

**MTA**

The voice of  
our retired  
members

# REPORTER



## WHAT SHOULD GRADUATES KNOW?

Students, Members & Allies  
Are Weighing In

JUNE 2025

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JUNE 2025

**On the Cover:** Elliott Talley, a senior at New Bedford High School, helped lead a discussion in New Bedford about what high school students should know when they graduate. Talley is an active member of the New Bedford Coalition to Save Our Schools.

**Cover Photography:** Eric Haynes

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PHOTOGRAPHY: CARLOS AVILA

Retired member Carlie Tartakov, at left, participated in a rally in Springfield following the Annual Meeting of Delegates.

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# Message from the Co-Chairs

Kathy Greeley and Rick Last

In thinking about what to write for this spring/summer edition of The Reporter, we took a look back at our most recent “Message from the Co-Chairs.” In that column, we listed the threats against public education, especially as outlined by the Heritage Foundation’s Project 2025: Eliminating the U.S. Department of Education; cutting funding to Head Start at the very beginning of a child’s education; cutting billions of dollars, yes with a “B,” in grants to our higher ed institutions; attacking the rights of labor unions and workers; punishing school districts and other institutions that try to create welcoming, inclusive and culturally sensitive environments through fines, lawsuits and funding cuts. Stripping the LGBTQ+ community of its rights and physically assaulting immigrants; encouraging ICE agents, who are masked and armed, to act with impunity; attacking cultural and educational institutions like the Library of Congress and the Museum of African American History.

Honestly, we could just write the same column again, with one difference. What we saw in March as a threat has all too rapidly become a reality.

Many years ago, Kathy taught the Facing History and Ourselves curriculum. She explored the Holocaust and the rise of fascism as a case study in human behavior. These seventh and eighth graders saw the power of scapegoating (replace “Jew” with “immigrant.”) They understood the role of propaganda and the manipulation of the media. They understood what we called “the salami tactic.” (Take one small slice at a time and, before you know it, the whole sausage is gone.) They learned the words “euphemism”

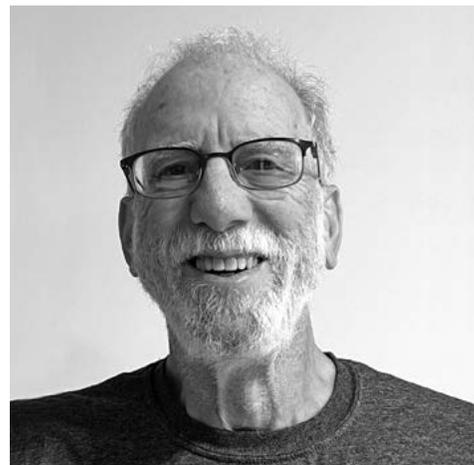


and “doublespeak.” And they learned that many people stood by and did nothing out of fear, apathy, exhaustion or despair. And it was that fact, that so many people did nothing, that gave the Nazis their power.

We cannot be bystanders or onlookers to this assault on our democratic institutions. It is critical for each of us to take a stand on the issues we care about and join our friends, family and community in fighting together to maintain our very democracy, as imperfect as it is.

The Retired Members Committee has been working hard to give people opportunities to come together in community, to share our expertise and knowledge, to use the time and independence we have to fight back against this anti-democratic onslaught. Many of these efforts are described in this issue of The Reporter, and more are detailed on our newly developing website, at [massteacher.org/retired](https://massteacher.org/retired).

We hope you will take a look at what we are working on and join in. If you have ideas for other kinds of work



that we as retirees can do, please let us know! We will be meeting for a two-day strategic planning retreat on July 22 and 23, and we welcome your input. You can always contact our staff organizer, Lisa Lemieux, at [Llemieux@massteacher.org](mailto:Llemieux@massteacher.org).

