetts primary election

MTA'S MISSION STATEMENT

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

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ON THE COVER

MTA Summer Member Organizers, top, show their solidarity for building union power as they prepare to hit the streets for conversations about issues such as passing the Fair Share Amendment in November. Below, Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey, the MTA-recommended candidate for governor, accepts a Fair Share T-shirt during a visit with members in Worcester as Education Support Professional Saul Ramos hands her an NEA ESP pin. An article about MTA candidate recommendations appears on Page 24, and this edition of *MTA Today* features a four-page 2022



Primary Election Guide. Also among the highlights in this issue: new MTA President Max Page and Vice President Deb McCarthy discuss their backgrounds and their hopes for the future, on Page 3; a story about the MTA Summer Conference, on Page 5; an update on the Fair Share Amendment campaign, on Page 6; an in-depth look at the contract gains made by locals, on Page 7; an article about the MTA Juneteenth celebration, on Page 8; and an update on ever-stronger efforts by ESPs to improve salaries and working conditions, on Page 9.

Cover photos by Jonathan Ng and Scott McLennan
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Quote-Unquote

"Higher ed has become a world where if your folks can write a check for tuition, you're going to graduate in pretty good shape. But if your folks can't do that, then you are caught in debt hell."

— U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, speaking during a forum on student debt held Aug. 10 at Boston Teachers Union Hall

A Q&A with the MTA's new leadership

MTA President Max Page and Vice President Deb McCarthy took office on July 15 following their election at the Annual Meeting of Delegates in May. Page previously served two terms as the association's vice president and is a former president of the Massachusetts Society of Professors. He has been a professor of architecture at UMass Amherst since 2001 and is also a former director of its Master of Design in Historic Preservation program. Before her election, McCarthy worked for 25 years as a fifth-grade teacher in Hull. She has served in a variety of leadership roles in her local union, the Hull Teachers Association, as well as on the MTA Board and as an NEA Director. Both Page and McCarthy were raised in families that were active in public advocacy and education unions, and both say their early experiences helped inspire their own activism. They were interviewed by MTA Editor/Writer Mary MacDonald.

Q: What inspired you to become active in your local union?

Page: My father was one of the founding members of the Massachusetts Society of Professors, which is the faculty and librarian union — my union at UMass Amherst. I grew up around this idea of unions and higher education. My mother also was a teacher and then a public school principal. After college, I worked for two years in New York City's homeless shelter system and got a closer view of the city's stark inequalities. After graduate school, I taught in Georgia and was involved in the American Association of University Professors, which is not a union but was the closest thing we had in Georgia. My wife, Eve Weinbaum, is a union organizer, and she teaches in the Labor Center at UMass Amherst. In coming to UMass, which is the largest unionized worksite in New England, I was a member of the MSP. Within a year or so, I was asked to join the board. All of us have activist energies and a desire to make change. The MSP seemed like a great place to do that, partly because there were great union activists who really wanted to transform that local to be an advocate for public higher education and to fight for the rights of adjunct faculty, who were increasingly exploited.

McCarthy: My first day on the job as a fifth-grade teacher, the Hull Teachers Association was demonstrating before the start of the school year. The members were working without a contract. They were having a stand-out at the entrance to the town, with signs saying "Support the HTA — Settle our Contract Now," and I joined them. That night at the dinner table, my husband questioned whether participating in that action was in my best interest. And I remember the conversation like it was yesterday: that it would be in my best interest to stand for my values and for what I thought was right. That if I was going to be the educator my students deserved, I needed to stand up and speak up when



Photo by Jonathan Ng

MTA President Max Page and Vice President Deb McCarthy have deep roots in union activism.

it's the right thing to do. And then I participated in several other job actions over the next couple of months. I'm not saying I was without fear. But I needed to push through my fear because of my students. These were the educators who had taught me. They had been my own children's educators. My mother, who was a Hull teacher, was on the line. There was this feeling of camaraderie and unity that felt special. The following year I was asked to be a building representative. And I've been an elected union leader in some capacity ever since.

Q: What do you consider the greatest opportunity for the MTA in the next few years?

Page: I feel like we have built momentum in the past number of years to truly take on that role as the voice of public education and fight for the kind of public education system our communities deserve — and our students deserve and our members deserve. I see great opportunity starting with a victory around the Fair Share Amendment. We have a chance to really upend the austerity narrative. By winning this and gaining a significant fund dedicated forever to public education and transportation, we start to upend that notion that we don't have the money to do the things we want, like pay living wages to Education Support Professionals, to pay adjuncts fairly and provide health care and pension benefits, to have enough counselors and mental health staff and educators in classes — all of the things that we're told we can't do in one of the wealthiest states in one of the wealthiest nations in the world.

McCarthy: I think the greatest opportunity for our union is as a collective to grow the power of our rank-and-file members through open bargaining, through shared governance and leadership models, and through shared solidarity. We must fight back against the false austerity narrative that has underfunded and undermined the true potential of our public schools and colleges. We have to fight against those who would try to eliminate educator autonomy, diminish educator professionalism, and deny our right to withhold our labor. We must maximize our opportunities for direct actions that create the schools all students deserve.

Q: Describe some successes you had as a union leader. What contributed to them?

Page: Probably the most significant was the passage of the *Student Opportunity Act*. We worked on it for close to two years. It was the most significant reinvestment in public education in Massachusetts and the most progressive, helping those districts that had the least. Communities like Fall River, New Bedford, Worcester and Springfield are getting the lion's share, as they deserve. That's rolling out over seven years. It was a powerful grassroots movement where we talked to members in 35 community forums. The Legislature had punted it year after year. And by the MTA's involvement, we were able to get it done.

McCarthy: The biggest successes were the two cycles of open bargaining and the bylaw change that

Please turn to **MTA's new leaders**/Page 19

A time of exciting possibilities for our union

I had the great privilege a few weeks ago to be invited to serve as a silent representative at a Malden Education Association bargaining session with the School Committee. For those of you who don't know, that means sitting in as a fellow



Max Page
MTA President

member who is not on the official bargaining team but observes, offers ideas to the union side, and shares the latest information back to the wider membership. I was joined by 20 other educators — mostly MEA members but also fellow MTA members from Cambridge, Brookline and UMass Boston. We marched in together and sat in chairs

in a semicircle around the MEA's five-member team. The MEA representatives sat down at a table directly opposite the School Committee members, who sat behind an identical table.

The School Committee members looked around at the unexpected guests. They were visibly squirming. At this moment, our members — the workers — were equal to the employer. The School Committee members were there, simply put, not because they wanted to be but because they had to be.

It was a powerful reminder of who we are: a network of nearly 400 locals in almost every city and town in Massachusetts, bound together into the largest union in Massachusetts, dedicated to advancing the working and learning conditions in our public schools and colleges and building a more just Commonwealth.

We don't do that by sending hopeful wish lists or deferentially requesting an audience with the all-powerful superintendent. No, we express our expert knowledge about what it takes to educate young people through collective bargaining and through organized, assertive advocacy at the local and statewide levels — always as a union of professional education workers.

I am so proud to serve as your president — and to do so with Deb McCarthy as our vice president. I am honored to amplify your voices at the state level and support your daily work to secure the best public schools and colleges in the nation — not just for the wealthy few but for all of our young people.

Massachusetts is in many ways defined by its localism. We love the community each of us is a part of — all 351 of them — and our 29 public campuses. That localism builds connection and pride. But the flip side of localism is the challenge of building the regional and statewide bonds that are necessary for us as a union to exercise our power.

We have much to be proud of in Massachusetts. But we also have a long way to go to achieve that goal.

The next few months and the coming year offer us tantalizing possibilities that we have the power and obligation to seize.

First comes the Fair Share Amendment, which will bring \$2 billion every single year to our public schools, colleges, and roads and bridges. As I write this, our MTA Summer Member Organizers, Senate District Coordinators and volunteers have knocked on more than 50,000 doors and made more than 379,000 calls to fellow educators and the general public.

As we head into the final months of this campaign, we all must do our part. I ask every single one of you to join a canvass or a phone bank, contacting your fellow members as well as other residents of our communities. When you speak, people listen. Indeed, they trust you on education matters more than they do anyone else.

Then comes the campaign to make sure that public education gets a Fair Share of the Fair Share Amendment revenues. After we celebrate on Nov. 8, we have to make clear to the next governor and the new Legislature our top priorities for our students, our schools, and our colleges and universities: more educators in classrooms, living wages for Education Support Professionals, justice for adjunct faculty members, green and healthy buildings, and high-quality, debt-free public higher education throughout Massachusetts.

And when we send more money to our schools, we want those schools to be places for educating the whole child — for nurturing the minds, bodies and hearts of our young people. MTA members educate not to have students pass high-stakes tests but to build thinking, caring, active adults who will form healthy families and strengthen their communities.

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System — MCAS — contributes nothing to that vision of our schools. We have to redouble our efforts to undo the decades of damage it has done.

I have found that some of the most exciting organizing in our union is happening among our ESP members, who are demanding and winning, in solidarity with all educators in our schools, true living wages. We are far from securing the basic justice of fair pay for a full week's work, but dozens of our locals have made it a priority at the bargaining table. We must build on that momentum in the coming year.

Massachusetts is in many ways defined by its localism. We love the community each of us is a part of — all 351 of them — and our 29 public campuses. That localism builds connection and pride. But the flip side of localism is the challenge of building the regional and statewide bonds that are necessary for us as a union to exercise our power.

So much can only be won at the state level — the end of MCAS, sufficient school and college funding, and laws and policies that shape everything from health care to recess to curriculum. Yet at the same time, we can only win at the state level if we build stronger locals. We will do both!

One way we knit ourselves together as the MTA is through communication. Deb and I will be sending our "MTA Union News" to you every Tuesday so you can reliably know about the latest MTA events, resources and ways to support fellow union members.

More importantly, we will do our best to be with you all over the state, knocking on doors with you to win the passage of the Fair Share Amendment, supporting your bargaining campaigns, and standing up for you and your fellow members whenever it's needed. Invite us to support your work as educators and unionists. We look forward to joining you.

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.

Get involved!
Volunteer to serve on an MTA committee

MTA committees are vital to the work and mission of our association. Serving on an MTA committee is an ideal way to get involved with your union at the state level. If you are interested in volunteering to serve, we would like to hear from you!

→ Visit massteacher.org/committees to learn more



Photo by Jonathan Ng

MTA members gathered recently at UMass Amherst to enjoy the Summer Conference. The event was held in person for the first time since 2019.

In-person event energizes members

By Scott McLennan

The MTA's first in-person Summer Conference since 2019 was already feeling like a special event as educators started gathering on July 31 at UMass Amherst. It became truly electrified later that day as members listened to a discussion among next-wave labor organizers who successfully brought union campaigns to Amazon and Starbucks.

MTA President Max Page noted that having members together again in person was important for solidarity — especially with the union facing goals such as winning the Fair Share Amendment in November, weakening the grip of high-stakes standardized testing on public schools, securing the pay and benefits that all educators deserve, and moving Massachusetts toward fully funded public colleges and universities that students can attend debt-free.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the MTA to cancel its annual Summer Conference in 2020 and 2021. The return to an in-person event included heightened health and safety precautions.

Attendance was limited to members who had signed up for multi-day workshop tracks that focused on effective bargaining campaigns, leadership development, union skills and training for new presidents.

The opening session featured Chris Smalls, president of the Amazon Labor Union, and Kyla Clay and Tyler Daguerre, organizers with Starbucks Workers United.

But the energy was high — beginning with the keynote opening session.

The event featured Chris Smalls, president of the Amazon Labor Union, which organized employees at a distribution facility on Staten Island, New York, and Kyla Clay and Tyler Daguerre, organizers with Starbucks Workers United, which has encouraged baristas to unionize at more than a dozen Massachusetts stores and is supporting an ongoing strike in Brookline. All used their stories to inspire educators facing their own battles to improve both their working conditions and students' learning conditions.

The Amazon Labor Union found success when workers cared for and supported each other during the initial years of the pandemic, making sure people were safe and healthy even as company managers pushed them to work harder, Smalls told the crowd.

“It was a culture Amazon had never seen before,” Smalls said. “We defeated the odds because we cared about one another.”

The conversation turned into a bit of a celebration for workers who had just organized a union at the Trader Joe's store in nearby Hadley, some of whom attended the opening session.

Two employees who participated in the campaign were singled out in the audience and received a standing ovation.

The union organizers for Amazon and Starbucks workers emphasized the importance of educators and the teaching of labor history in public schools. All of them said they had little understanding about unions or the U.S. labor movement when their organizing efforts began.

Audience questions highlighted comparisons between larger and more established unions, such as the 177-year-old MTA, and newer unions organized by different kinds of workers.

Clay said that workers at all levels need to be included in decision-making.

“Older and larger unions need to let workers call the shots and not be afraid to try new thinking and listen to people who are on the ground,” she said.

Summer Conference activities were designed to encourage the several hundred MTA members on

Please turn to **In-person**/Page 22

Fair Share campaign advances

By Mary MacDonald

The Fair Share Amendment will bring a measure of economic justice to Massachusetts communities while providing critically needed resources for public education and transportation.

That is the strongly held view of educators and other supporters who have spent the past several months encouraging fellow voters to approve the measure, which will be Question 1 on the statewide ballot this fall.

In recent weeks, groups of MTA Summer Member Organizers have fanned out across the Commonwealth, knocking on doors and speaking to taxpayers about the amendment. Other educators have made phone calls, answered questions, and talked to family members and friends about why the FSA would be good for the state's future.

The challenge, they say, is not so much to change people's minds as it is to introduce them to the proposal and help them understand its impact.

Question 1, whose fate will be decided on Nov. 8, asks voters to approve an additional tax of four percentage points on annual taxable income over \$1 million. That means it will affect only the very rich, despite the fears being stoked by right-wing groups and other opponents. The vast majority of residents will not pay a penny more in taxes.

As things stand, Massachusetts has a sizable gap in the share of state and local taxes paid by the highest-income families and the lowest-income families — one that favors those with the greatest wealth. Families earning less than \$22,500 a year pay 10 percent of their income in taxes, while the top-income families pay 6.8 percent, according to research by the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center.

The Fair Share Amendment would help correct that imbalance.

Tracey Pratt, a 22-year educator, is among the MTA canvassers who have been visiting homes in Somerville this summer. Pratt, who teaches health and is a member of the Cambridge Education Association, said that passing the ballot question will make the tax system fairer for everyone.

In mid-May, Pratt spoke briefly at the campaign kickoff in front of a Somerville school.

"Schools need support," Pratt said. "We need new buildings. We need repairs to buildings. We need to make sure that every school and every building has proper ventilation and is safe for students. We need to make sure that the students have the proper staff. We need to give them what they need — and to give them what they need costs money."

Others point to the necessity of providing high-quality public colleges and universities without leaving students burdened by massive amounts of debt. Such arguments resonate among working families, the organizers note.



Tracey Pratt, a member of the Cambridge Education Association, canvassed in a Somerville neighborhood in mid-May. So far this year, canvassers have knocked on more than 50,000 doors and placed over 379,000 calls as part of the Fair Share Amendment campaign.

Photo by Jonathan Ng

Cara Berg Powers worked in Worcester this summer as one of the MTA's lead member organizers.

She and 15 fellow organizers have been committed and resourceful in spreading the word. They're hitting the highest voter turnout areas of Worcester, as well as some surrounding communities.

"We have an awesome crew," Berg Powers said. "We are doing primarily doors, but also phones. We have teams going out every day Monday through Friday — and then weekend shifts if that makes sense for them."

As of late July, the Worcester contingent had reached more than 7,500 doorsteps, and organizers had held more than 1,000 in-person conversations with prospective voters.

The individual one-on-one contact, whether face-to-face or over the phone, makes a difference because organizers can respond to any questions that voters may have.

"The Fair Share Amendment is incredibly popular once people understand it," Berg Powers said. "The bigger issue is identifying folks and making sure enough people know this is coming up on the ballot: 'Vote Yes on 1.' It's more of an information campaign."

Elected officials have joined the summer organizers in signing on to champion the amendment. They include U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren and Edward Markey.

In mid-May, Markey spoke at the Somerville launch that Pratt also attended. The amendment represents "fundamental fairness" for Massachusetts, Markey said.

"We are one of the wealthiest states in the United States," he said. "All we're asking for is for a millionaire who makes \$20,000 a week to pay 4 cents more on what they make over \$1 million. That is a small price to ask the wealthiest in Massachusetts to pay."

Why does Massachusetts need this?

"We can see all of the gaps that still exist, all the kids who still are getting left behind," Markey said.

"We know there is a digital divide. We know the pandemic exposed how many kids did not have the internet at home. It made it very clear we already had a crisis in terms of brown, Black and immigrant kids in our state not getting access to the educational tools that they need."

Warren, who spoke at a campaign event in Malden in late June, said that explaining the amendment to voters is straightforward.

"We're not going to win this through a multi-zillion-dollar campaign," she said. "We're going to win this one face-to-face."

And how the new revenue will be spent is also startlingly simple, Warren told the crowd. "Two things: We're going to put that money into educating our children and we're going to put it into transportation. Because we understand in Massachusetts that to build a future for all of us, we have to have an education system that works for all of us. And understand this about transportation. Transportation is opportunity. It's how you get to work. It's how you get to a home that you can afford."