We have learned as union members that when we fight we win. But it won’t be easy and it won’t be overnight. The far-right architects of Project 2025 and their cronies have been working on their plan for decades. They have the wealth of the world’s billionaires at their fingertips. But we have people power. And, in the end, people power will prevail. We hope you will find a way to get involved!

Contact Kathy Greeley at [kegreeley@gmail.com](mailto:kegreeley@gmail.com). Contact Rick Last at [ricklewislast@gmail.com](mailto:ricklewislast@gmail.com).

# Executive Committee / Board Report

Andrei Joseph



Joined electronically by over 300 virtual delegates, 835 more delegates met in person in Springfield for the MTA's 180th Annual Meeting. Together, these 1,167 members debated motions, elected representatives and passed a budget. On occasion struggling with the hybrid technology, we managed to express our version of a difficult, wonderful democracy.

Thirty-nine New Business Items were submitted for consideration. Our procedures called for the NBIs to be lumped into two groupings: Those with a budgetary impact must be dealt with before we tackle the budget itself. Following the passage of a budget, we then turn to the remaining business items.

Responding to the precarious political moment, one NBI called for our union to provide legal representation to any member threatened with detention, deportation or expedited removal for exercising academic freedom. Although this added \$3 to the member dues, it passed with 70% support. I voted in favor.

Another NBI created an in-person summit and conference to be focused on LGBTQ+ topics that impact educators, students and the broader community. This added \$1 to the dues while receiving 75% support. I voted to support the motion.

A further NBI that passed intends to provide opportunities for our members to build dialogue skills, while cultivating respect and an open exchange of ideas. We also created a statewide task force that will focus on housing and food insecurity within our union.

Eventually, we passed a budget that set the annual dues for full-time members at \$553, for custodians, secretaries and clerks at \$332 and for ESPs including paraprofessionals at \$166. Retired member dues remain \$30/year. The meeting also approved a Public Relations/Organizing Campaign budget with annual dues set at \$20/\$12 and \$6 for the above categories.

The continuing issue of how – or if – the MTA should be involved in Palestine/Israel came in the form of a motion that would have required the Executive Board to create a new “neutrality policy” and “not take official positions on matters related to geopolitics, foreign policy, or global conflicts.” After considerable debate, the motion failed having gathered only 28.48% support. I voted no.

Also of direct concern to many of us was NBI 37, which would have ended hybrid annual meetings. This, too, led to considerable debate: There were still 48 people in the speaking queue when debate was closed. As I have noted in previous columns,

consideration of hybrid meetings has grown from a safety perspective to include cost and democracy factors. The variables are complicated and contradictory. The costs of hybrid meetings are increased because of the technology involved. However, costs are decreased because remote delegates don't spend money on travel or hotel rooms. The level of democracy increases because more people can participate (including those with health issues, disabilities, child care needs and financial challenges). Democracy decreases because we are not face to face with the opportunity to build relationships and communicate more directly. Obviously, the objective nature of the COVID threat has changed. Only a tiny portion of in-person delegates chose to wear masks. Most of the time there, only two of us were in the “mask required” delegate seating area. The motion to end hybrid meetings failed, having gathered but 30.34% support. I voted against it. Still, it seems clear this issue will return in the future. For reference purposes, here are some statistics: Of our 147 retired delegates, 81 were in person (55%) and 47 were remote. Seventy-four percent of non-retired delegates showed up in person.

Also in our future are several issues related to money. More than one active member has expressed resentment that retiree dues remain frozen, per an MTA Bylaw, while the dues of active members continue to rise. Even some retired members have suggested that our dues should increase. This will be a complicated debate going forward that should

*continued pg 5*

**“ Consideration of hybrid meetings has grown from a safety perspective to include cost and democracy factors. The variables are complicated and contradictory.”**

Andrei Joseph

include consideration of the limited relief offered by our COLA, the rate of inflation, the advanced age of some retirees and all that we have contributed over our careers to public education and our union.