The amendment is a chance to end the austerity narrative — the "sorry, there's just no money" argument — that has been offered again and again in Massachusetts, according to MTA President Max Page.

"This is one of the wealthiest states in the nation, a place where the wealthy have gotten much wealthier because of what makes Massachusetts a great place for business — a well-educated workforce," Page said.

"When we take away that false story of austerity, we can get what we need for public schools and colleges and win fair pay for adjunct faculty, debt-free public higher education, more counselors and behavioral specialists, living wages for Education Support Professionals, and sustainable, healthy buildings."

For more information on the campaign, please visit massteacher.org/fairshare.

Locals show strength and resolve as members demand fair contracts

By Scott McLennan

A wave of determination swept through educators' unions this spring, with locals taking bold actions — including going on strike in one community — to win significant gains in their contract fights.

Brookline, Tewksbury, Belmont, Somerville and Cambridge are among the districts where local unions did extensive organizing and took escalating actions to break through stalemates in bargaining with their respective school committees.

They also learned from each other's experiences.

While Brookline educators ultimately engaged in a strike, several other locals indicated they were prepared to do the same, which prodded districts to reach agreements that met union demands rather than face labor disruptions.

Contract terms prioritized by local unions included increased wages for their lowest-paid members and specific requirements for preparation and collaboration time. The local unions got these terms in writing rather than leaving elements of professional consensus to chance or management discretion.

Several recently settled agreements addressed issues of racial equity and plans to diversify the school workforce, as well as higher pay for Education Support Professionals. They also included measures that will help protect work-life balance and improve students' social and emotional well-being.

Union members were resolved to get meaningful improvements in working conditions, salaries and benefits.

“What I heard on the picket lines was how members were feeling unprecedented empowerment and a sense of self-respect,” said Jessica Wender-Shubow, president of the Brookline Educators Union.

The BEU called a strike on May 16 following a weekend of round-the-clock bargaining sessions. Before getting to that point, the BEU conducted a rapid assessment of its membership, with members holding hundreds of one-on-one conversations. Members who were identified as being the most willing to take bold steps helped organize escalating actions that included standouts and rallies directed at rebutting the Brookline School Committee's intransigent positions on salaries, workload and racial justice.

By the time the union called its strike authorization vote, support was nearly unanimous. Almost all of the members walked the picket lines.

“The School Committee became our best organizer,” Wender-Shubow said. “When they created ‘poison pills’ in their contract proposals and threatened to impose conditions we could never accept, that’s when people got radicalized.”

Cambridge Education Association President Dan Monahan painted a similar picture. When that



Photo by Jonathan Ng

Members of the Brookline Educators Union marched near the high school during their strike in May. They also set up picket lines in front of other schools as they fought to win a fair contract.

Several recently settled agreements addressed issues of racial equity and plans to diversify the school workforce, as well as higher pay for Education Support Professionals. They also included measures that will help protect work-life balance and improve students' social and emotional well-being.

district's lawyers — rather than elected School Committee members — led management bargaining, the concerns of educators were dismissed or ignored.

The CEA responded with public standouts and other forms of community outreach. The bargaining dynamic shifted, Monahan said, once that pressure was applied. The union was able to win key provisions on pay and parental leave, as well as increasing its influence on labor-management committees.

In an adjacent community, the Somerville Educators Union effectively rallied citywide support for a bargaining platform that prioritized students' mental health and well-being, as well as living wages for the district's paraprofessionals.

Over the past three years, according to SEU President Rami Bridge, union-led efforts have increased pay for paraprofessionals by almost 70 percent.

“Our union has shown that when educators stand up and demand changes to an unsustainable system

that pays poverty wages to paraprofessionals, fails to staff schools appropriately, and burns educators out, we can organize and create positive changes for ourselves, our schools, and our community,” Bridge said after the local ratified a contract over which it was prepared to strike.

“We are thrilled to have found our district and local elected leadership willing to meet our demands with compassion, understanding, and increased resources,” he added. “This is a powerful first step in building a sustainable school system that values, rather than exploits, educators.”

Belmont educators, who were working without a contract, rejected the district School Committee's claims that the town could not afford fair cost-of-living adjustments. The Belmont Education Association successfully made its case through rallies and communication blitzes to elected officials that detailed how failing to adequately pay all Belmont educators competitive wages would undermine the quality of the town's public schools and their ability to attract and retain the best employees. The BEA also made a persuasive argument that the town could afford a fair contract.

A rally on June 1 drew not only hundreds of BEA members but also Town Meeting members, students and community supporters who amplified the educators' arguments for a fair settlement. With the local poised to take a strike authorization vote, the district and union reached an agreement that will extend through the 2024-2025 school year. It

Please turn to **Educators**/Page 8

MTA members celebrate Juneteenth

By Jonathan Ng

More than 100 educators, family members and guests gathered in Worcester on Juneteenth to celebrate the holiday and reflect on the historical meaning of the event.

Now a federal holiday, Juneteenth marks the day when Union troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865 — two months after the surrender of Confederate forces in the Civil War — and told Black people who had been enslaved that they were free.

The MTA Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee hosted the celebration, which was held at Quinsigamond Community College. EMAC Chair Candace Shivers, an associate professor of sociology and human services at Mount Wachusett Community College, welcomed members to the event.

It's important that educators celebrate Juneteenth, Shivers noted.

"As educators, we are responsible to make sure the truth about our history is told," she said. "Since the MTA is a social justice union, we need to make sure all of our members know and can learn about Juneteenth."

Attendees enjoyed hamburgers and hot dogs, among other fare, and danced under a tent to music provided by a deejay. There was also a range of fun activities for youngsters — including soccer, board games, and arts and crafts.

Because Juneteenth was observed this year on Father's Day, the event included a tribute to the father figures who have played a pivotal role in children's lives.

Sha-Asia Medina, director of The Village in Worcester, was a featured guest speaker and provided



Photo by Jonathan Ng

Educators got together on June 19 for an outdoor event at Quinsigamond Community College.

an overview of Juneteenth history. Medina urged those present to learn more about Juneteenth and about the fight for Black liberation.

Then-MTA Vice President Max Page, who was soon to become union president, described Juneteenth as "a day of celebration, education and agitation."

"This is about continuing to change the world," Page told the crowd. "On that day — June 19, 1865 — it was not a completion. That was a day of beginning of aspiration."

Page thanked EMAC members for hosting the event and said the MTA will continue to hold Juneteenth celebrations.

Outgoing MTA President Merrie Najimy said it was joyful to be with fellow MTA educators committed to racial and social justice.

The fight for racial equity is ongoing, Najimy said.

"Today is a really special day because it's a day to celebrate liberation," Najimy said. "We have to understand liberation isn't something that somebody gives to us. Freedom is a constant struggle."

Educators 'are showing up for each other's fights' and winning public support

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provides adequate raises, preserves existing health insurance cost-splits and pays ESPs for prep time.

Educators supporting each other across Massachusetts locals was a consistent factor in the campaigns for fair contracts.

The Tewksbury Teachers Association was among the first to publicly declare its readiness to strike in the spring. It ultimately turned a strike-authorization vote into one for contract ratification after the School Committee moved to meet educators' demands.

Hearing from Tewksbury union leaders inspired Brookline members to act, Wender-Shubow said. Leaders from Belmont and Somerville likewise attended BEU rallies, drawing inspiration for their fight. And a contingent from Brookline made its

presence felt at that large June 1 rally in Belmont.

MTA President Max Page and Vice President Deb McCarthy both attended the Belmont rally, which was held shortly after their election, as they prepared to take office.

"What we saw in Belmont and in Brookline — and in all of the other locals that are organizing for the working conditions that educators deserve and that will benefit students — is the continued growth of union power and solidarity. Members are showing up for each other's fights, winning public support for educators' goals, and demonstrating their willingness to strike," Page said. "Working as hard as educators did through the pandemic and then being treated with indifference and disrespect by school committee members and their hired lawyers simply will not be tolerated."



Photo by Scott McLennan

Cambridge Education Association members lined the streets outside of a School Committee meeting to show solidarity in their contract fight.

Action by ESPs brings contract wins

By Mary MacDonald

A years-long effort to increase salaries and benefits for Education Support Professionals paid off in several communities this spring and summer thanks to stepped-up action by MTA members.

The gains came in small and large locals across the state, as unions built on previous contracts and reached out to engage their communities.

In Somerville, the local secured a \$35,000 minimum salary for paraprofessionals, an increase of almost 32 percent in the first year. The new contract also includes 12 weeks of paid parental leave for all educators, including for non-birthing parents.

In its last contract, the Somerville Educators Union secured a \$25,000 starting salary for paraprofessionals and job security after four years, according to President Rami Bridge. This time, the priority was to move from a nominal percentage gain to a larger salary. The union followed an open process for negotiations that allowed members to follow what was happening.

And members were unafraid to take direct action — at one point in 2020 occupying a School Committee meeting to push for what the local was demanding. The SEU also distributed flyers when committee members who had said they would support union priorities later failed to follow through.

Bridge's best advice for other locals? "To know your worth and not back off of it," he said. "These educators are worth this."

The Wakefield Education Association also stuck to its priorities. The 400-member union, which represents about 100 paraprofessionals, secured a 20 percent raise for all members over a three-year period, including 15.5 percent this year, said association President Erin Chrisos.

The new contract also includes a tripling of longevity pay, which starts after eight years, and input into professional development choices for ESPs.

Brockton paraprofessionals are continuing to bargain this month for a living wage, having made a strong stance earlier in the summer to reach out to the community and gather support for their goals.

In recent months, the Brockton Education Support Professionals Association has held a standout, coordinated an email blast of 3,200 messages to School Committee members and distributed flyers, in English and Portuguese, at the Cape Verdean Day Festival.

The 400-member local is seeking a \$25-an-hour minimum rate. That's the same wage that the Brockton district paid one-year "community allies" who acted as hall monitors, according to local President Stacy MacDonald.

At the time, her union had a starting wage of just \$16.90 an hour and the district couldn't fill the ESP positions. "That opened our eyes," MacDonald said.



Photo by Jonathan Ng

Brockton paraprofessionals rallied outside a public library on June 27, waving signs to build support for a stronger contract. The local is seeking a \$25-an-hour starting wage for members.

In Northampton, the local worked over three contracts to improve the status of ESPs, taking an active role in supporting and voting for union-friendly candidates for School Committee. The Northampton Association of School Employees also simultaneously bargained all six of its unit contracts, which made the district see it was unified.

"Our strength comes in our numbers," said NASE President Andrea Egitto.

The local added bus monitors to its ranks this year and successfully negotiated a three-year contract that includes a \$2-an-hour increase, yearly, for all paraprofessionals. By the end of the contract, ratified in June, the lowest-paid paraprofessional will earn \$22.97 an hour, a 40 percent increase.

Paula Rigano-Murray, co-coordinator of the paraprofessional unit, described the contract as "phenomenal."

A paraeducator at Northampton High School, she attributed the gains in part to a decision by the local to "work to rule" in previous years, which demonstrated how much effort beyond the contract terms the ESPs had been putting in.

During bargaining, she prepared a slideshow of the MTA PreK-12 ESP Bill of Rights principles, and the accompanying living wage calculator, to demonstrate why ESPs needed to be paid more.

"I made it hard for them to say no," Rigano-Murray said.

Cambridge paraprofessionals, part of the 1,400-member Cambridge Education Association, also participated in actions this year.

The new CEA contract for paraprofessionals includes stronger terms for professional development

and growth — including \$1,000 a year in tuition reimbursement — and a requirement that all paraeducators be paid for the 6.5 hours they work, a 30-minute increase.

In addition, the unit got a 2 percent raise this year, to be followed by annual increases of 2.5 percent for the final two years of the contract, according to Bobby Travers, a 27-year paraprofessional who serves as CEA treasurer.

Travers said he sees growing respect for ESPs as educators — one of the tenets of the PreK-12 Bill of Rights — but there is still work to do on that.

"People think a paraprofessional is there to babysit kids — and we're not. We're there to educate kids. Overall, in public education, it has improved. But it's still not where it should be."

In Andover, which also secured an improved contract this year, Special Town Meeting voters in mid-May approved a stipend of \$800 for ESPs. Approval of the funds, to come from the town's federal COVID-19 relief allotment, is being contested by the town administration.

But the support shown by residents was heartening, said Susan Greco, an Andover ESP and a member of Andover Citizens for Transparency, the group that organized the Town Meeting article.

"It is encouraging when we think about it. It shows the public does care about ESPs," she said.

For more information on Education Support Professionals and the PreK-12 ESP Bill of Rights campaign, please visit [massteacher.org/ESP](https://www.massteacher.org/ESP).



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Taking a stand against gun violence

By Scott McLennan and Mary MacDonald

The massacre of 19 fourth-grade students and two teachers on May 24 at the Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, by an 18-year-old with an assault rifle shocked and angered educators throughout the nation.

Within days, educators, students, parents and other community members were meeting to plan actions to express their outrage.

“There are no excuses — and no ‘inalienable rights’ — that can justify the deaths of 19 children who were in their fourth-grade classroom ...,” the MTA said in a statement immediately after the murders. “Our nation needs to take bold and immediate action to control the flow of firearms in our society.”

To amplify that message, MTA members staged days of Mourning, Rage and Action — “MRA” events — to combat the influence of the NRA.

Local associations held ceremonies honoring the students and educators killed in Uvalde, as well as demanding tougher national gun laws. Many of the actions took place on June 1, ranging from a somber vigil in Milton — where educators wore black and struck a triangle 21 times to commemorate those killed in Uvalde — to a standout in Middleborough, where educators wore white as a symbol for peace. Members of the Springfield Education Association set up empty chairs in their city to symbolize the lives lost to gun violence.

The MTA was joined by the Massachusetts Nurses Association, the Massachusetts School Nurse Organization and the American Federation of Teachers — Massachusetts in calling gun violence a national public health crisis and demanding stricter gun-control laws. The joint statement drew attention not only to deadly school shootings but also to killings at health care centers, places of worship, and other everyday destinations, including grocery stores.

“Students and families deserve the right to go about their lives without fear of being murdered



Photo by Jonathan Ng

More than 1,000 people, including many educators and students, attended the rally in Boston.

at random — just as they should be able to access public schools and colleges without unnecessary fear of contracting or spreading COVID-19,” the unions said. “We support sensible national laws that expand background checks and close loopholes allowing easy access to firearms. We support national bans on the high-powered assault weapons that turn schools and other places into combat zones that police themselves fear to enter.”

Local activists connected to March For Our Lives, a national gun-control group, invited then-MTA President Merrie Najimy to be a featured speaker at a June 11 rally in Boston. Numerous area educators joined more than 1,000 other protesters gathered at a waterfront park to demand action on gun violence. Similar events featuring educators were held elsewhere in the state.

Rachel Keegan-McGlenn was among more than a dozen members of the Brookline Educators Union who attended the event in the North End.

“It’s really important that we’re visible and that we’re sending a clear message,” Keegan-McGlenn said. She said gun laws need to be the focus of change — “not arming teachers or putting the burden of change on teachers and children.”

Some of the educators who attended said they decided to come to the rally in Boston as soon as they heard about it.

“I just couldn’t sleep after this thing in Texas,” said Matt McKeon, a teacher at Peabody Veterans Memorial High School. As an educator, McKeon already had taken part in active-shooter drills. “Seriously, we need to ban assault weapons,” McKeon said.

Najimy drew loud cheers when she told the crowd that educators would reject proposals to arm themselves or increase the presence of police at schools.

“Our vision is one where public preK-12 schools — and public colleges as well — are the heart of their communities: places of joy and learning, open to all and full of ways to enrich our lives,” Najimy said. “Yet many of our schools have become fortresses, locked down and under 24-hour surveillance.

“We want to stop normalizing active-shooter drills,” she continued. “All of these only perpetuate the culture of firearms and violence that we are trying to break. And such measures create merely an illusion of safety.”

MTA task force fights to protect reproductive rights

By Jonathan Ng

Delegates to the 2022 MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates approved a new business item calling for the creation of a task force to explore ways to protect reproductive rights — including the right to abortion — and help people from other states seeking care in Massachusetts.

The delegates acted after the leak of a draft opinion that suggested the U.S. Supreme Court would overturn the landmark 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision. The court did so on June 24, and many states moved rapidly to ban or heavily restrict abortion access.

In Massachusetts, abortion remains legal and has been protected under state law. After the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, the governor and the Legislature took action to protect physicians in the state and patients from other states seeking services here.

MTA members have now been appointed to the Task Force on Reproductive Rights, which is to operate through Dec. 31. It will reach out to reproductive

rights organizations in Massachusetts and other states to seek information.

According to the NBI, the task force will make recommendations on how the MTA, on its own and with other unions, can assist people from other states by funding travel, housing and other forms of support for abortion care. The task force will also look beyond the immediate emergency and explore ways to protect reproductive rights and health.

“The MTA’s history is one of relentlessly fighting to uplift human rights — and fighting against any attempts to control and marginalize women,” said MTA President Max Page. “The extremist right-wing supermajority on the Supreme Court used the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* case to move an agenda aimed at revoking rights for women and other people who need reproductive care. We have no doubt that this is the opening salvo in a systematic and wholesale assault on civil, women’s and LGBTQ+ rights.”