There is also the immediate challenge of next year’s Annual Meeting. Both the 2026 and 2027 annual meetings will return to Boston. Right now, the maximum allowable stipend for retired delegates is \$450. But the cost of a hotel room alone in Boston next year will be at least \$369. Increasing the stipend to cover remaining costs (including food and travel) will require a change in our policies (see MTA Policy 200.75). That will understandably face some opposition.

**Also at the meeting:**

In a rare, contested election among retired members, Bonnie Page of Tewksbury and Bob Miller of Brookline won three-year terms on the MTA Board of Directors. Bonnie returns to the Board from previous service and Bob will join her to comprise our two statewide retired representatives. Please see Page 10 for an introduction to them.

We gave annual awards to Chrissy Lynch, president of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, Stacy Davis Gates, president of the Chicago Teachers Union, and U.S. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Katherine Monteiro of the Weymouth Educators’ Association was recognized as ESP of the Year.

On Saturday afternoon, following passage of the budget and completion of the elections, we returned to the New Business Items without budgetary implications. NBI 1 attempted to

direct the MTA staff to create model contract language to protect members of marginalized groups. The debate became protracted when some delegates thought the proposed language did not sufficiently address race. Wordsmithing was attempted. This inefficient attempt at democracy met with predictable failure. Procedural questions arose

and we lost a quorum at 3:06 p.m. on Saturday, leaving many proposed NBIs unaddressed. To culminate the day, many delegates went across the street from the meeting hall to join a lively demonstration in support of casino workers at MGM Springfield.

Contact Andrei Joseph at [ajoseph@rcn.com](mailto:ajoseph@rcn.com).

**Legislative UPDATE**

**T**e state Senate completed its version of the budget on May 23, which included a COLA for retired state and teacher pensions. This COLA provides an increase to a retiree’s pension of 3 percent on the first \$13,000 of pension earnings. This language is identical to that passed earlier by the House, so it is expected to be included as part of the final version of the budget when passed into law.

The MTA has made increasing this COLA a legislative priority. Legislation to increase the base, which hasn’t been raised in more than a decade, was introduced in the 2025-2026 session by state Rep. Dan Donahue and state Sen. Julian Cyr.

Referred in both chambers on Feb. 27 to the Joint Committee on Public Service, it has not been scheduled for a public hearing.

The bill will increase the base for the COLA from \$13,000 to \$18,000, and over time, raise the base to align with the maximum Social Security benefit for an individual worker retiring at full retirement age.

The legislation also will create a mechanism to cap out-of-pocket expenses for public retirees who are not Medicare-eligible, at \$2,500 for individual coverage and \$5,000 for family coverage. And it will freeze the health insurance premium contribution share for current municipal retirees at the percentage they were paying when the legislation takes effect.

For additional information on the MTA’s legislative agenda, or to contact your state representative or senator, please visit [massteacher.org/legislation](https://massteacher.org/legislation).

# Mentoring Program Update

Phyllis Neufeld

The Retired Member - New Educator of Color Mentoring Program held its third in-person meeting on Saturday, May 17. This program is in its first year, having been rolled out at the end of August 2024, and pairs retired educators of color with new educators of color in the hopes of retaining more educators of color. We have working pairs from preK through higher education and are thrilled to have nine working pairs, and are now concentrating on expanding this network. Three mentees and four mentors attended our most recent meeting, as well as members of the mentoring committee.

Major topics of discussion included the challenges and successes that the mentor/mentee pairs experienced this year and how to “grow” the program next year and beyond.

**The challenges faced by these pairs included:**

The toll of microaggressions has been recently investigated in all employment environments, where it was found to:

- Mentors needing a letter of introduction to the school for entrance, as well as official badges (now being created).
- A mentee being pulled out of her classroom by the administration multiple times to provide translation. (She is being aided by the mentor on this issue).
- Mentees reporting trouble passing the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure.
- The frequency of curriculum changes. (Often, the mentor is not familiar with new curriculum – the

mentor needs to be open and willing to have the mentee explain the curriculum.)