The MTA also has signed on to the Massachusetts Beyond Roe Agenda launched by Reproductive Equity, which is fighting to ensure that reproductive choice is protected in the Commonwealth.

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A dozen things you should know about MTAB

MTA Benefits has been providing members with trusted benefit programs and discounts for more than 53 years. Since MTAB's early days, quite a bit has changed.

MTA Benefits now offers more than 50 benefit programs and 650 local discounts. In addition, the way MTAB communicates with members has evolved. Email and social media have become the main methods, rather than traditional mailings.

If you'd like to receive MTAB's monthly emailed newsletter, *Savin' Haven*, you'll first need to create an account on the MTAB website and check the box to receive email. MTAB is also active on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, where MTA members will find relevant news including the latest information on new discounts, offers for last-minute tickets to a variety of events, and much more. So if you don't follow MTAB yet, start now!

The one thing that hasn't changed over the past 53 years is MTAB's commitment to providing members with valuable savings for such important milestones as a home purchase or the vacation of a lifetime — as well as for everyday items including free museum admission or discounted theater tickets.

Whether you're new to the MTA or a veteran member, there are many things you may not know about MTA Benefits. MTAB options and programs are regularly updated. Take a look at the following list and find new ways you can save in 2022-2023!

1. FREE webinars for members: Throughout the year, MTAB and its partners offer webinars on topics such as student loan debt repayment and forgiveness, financial planning, mental wellness and general MTAB savings and discounts.

2. 200 FREE admissions and offers: The MTA Benefits *Discount Directory* offers members savings at hundreds of local businesses, including free admission to the Patriots Hall of Fame presented by Raytheon Technologies, the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, the New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill and the Sandwich Glass Museum.

3. 350,000 nationwide discounts: Thanks to MTAB's nationwide discount



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Through Sept. 19	\$500 Visa gift card	Two winners
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partner, Access, you can save at more than 350,000 retail shops, restaurants, entertainment and recreational venues and more, whether you're at home or traveling.

4. Choice for auto and homeowners' insurance: Receive exclusive pricing from both Hanover Insurance and Liberty Mutual Insurance as members of the MTA — and if you have a pet, you can get a quote from Liberty Mutual for pet insurance.

5. You have several mortgage options: If you're purchasing a home or an investment property or looking for a renovation loan or a reverse mortgage, MTAB's partners at New Fed Mortgage or Mid-Island Mortgage can help you through the process — and save you money.

6. MTAB's partner for office and classroom supplies has a new name: The discounts haven't changed,

but the name of the business has. Office Depot is now ODP Business Solutions, and it's offering members the same great savings on all the essentials.

7. Travel discounts: Whether you're planning an all-inclusive tropical vacation or a road trip two hours from home, you'll find great savings using MTAB's travel programs. Discounts are available on car rentals, hotels, theme parks, vacation packages and more. Don't forget travel insurance to protect your investment!

8. NEW Virtual Behavioral Health program: Launched last winter, the MTA Benefits Virtual Behavioral Health program connects members with a licensed mental health therapist in less than 48 hours. There's a \$0 visit fee, follow-up visits are scheduled in less than 24 hours, and coverage is available for family members. This program is available

through your MTA local association and not on an individual basis. If you'd like your local to offer this program, contact your local president.

9. Disability insurance: If you belong to a local association that participates in MTAB's disability insurance program, you're eligible to enroll or make changes to the program during the open-enrollment period each spring. New members in a participating local can enroll within the first 60 days of their hire date.

10. Financial planning assistance: From budgeting and investing to estate and retirement planning, Stacey Braun Associates can help you achieve your financial goals. For \$140 per year, you'll have access to three hours of financial planning services, written summaries and reports, password-protected access to Stacey Braun's proprietary website, and more.

11. Your family members are eligible as well: Share the savings with your family members by getting them a no-cost family membership. Complete the application form found at www.mtabenefits.com/family.

12. Giveaways all year long: There are giveaways all year long. Start entering now!

Visit www.mtabenefits.com for more information on benefit programs, discounts and giveaways.

Gathering to feature award presentation

By Mary MacDonald

In late September, MTA Retired members will have an in-person event together for the first time in more than two years.

The Retired Gathering is scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 29, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Westborough. Online registration will be available at massteacher.org/retired.

The agenda for the event was still being finalized as *MTA Today* went to press — but one highlight will be the Honor Our Own Award presentation, which will take place during lunch.

This year, two recipients will be honored:

- Beverly Saccocia, an MTA Retired member who worked as an Education Support Professional and was a long-active member of the Bridgewater-Raynham Education Association.

- Mary Cowhey, who retired after 22 years as a first- and second-grade teacher and a Title I math specialist in Northampton. She was a member of the Northampton Association of School Employees.

Saccocia, who now lives in Dennis, served as an elected or appointed representative on many MTA committees, including the Candidate Recommendation Committee and the Education Support Professionals Committee. She also served



on the NEA Resolutions Committee and consistently attended the MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates and the NEA Representative Assembly.

Before retiring, Saccocia was an active advocate for ESPs in the Bridgewater-Raynham association.

She served as a liaison for ESPs on the local's executive committee, as well as a negotiation chair for ESP contracts, according to MTA Retired member Lois Powers, the 2014 MTA ESP of the Year, who wrote a letter nominating Saccocia for the Honor Our Own Award.

"She demonstrated the union leader's activism with her strong work ethic and commitment to the union and to the community," Powers wrote. "Beverly believes that a true union leaves no member

behind: Each member is entitled to the same benefits and representation, no matter who they are."

Cowhey, who lives in Florence, was "legendary in the Jackson Street School community," according to a nomination letter written by MTA Retired member Dale Melcher. Over the course of her career, Cowhey became educated in and was a practitioner of trauma-informed instruction and social-emotional learning. She helped lead the introduction of school gardens, among other accomplishments. She was among the organizers of the Western Mass Educator Action Network — WEMEAN — which brings regional support to local campaigns. "Mary is the whole package," wrote Melcher. "A teacher, grassroots organizer, parent, union activist, writer, community gardener and winner of numerous awards for teaching."

The Honor Our Own Award winners are selected by the MTA Retired Members Committee.



Beverly Saccocia



Mary Cowhey

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

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; call 774.239.7823 or email enelson@massteacher.org.

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, or email hcrowley@massteacher.org.

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 or email kmelanson@massteacher.org.

HOLYOKE — Ron Lech: third Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Western Office, 55 Bobala Road, Suite 3, Holyoke; call 413.893.9173 or email rlech@massteacher.org.

LYNNFIELD — Barbara Callaghan: third and 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 or email bcallaghan@massteacher.org.

PITTSFIELD — Ward Johnson: second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Berkshire Office, 188 East St., Pittsfield; call 413.443.1722 or email wjohnson@massteacher.org.

RAYNHAM — Raymond Thompson: third Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; and Lawrence Abbruzzi: second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; MTA Southeast Office, 756 Orchard St., third floor, Raynham. Contact Thompson at 617.347.4425 or rthompson@massteacher.org; or contact Abbruzzi at 508.824.9194 or labbruzzi@massteacher.org.

HIGHER EDUCATION AT-LARGE — Edward McCourt, call 781.325.2553 or email emccourt@massteacher.org.

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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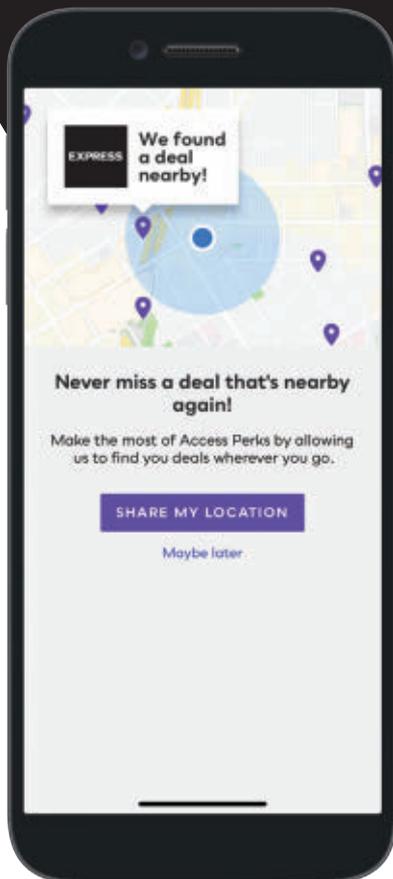
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Retirement plan options expand for higher ed members

By Noah Berger

After years of advocating for improvements in the retirement plans available to them, adjunct faculty members and other part-time employees working in public higher education will finally have more options available this fall.

While most higher education employees are members of the state retirement system, a high-quality defined-benefit plan, adjunct faculty and other part-time employees are only able to participate in what is called the OBRA Plan — named for the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990. The plan is funded by deductions from an employee's salary and has only one investment option, a "capital preservation" fund.

As a result, members cannot benefit from growth in the markets. This has harmed the ability

of adjunct faculty members and other part-time employees to build retirement savings.

This fall, there will be new options.

The OBRA pension plan is being changed to allow adjuncts and other part-time employees to choose among SMARTPath retirement funds. These target-date funds will have a mix of securities that are heavily weighted toward stocks when the member is far from retirement age and become increasingly conservative as the member gets closer to retirement.

It is important and advisable to seek the advice of an independent, qualified financial planner before members make this decision or any other about their retirement savings. For those members who want to avoid the risks of investing in the market, the capital preservation plan will still be available.

"After years of watching our retirement savings just sit there, options to have our money grow with the market will be an improvement," said Michael Stassen, an adjunct faculty member at Fitchburg State University.

"It's a first step, but we need our employer to contribute to our retirement, as well," Stassen continued. "Our demand remains true adjunct justice: fair wages and benefits, improved working conditions, and opportunities for full-time and tenure-track positions."

The new OBRA options will become available Oct. 1. To learn more, members can log in to their SMART Plan accounts. They can also contact their local SMART Plan retirement advisor for assistance by calling 877.457.1900. In addition, the MTA website, massteacher.org, will provide relevant updates as they become available.

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The program looks at eligible employment as far back as October 2007, no matter what payment plan you were in or whether your school was designated Title I. MTA members who are employed full time by a school or educational service agency satisfy this requirement.

PSLF forgives the remaining balance on your Direct Loans after you have made 120 qualifying payments while working full time for a qualified employer. The PSLF waiver, which expires on October 31, 2022, allows borrowers to get credit for past payments that would otherwise not qualify for the program. This does not mean you need to have made 120 payments by that date. Even if you're short, you can receive retroactive credit for past payments that would otherwise be ineligible.

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A few facts about PSLF

- ✓ You do not need to have filed paperwork in the past. (That's a myth that has never been true.)
- ✓ You do need to take action quickly. If you need to consolidate, that process can take 45 days to complete, after which you'd have very little time left to file the PSLF application.
- ✓ The time to act is now! Prior to the waiver, only 14,000 applications had been approved since 2017. In the last 10 months, more than 150,000 applications have been approved, with many more pending.

Call now to speak with a student loan counselor and learn your next steps

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MTA's new leaders map out an ambitious agenda

Continued from Page 3

brought about a shared-governance plan into the leadership model of the Hull Teachers Association. Under open bargaining, every member is invited to attend and participate in the conversations between the union and management. The conversations happen in the open, versus behind closed doors. The shared-governance bylaw change means there will be a co-president from the elementary building and a co-president from the middle school — and the third co-president will be from the high school. This allows the members in all buildings to feel like they have a voice and are invested in the governance of our union.

Q: What are some of your goals for the next two years?

Page: We have an opportunity with the Fair Share funds to finally achieve the major reinvestment in public higher education that has been long delayed. Some of the needs are lifting up adjuncts in pay and

“Well, Fair Share should also make sure that every educator earns a living wage. That should be a baseline.”

benefits and lifting up working conditions and pay for our faculty and staff in community colleges and throughout the higher education system. It's about achieving debt-free public higher education for our students. For preK-12, there is often a justification: “Well, we can't pay our ESPs a living wage. We don't have the money.” Well, Fair Share should also make sure that every educator earns a living wage. That should be a baseline. The MCAS — the high-stakes testing regime — is another focus. Getting rid of the MCAS and the high-stakes nature of MCAS is starting to get back at reclaiming the classrooms and the schools — being able to have educators be the experts that they are in educating the whole child. If we don't have educator autonomy and have educators educating the whole child, then we're not succeeding.

McCarthy: Once we win the Fair Share Amendment, a major focus of mine will be to dismantle the racist high-stakes accountability system that supports and maintains an elitist opportunity gap. At the elementary school in which I taught, what I experienced under the punitive MCAS regime was the elimination of the position for the school librarian, the band program and the buses for an after-school enrichment program. Educator autonomy has been denied. The professional right to educate the whole child no longer exists. Instead, the mandates of high-stakes testing have districts, like the one I taught in, purchasing online testing software. The students' day becomes a series of test-and-drill curricula that has removed the joy from the classroom. Last year alone, the students in my fifth-grade classroom participated in 18 days of simulated MCAS testing, which, when combined with the actual six days of MCAS testing, resulted in 24 days of high-stakes testing at the elementary school level.



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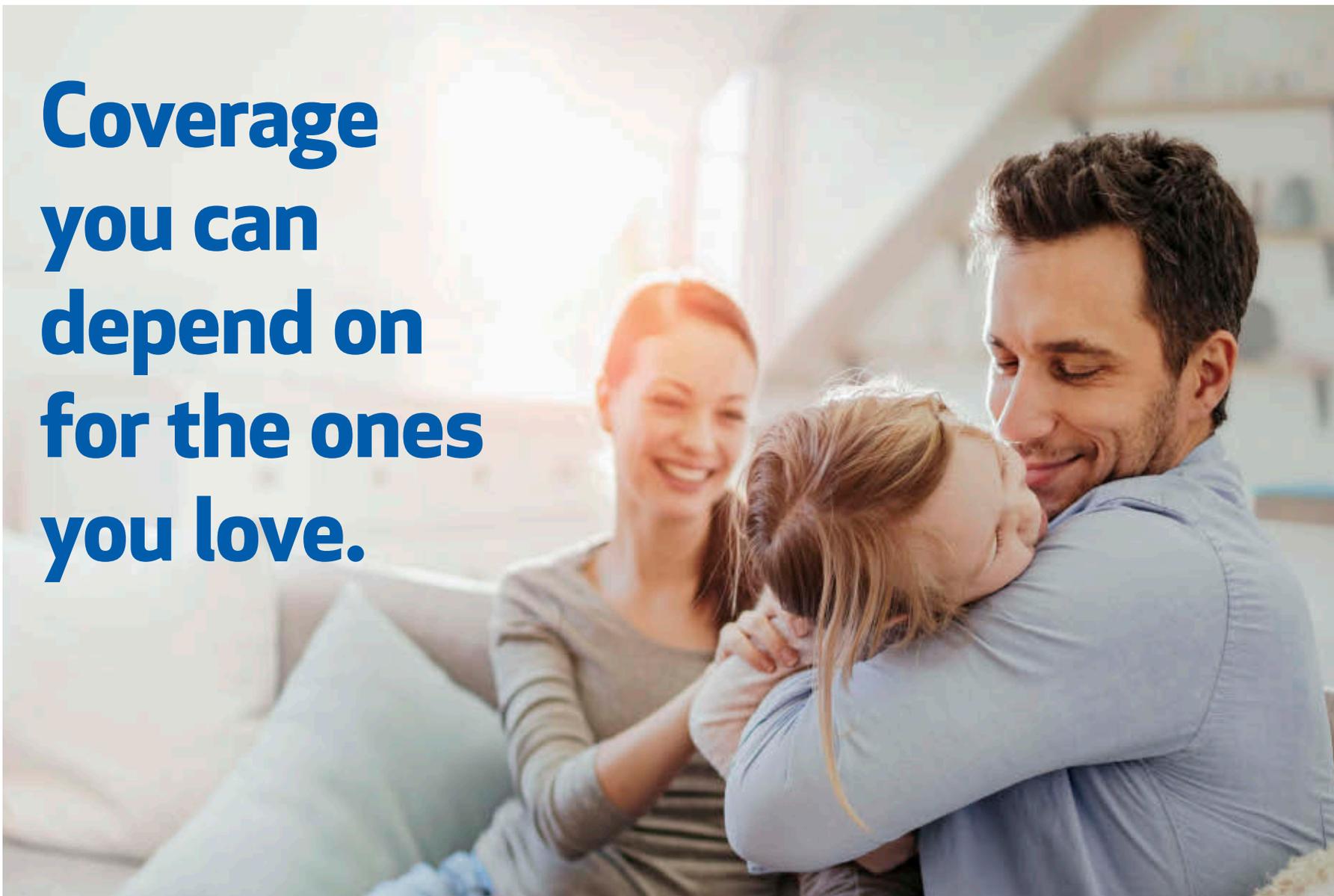
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Obituaries

Harold J. Beaupre, 93, of Ocala, Florida. Was a teacher at Classical High School in Springfield. Feb. 7.