- In higher ed particularly, the special challenge of research and grant cuts, with resulting layoffs.
- Mentees being asked to teach in unfamiliar areas and in subjects they weren't hired to teach.

**The successes included:**

- Mentees “appreciating how wonderful it is to depend on the wisdom of those who came before” them.
- The ability to learn from a mentor when the mentee is told they have to teach another area or subject.
- Demonstrating to students that their teacher never stops learning.
- The relationship helped improve communication to parents. The mentee worked with the mentor to keep parents abreast of what is happening in the classroom.
- Feeling good about having a mentor from outside the system to discuss issues – providing a sense of safety.
- Mentors picking up slack for what the teacher does not have time to do (such as making flash cards.)
- The ability of mentors to recognize weaknesses in the mentee and lending their expertise to strengthen those areas.
- Making sure the mentee knows about help that can be found through union and other organizations (such as Tools for Teachers in Springfield, which has free teacher materials.)



Phyllis Neufeld

- Help with managing a class and the ability to model that behavior for the mentee.

**We segued naturally into how to grow the program. Suggestions included:**

- Creating a three-minute video promoting the program that districts could show at orientations, faculty meetings; etc..
- Developing a recruiting template of the model used in Springfield, to be used in other communities.
- Having a presence (and be present) at MTA events such as Juneteenth and the Summer Conference ‘Confronting Racism’ event.
- Asking new member liaisons in districts to help promote this program as well as summer organizers.

This work matters. Retention of educators of color matters. Of the three mentor pairs at our meeting, all three are eager to continue next year. Spread the word to educators you know, who will hopefully do the same.

If you are interested in becoming a mentor, please see the information on the MTA retired website, at [massteacher.org/retired](https://massteacher.org/retired), and [massteacher.org/news/2024/09/mentorshipprogram](https://massteacher.org/news/2024/09/mentorshipprogram).



A DIVERSE UNION  
of EDUCATION  
WORKERS

# BECOME A RETIRED MENTOR

Volunteer as a Mentor to a New Educator through the MTA's new Retired Member-New Educator of Color Mentoring Program (**0-5 years of experience**). Retiree Mentors of color will be paired with new educators of color to help navigate challenges in the workplace with the goal of retention in the profession. Mentors will be expected to communicate with their Mentee at least once a week through one-on-one meetings, via email, text and/or over the phone. **If you are interested, please contact [mtamentoring@massteacher.org](mailto:mtamentoring@massteacher.org) or scan the QR code.**

This program is a collaboration of the MTA Retired Members Committee and the MTA New Member Committee.



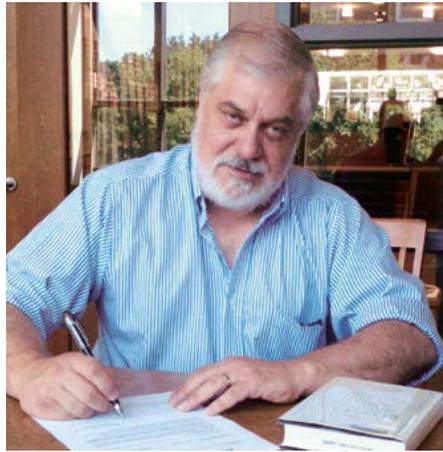
# Perspective: Microaggressions, or Death by a Hundred Cuts

Rafael Moure-Eraso, Ph.D.

The MTA is committed to preventing physical aggression against educators in Massachusetts and has developed programs to promote a safer work environment that strives to eliminate physical violence in the classroom. However, another critical concern is the issue of nonphysical violence that also occurs in classrooms and other educational environments. These are known as “microaggressions,” everyday nonphysical actions or behaviors that can sometimes be just as harmful. Each one might be considered minor, but the accumulation of these behaviors has been described as “death by a hundred cuts.”

In the work of the RMC Mentorship program of the Retired Members Committee, mentors might encounter situations in educational institutions where educators, including mentors, at every level — in preK-12 and higher education — face microaggressions in everyday interactions with supervisors, peers and students that might be negative and demeaning, but in most cases, not intentional.

Microaggressions are defined as: “The indirect, subtle, hostile, or derogatory, sometimes unintentional incidents of racism and bias that members of sidelined (marginalized) groups might experience every day. These interactions can significantly affect people’s mental and physical health.” (Microaggression: Derald Wing Sue, Ph.D. [www.uua.org/files/](http://www.uua.org/files/).) The interactions are present in educational environments and are usually under the control of school administrators (more on that below).



## Why should we care?

The toll of microaggressions has been recently investigated in all employment environments, where it was found to:

- invalidate the group identity or experiential reality of targeted persons.
- demean them on a personal or group level.
- communicate that they are lesser human beings, suggest they do not belong with the majority group.
- threaten and intimidate or relegate them to inferior status and treatment.

These interactions normally target people based solely upon their marginalized group membership. That is, women, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous people of color), LGBTQ+ and other minorities. Research shows that microaggressions have measured negative effects on the mental health of the recipient (frequency-dependent) and work outcomes, including job satisfaction, productivity, retention and promotion opportunities, and creates a perceived biased work environment with bad conditions for all.

## Examples of Microaggressions

Derald Wing Sue, a professor of counseling psychology at Columbia University, has classified some microaggressions by target groups, including by racial, gender and sexual orientation, and has described some examples of each.

### Racial Microaggressions:

- An African American, born and raised in the United States, is complimented for speaking “good English.” (Hidden message: You are not really a true American.)
- A BIPOC couple is seated at a table in the restaurant next to the kitchen, despite other empty and more desirable tables at the front. (Hidden message: You are a second-class citizen and undeserving of first-class treatment.)

### Gender Microaggressions:

- An assertive female manager is labeled as a “bitch,” while her male counterpart is described as “a forceful leader.” (Hidden message: Women should be passive and allow men to make decisions.)
- A female physician wearing a stethoscope is mistaken as a nurse. (Hidden messages: Women should occupy nurturing and not decision-making roles. Women are less capable than men.)
- Whistles or catcalls are heard from men as a woman walks down the street. (Hidden messages: Your body/appearance is for the enjoyment of men. You are a sex object.)

### Sexual Orientation Microaggressions:

- A young person uses the term “gay” to describe a movie that she did not like. (Hidden message: Being gay is associated with negative and undesirable characteristics.)
- Two gay men hold hands in public and are told not to flaunt their sexuality. (Hidden message: Same-sex displays of affection are abnormal and offensive. Keep it private and to yourselves.)

### What is to be done?

Wing Sue and his academic colleagues observe that we have been socialized into racist, sexist and heterosexist attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.

Much of this is outside conscious awareness; thus, we engage in actions that unintentionally oppress and discriminate against others.

The first step in addressing microaggressions is to become aware of their conspicuous presence in every workplace and sometimes in all our social interactions. Methods to develop awareness and interventions include training bystanders to intervene and implementing administrative policies in institutions. Massachusetts institutions have studied microaggressions systematically and developed targeted programs to address microaggressions specifically, including UMass Lowell, which has two of its research centers

engaged in research and study of these behaviors: (UML-Center for Women and UML-Center for the Promotion of Health in the Workplace.)

Rafael Moure-Eraso is the representative of the Retired Members Committee to the MTA Environmental Health and Safety Committee. He is a professor emeritus of public health at UMass Lowell.

**Editor’s Note:** This is the fourth in a series of commentaries by Retired members of color, reflecting on their personal experiences in public education.