Charles G. Bender Jr., 71, of Wareham. Was a sixth-grade teacher in Bridgewater for 37 years. Jan. 29.

Meredith Bissell, 89, of West Groton. Was a history and English teacher, as well as a guidance counselor, for the Lunenburg Public Schools. Also taught at Fitchburg State University. Feb. 9.

Marsha M. Bray, 76, of Barre. Was a kindergarten teacher in Barre for almost 30 years. March 7.

Pauline S. Byrne, 90, of Ayer. Was a kindergarten and second-grade teacher at Shaker Lane Elementary School in Littleton for 19 years. March 17.

Wayne R. Cardillo, 70, of West Springfield. Was a college and school librarian, including for the Springfield Public Schools, until his retirement. Jan. 28.

Anthony F. Ciampa, 82, of Weymouth. Spent his career in the Weymouth Public Schools, retiring in 2000 as Weymouth High School assistant principal. April 29.

Richard A. Coleman, 78, of Northbridge. Was an English and social studies teacher in the Grafton Public Schools. March 24.

Joseph A. Collins Jr., 96, of Reading. Was a teacher for over 25 years, mostly in the Stoneham Public Schools. March 22.

Van P. Constantine, 54, of Webster. Taught English and journalism in the Webster Public Schools until his retirement. March 30.

John Cuoco Jr., 89, of Walpole. Spent his 40-year career at Medfield High School, where he served as chairman of the Math Department, director of adult education and cross-country coach. Also served as president of Medfield Teachers Association. March 31.

Nancy Davidowicz, 77, of Salem. Was a special education teacher in Danvers and was instrumental in establishing the alternative education program for junior and senior high school students. Feb. 16.

Walter M. Davis Jr., 74, of Wellesley. Taught at the Peabody Elementary School in Cambridge for 30 years. March 12.

John E. DeBassio, 74, of Webster. Was an industrial arts teacher in Oxford for 32 years. March 3.

Lawrence W. Faye, 74, of North Andover. Was a teacher for 35 years, including at Pentucket Regional High School. April 15.

Nelda Fullerton, 90, of Norton. Was an elementary school teacher in Stoughton for 35 years. April 13.

Joseph A. Gattuso, 90, of Falmouth, formerly of Medfield and South Boston. Worked for over 40 years in the Newton school system. April 8.

Jack Haroian, 81, of Auburn. Was a special education teacher at Southbridge Middle School for 36 years. Feb. 19.

Sheila A. Jameson, 55, of Bradford. Was an elementary art teacher for the Haverhill Public Schools for 25 years. Feb. 6.

Lois M. Keefe, of Norwood. Was a teacher at the Cleveland School in Norwood until her retirement. April 23.

Paul A. Kolman, 79, of Newburyport. Taught biology at Newburyport High School for over 37 years. March 7.

George A. LeBlanc, 72, of Southwick. Was a teacher, guidance counselor and guidance director in Southwick. Feb. 9.

Catherine T. "Kay" Lennon, 100, of York, Maine, formerly of Arlington. Was a teacher in Newton for 40 years. Feb. 25.

Mary R. Leonard, 93, of Framingham. Taught English literature at Framingham North High School from 1969 to 1993. Feb. 19.

Mary M. Manwaring, of West Yarmouth. Taught first grade at the Ezra H. Baker School in Dennis for 28 years. March 27.

Stephen J. McCann, 82, of Worcester. Was a social studies teacher for the Framingham Public Schools, retiring in 2002. Jan. 26.

Maureen F. Mores, 78, of Norfolk, formerly of Peabody. Was a librarian for the Mansfield and Foxboro public schools and at King Philip Regional High School. April 3.

Francis J. O'Donnell, of Southampton. Taught English at Northampton High School for more than 30 years. Feb. 26.

Patricia A. Pellegrini, 77, of Bedford. Taught social studies and psychology at Bedford High School for 34 years. April 29.

Dorothy M. Peracchi, 80, of Revere, formerly of Somerville and Arlington. Taught for many years in the Somerville schools at the elementary level and as a reading specialist. March 16.

Malcolm D. Reese, 75, of East Bridgewater, formerly of Medford. Taught for 30 years for the West Bridgewater Public Schools. Also served as president of the West Bridgewater Education Association. April 16.

Stephanie M. Rich, 75, of West Yarmouth. Was a first-grade teacher at the Joselin School in Oxford before working in the Worcester Public Schools. Feb. 10.

Kathryn M. Sample, 76, of Danvers. Worked in the Haverhill Public Schools, teaching for over 30 years at Tilton Elementary School. April 24.

Phyllis M. Schank, previously Phyllis M. Klinger, 87, of Mulberry, Florida, formerly of Hudson. Was an elementary school teacher for the Hudson school system for over 22 years. Feb. 22.

Marilyn L. Slattery, 75, of Norwell. Taught French and Spanish in the Randolph Public Schools from 1969 to 2006. Feb. 18.

Marla H. Sohegan, 66, of Rehoboth. Was a teacher in the Bridgewater-Raynham School District. March 22.

Barbara A. Spence, 89, of Worcester. Was a professor and chair of the Human Service Division at Quinsigamond Community College. She was a longtime MTA activist and recipient of the Carter G. Woodson Award presented by the National Education Association. June 8.

Ann Swicker, 94, formerly of West Townsend. Was a biology teacher in Townsend, at Spaulding Memorial School and then at North Middlesex Regional High School. She also served as Science Department head for the regional district. May 4.

Salvatore J. Vento, 84, of Hull. Taught business education at North Quincy High School for 34 years and served as Business Department head before retiring in 2001. March 18.

Helen Webster, of Peabody. Was an elementary school teacher in Topsfield. March 23.

Eleanor Wollins, 96, of Lenox, formerly of Lexington and Newton. Taught in the Newton Public Schools for 33 years. May 1.

Brooke L. Yanow, 41, of Swampscott. Was a first-grade teacher in the Revere Public Schools before teaching kindergarten at the Eveleth and Glover schools in Marblehead. April 20.

Jennie E. Zalesney, 93, of Plympton. Was an art and graphic arts teacher in the Leominster and Dracut school systems. Feb. 26.



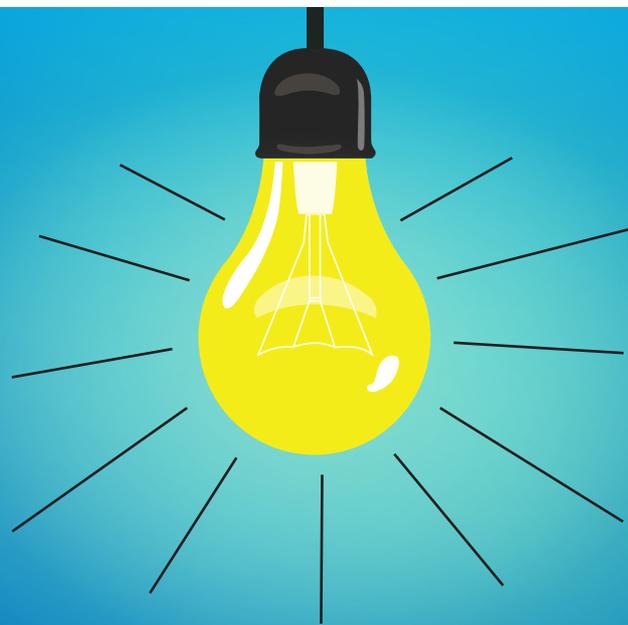
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¹ National Safety Council, Injury Facts, 2008 edition.

² U.S. Census Bureau, Selected Social Characteristics in the United States, 2009.



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In-person Summer Conference builds energy and enthusiasm

Continued from Page 5

campus to reflect on how they could work to develop a more inclusive and stronger union.

The LGBTQ+ and Ethnic Minority Affairs Committees each held forums designed to provoke healthy self-examination on issues surrounding equality. Union members discussed ways to break down white supremacist attitudes and structures to make workplaces more equitable and welcoming for diverse educators, as well as how to best support students — especially those from traditionally marginalized or targeted backgrounds. With a critical election looming on Nov. 8, state politics also played a role at the conference.

Page worked hard to build urgency and enthusiasm around the Fair Share Amendment, which would add 4 percentage points to the tax on annual income over \$1 million to generate funding for public education and transportation.

MTA Vice President Deb McCarthy focused on encouraging

members to mount resistance to the high-stakes MCAS testing regimen, describing it as “an accountability system that, in reality, is destroying lives.”

This year's Summer Conference featured appearances by several MTA-recommended candidates for statewide public offices.

Shannon Liss-Riordan, a candidate for attorney general, Diana DiZoglio, a candidate for state auditor, and Tami Gouveia, a candidate for lieutenant governor, spoke at a conference event and listened to members' concerns.