## FIRST WEDNESDAY SPEAKER SERIES

# Bringing on the Challenging, Interesting Perspectives

Dale Melcher

Some of the most important things we can do for our cognitive health as we age is to engage with others and learn new things. This was among the points made by Dr. Rebecca Starr, medical director of the Pioneer Valley Memory Care Initiative, in her December presentation to retirees on “Memory and Aging.” Our RMC First Wednesday Speaker Series does just that. As I look back on what we have been able to offer over the past two years, I am impressed with both the breadth and depth of our offerings.

We were able to bring in experts in various fields to do deep dives into topics that were interesting, challenging or entertaining, or a mix

of the three, and to offer suggestions for actions we could take as individuals or as the MTA. Our final speakers this spring, U.S. Senator Edward Markey, MTA President Max Page and MTA Vice President Deb McCarthy, looked at the attacks on both public education – from preK through graduate programs – and democracy. They offered a sobering assessment of the current landscape and provided examples of what the MTA and our allies are doing to fight back. They offered us a path forward for our union and ourselves.

While there was an opportunity for conversation with our guest speakers after each presentation, we appreciate that we have lost the in-person social interaction with other retirees –

another facet of successful aging. As a positive, we were able to offer nine topics, including “Education and the Rise of the Right,” “Dignified Retirement,” “Media Bias” and “Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others,” to retirees across the Commonwealth and, I suspect, beyond. The magic of Zoom!

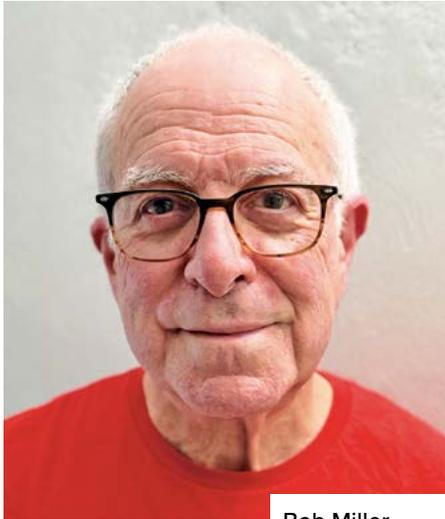
Recordings of all of these presentations are available on the MTA Retired web page at [massteacher.org/retired](https://www.massteacher.org/retired). We encourage you to listen to any you missed. In addition, we would love to hear from you about any topics you would like to see addressed in the 2025-26 Speaker Series. Email me with your suggestions at [daleannmelcher@gmail.com](mailto:daleannmelcher@gmail.com).

*See you in September!*

# Meet your new MTA Board members

Mary MacDonald

**Two members recently were elected as statewide representatives for retired educators to the MTA Board. Bob Miller and Bonnie Page will join the Board in July. Each will serve for three years.**



Bob Miller

Bob Miller is a native of New York who received an architecture degree from Washington University and initially worked for an architecture firm. He moved to Boston in 1978 and worked as a sales engineer, in commercial real estate and as a software product manager before becoming a teacher. After earning a master's degree in Education from Lesley University, he taught middle school science in Brookline and was active in the Brookline Educators Union. He was the local's vice president for more than 10 years and retired in 2022, after the local had its one-day strike.

"I am honored to have been elected to serve retirees on the MTA Board," he wrote. "Obviously, my first priority will be to represent retirees so issues like cost-of-living adjustments will be top of mind. At the same time, I want to help the MTA continue to be a powerful organization for the good of public education in Massachusetts. Now, more than ever, public schools are facing fiscal and pedagogical challenges. Unions like the MTA have a crucial role to play. I look forward to doing my part."

MTA retirees can contact Bob at 617-828-8100 or by emailing [brookline.teacher@gmail.com](mailto:brookline.teacher@gmail.com).



Bonnie Page

Bonnie Page proudly hails from New York and pursued her undergraduate studies at Wheelock College in Boston, graduating in 1972. She later returned to Wheelock to obtain her master's degree in Early Childhood Education and Child Development in 1992.