Comments focused on issues such as the unfair working conditions that adjunct faculty members experience at public colleges and universities and how a ban on strikes by public employees should be overturned.

The four-day Summer Conference, which ran through Aug. 3, kept attendees busy from morning through night with workshops, forums and social events. But ultimately, members said they left feeling energized about the union and the challenges ahead.

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Recommended candidates will back MTA priorities

By Scott McLennan

The MTA is recommending that voters elect Maura Healey, a strong advocate for public education and working families, to serve as the next governor of Massachusetts.

Healey, currently the state's attorney general, tops a list of statewide candidates who have earned the MTA's backing after careful consideration by the member-driven Candidate Recommendation Committee. The MTA Board of Directors also has approved the recommendations.

MTA President Max Page said the union-supported candidates will elevate public educators and education during their terms in office.

"We in the MTA, the union of 115,000 public school and college educators, are glad to raise our voices in support of candidates we believe will serve working families, respect unionized educators and value public education, from prekindergarten through college," Page said.

The MTA recommends Tami Gouveia to serve as the state's next lieutenant governor, Shannon Liss-Riordan for attorney general, Diana DiZoglio for state auditor, and William Galvin for secretary of state.

The statewide primary election will be held on Sept. 6. The general election is Nov. 8.

The election will also feature mail-in balloting and early voting periods. Information is available at www.MassEarlyVote.com.

The MTA-recommended candidates have pledged to support educators' priorities, including passing the Fair Share Amendment, working to address the impact of MCAS on teaching to the whole child, ensuring sufficient funding for public schools and colleges, and reducing education loan debt for students attending public colleges and universities.

Shortly after she gained the MTA's backing, Healey met in Worcester with a group of Education Support Professionals from throughout the state to hear more about the challenges they face.

"I am the proud daughter of public school educators," Healey said. "They taught me the

2022 Primary Election Guide



MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT!
SUPPORT CANDIDATES WHO WILL FIGHT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION



For additional information on MTA candidate recommendations, please see the *2022 Primary Election Guide* at the center of this edition of *MTA Today*. For further updates, visit massteacher.org/election.

meaning of hard work, compassion, and caring for your community. I'm grateful to have the MTA's support and partnership as we continue to make our public schools and colleges equitable, thriving places for our students."

In backing Healey, MTA leaders noted that as attorney general she has demonstrated a commitment to racial, social and gender justice — and that she entered the campaign understanding that public education is foundational to the quality of life in Massachusetts. She also has battled to protect the state's communities from gun violence, shield student borrowers from predatory lenders, and preserve the dignity of retirees.

In August, Gouveia, Liss-Riordan and DiZoglio all spoke at the "Political Desserts" session held at the 2022 MTA Summer Conference.

MTA Vice President Deb McCarthy said the candidates who earned the union's support have "shown up for labor and supported public education."

Gouveia, a state representative whose background is in public health, said her goal as lieutenant governor would be to place "health, well-being and dignity" at the center of decision-making.

Liss-Riordan, a veteran labor-rights lawyer, said she supports ending the prohibition on public employees from striking and opposes expanding charter schools and state receivership of school districts.

"I will be fighting systemic discrimination against race, age, sex and ability," Liss-Riordan said.

DiZoglio, currently a state senator, said she wants to be state auditor to increase transparency and accountability in state government. In discussing her support for the Fair Share Amendment, which will place a 4 percent surtax on annual income over \$1 million to generate funds for public education and transportation, DiZoglio said that as auditor she will make sure the money goes to its intended uses.

The MTA is recommending Galvin because of his extensive experience and long commitment to protecting and expanding voting rights — particularly now, as they come under fierce attack across the country. Galvin supports Election Day registration, continued use of mail-in ballots and extended periods for in-person voting.

MTA Vice President Deb McCarthy said the candidates who earned the union's support have "shown up for labor and supported public education."

"We know our power resides in our members and their ability to organize and take action," McCarthy said. "We believe that the candidates we are recommending will treat us with respect and work to make state government transparent and accountable to working families."

2022 Primary Election Guide



MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT!

SUPPORT CANDIDATES WHO WILL FIGHT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION



MTA
Massachusetts Teachers Association



MAURA HEALEY FOR GOVERNOR



“Maura Healey knows that public education is the cornerstone of our democracy and the basis of our collective prosperity. Given her track record as attorney general — fighting against gun violence, making pharmaceutical companies pay for the harm they’ve caused, shielding student borrowers from predatory lenders, and preserving the dignity of retirees — we can count on her to be a leader in the fight for a more racially and economically just Commonwealth. The education experts — the 115,000 members of the MTA — look forward to working with her as we seek to ensure living wages for everyone, bring an end to the great harm caused by high-stakes testing in our schools, and achieve fully-staffed, debt-free public higher education throughout Massachusetts.”

— MTA President Max Page



STATEWIDE CANDIDATES

Lieutenant Governor

A headshot of Tami Gouveia, a woman with long blonde hair, wearing a dark top, against a blue background.

Tami Gouveia

Attorney General

A headshot of Shannon Liss-Riordan, a woman with long blonde hair, smiling, wearing a dark top.

Shannon Liss-Riordan

State Auditor

A headshot of Diana DiZoglio, a woman with long dark curly hair, smiling, wearing a pink top and large hoop earrings.

Diana DiZoglio

Secretary of State

A headshot of Bill Galvin, a man with short grey hair, wearing a suit and tie, against a wood-paneled background.

Bill Galvin

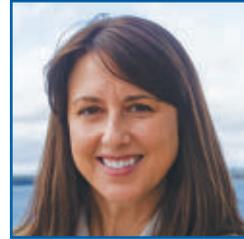
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE



Mike Brady
(D-Brockton)
2nd Plymouth & Norfolk



Nika Elugardo
(D-Boston)
2nd Suffolk



Robyn Kennedy
(D-Worcester)
1st Worcester



Paul Mark
(D-Becket)
Berkshire, Hampden,
Franklin & Hampshire



Jake Oliveira
(D-Ludlow)
Hampden, Hampshire &
Worcester



Eunice Zeigler
(D-Methuen)
1st Essex

HOW THE MTA RECOMMENDS CANDIDATES

Visit massteacher.org/election for more information

MTA's member-elected Candidate Recommendation Committee establishes policies and procedures for recommendations in elections, which are reviewed by MTA's Board of Directors for final approval.

Evaluations of incumbent legislators in contested races are based on support for MTA's legislative agenda, voting records, access to MTA lobbyists and activists, as well as their responses to the questionnaire developed by the CRC. Candidates running for open seats, and those in some contested legislative races with incumbents, fill out the questionnaire developed by the CRC and are interviewed by CRC members, MTA local presidents and their appointees, members of the MTA Board and Executive Committee, and Senate District Coordinators and Political Action Leaders.

The recommendations in this Primary Election Guide are the result of that process. We hope you will take the guide with you to the polls on Sept. 6 and help elect MTA-recommended candidates. These candidates will listen to educators and act in the best interests of students and public education. The MTA also urges you to join our Legislative and Political Action Teams and participate in campaigns.

An Election Guide in the Fall edition of *MTA Today* will make recommendations for the General Election on Nov. 8.



MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



James Arena-DeRosa
(D-Holliston)
8th Middlesex



Zoe Dzineku
(D-Lowell)
16th Middlesex



Joel McAuliffe
(D-Chicopee)
8th Hampden



Sam Montaña
(D-Boston)
15th Suffolk



Estela Reyes
(D-Lawrence)
4th Essex



Roberto Jiménez-Rivera
(D-Chelsea)
11th Suffolk



Margareth Shepard
(D-Framingham)
6th Middlesex



Donny Tavares
(D-Boston)
5th Suffolk



Steve Teehan
(D-Medfield)
9th Norfolk



Erika Uytterhoeven
(D-Somerville)
27th Middlesex



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VOTE YES ON QUESTION 1

THE FAIR SHARE AMENDMENT

Massachusetts voters have a once-in-a-generation opportunity this year to guarantee a stable flow of funding for public education and transportation — while ensuring that the very rich pay their fair share in taxes. MTA members are strongly urged to **vote YES on Question 1**, the Fair Share Amendment. Approving Question 1 would amend the state Constitution to add 4 percentage points to the tax on annual income above \$1 million, providing about \$2 billion every year for our schools, colleges, roads and bridges.



massteacher.org/election

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!

The Massachusetts Primary Election will take place on Tuesday, Sept. 6.
The MTA recommends candidates who appear in this Primary Election Guide.

If you haven't already voted by mail and if you cannot or do not want to vote in person on Sept. 6., please consider early voting, which runs from Aug. 27 to Sept. 2. You may vote at any early voting location in the city or town where you are registered to vote. See all early voting options at www.MassEarlyVote.com.