In a 30-year career in the Malden Public Schools, Bonnie made significant contributions to public education. Previously, she worked in accounts receivable at Gillette and in a day care center. Bonnie's passion for advocacy within the MTA blossomed during her early years teaching preschool and kindergarten. Serving as the Malden Education Association's president during her final two years, she also represented Region 21G on the MTA Board of Directors, as well as the NEA Board of Directors.

"I am honored to be a member of the MTA Candidate Recommendation Committee and thrilled to return to the MTA Retired Members Committee. My focus is to advocate for an increase in the COLA base, which has remained stagnant for years. I believe in empowering our retirees and fostering a strong community because together, we can improve the conditions for educators and retirees alike."

Bonnie shares her life with her husband, Troy, who teaches 8th grade civics in the Lexington Public Schools. Together, they share a love for travel and have explored 31 baseball parks, with just one more to complete their quest!

MTA retirees can contact Bonnie at 781-820-2740 or via email at [bonpage30@gmail.com](mailto:bonpage30@gmail.com).

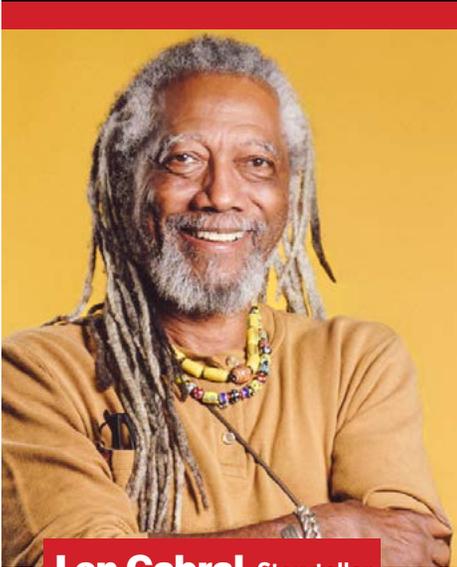
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# JUNETEENTH

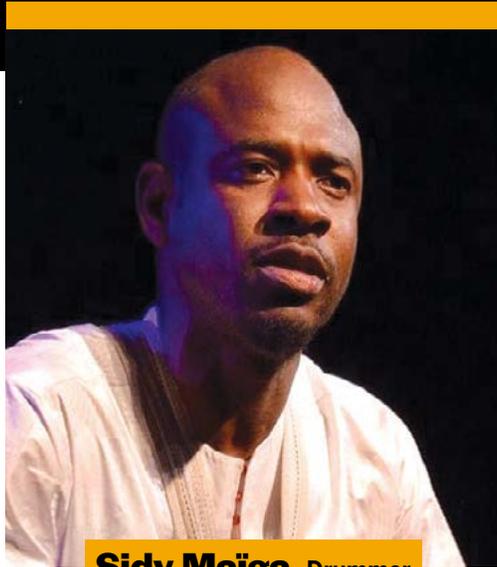
C E L E B R A T I O N

## *Literacy is Liberation*

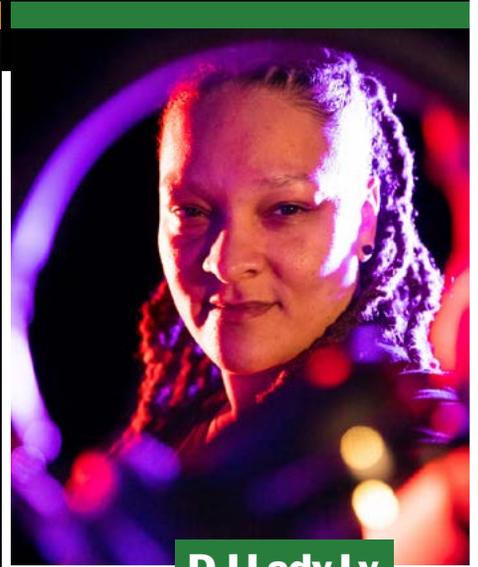
FEATURED EDUTAINERS



**Len Cabral** Storyteller



**Sidy Maiga** Drummer



**DJ Lady Ly**

ALL MEMBERS,  
FRIENDS AND FAMILY  
ARE WELCOME!



TO REGISTER & LEARN MORE  
[massteacher.org/juneteenth](https://massteacher.org/juneteenth)

Join us as we come together to commemorate the historic occasion of Juneteenth, a day that symbolizes freedom, unity and resilience.

**June 21**

10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

**FULLER MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Framingham, MA



**ETHNICALLY  
MARGINALIZED  
AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE**



**A DIVERSE UNION  
of EDUCATION  
WORKERS**



Bridget Weiner, Kathy Greeley, Elliott Talley and Carolyn Burke, from left, participated in a discussion last month in New Bedford about what high school graduates should know in Massachusetts.

## Organizing After a Victory on **QUESTION 2**

Alain Jehlen and Kathy Greeley | Photographs by Eric Haynes

**W**hat should students know and be able to do by the time they graduate, and how should they demonstrate this?

These seem like simple questions, but they're complex and deserve the input of educators, students and community members. MTA members and community allies are meeting throughout the state, in sessions organized in part by retired members, to help guide the state's response to the end of using MCAS as a high school graduation requirement.

In Cambridge, more than 100 educators, parents, students and other community members got together on April 30. In New Bedford, three weeks later, more than 30 people gathered to consider the possibilities, including how schools

can help to support new goals for graduates.

The crowds were diverse in age, background and interests. Two New Bedford High School students participated in that session, offering their perspective on what should be included.

"The student perspective is very important because the students are not just passive recipients of policy," said Elliott Talley, 17, a senior who will attend Northeastern University in the fall. Active in the New Bedford Coalition to Save Our Schools, an organizer of the session, Talley facilitated discussion at one table.

Another student, Fredricka Freire, 16, suggested that graduation requirements include real-life skills, in addition to specific academics.

"We should learn about things like how to manage money, take care of our mental health, vote and apply for jobs," Freire said. "These are skills we will use for the rest of our lives."

These were the first two of six public forums planned by Citizens for Public Schools, Cambridge Retired Educators United, and other organizations following the passage of Question 2. By a 59 to 41 percent margin, Massachusetts voters on Nov. 5 ended the requirement that high school students pass the MCAS to get their high school diplomas, which had been in effect for 22 years.

As a result, Gov. Maura Healey established the Massachusetts K-12 Statewide Graduation Council

Retired Members Organizer Lisa Lemieux participated in a discussion on high school graduation requirements.



to propose new graduation requirements. CPS and CREU wanted to ensure that any new statewide requirements reflect the views of parents, students, educators and other community members concerned with public education. People of all races, incomes, disability statuses and languages should be involved in these important decisions.

The first forum, for Cambridge and Somerville, was endorsed by nine local organizations and six state legislators representing the two cities.

Participants worked in small groups with a note-taker at each table who wrote down all that was said.

While people acknowledged that it is important for students to know subject matter content, they also felt that students need to learn the skills they will need to navigate the real-life challenges of modern life, such as creative problem-solving, analyzing data, and how to work effectively with a team. Practical knowledge and skills including financial literacy, media literacy, home economics and effective communication came up in many of the groups. Participants also wanted students to understand our system of democratic government and how they can be civic-minded and advocate for changes that benefit the community.

How should student achievement in these areas be assessed? Participants proposed a wide range of ways. The two leading approaches were portfolios of student work collected over years of study, and capstone projects that may involve several subject areas and that demonstrate skill in research and analysis, effective use of technology

in presentations, and creative problem-solving.

Participants also had many proposals for how to improve schools to better support students in achieving the goals of their education, such as transforming instruction to give students more choice and agency in their learning and embedding more project-based and out-of-school learning throughout a student's high school career.

Additional forums across the state are planned this spring and next fall, including in Worcester, Springfield/Holyoke, greater Boston, and possibly in Lowell/Lawrence. Findings from all six forums will be presented

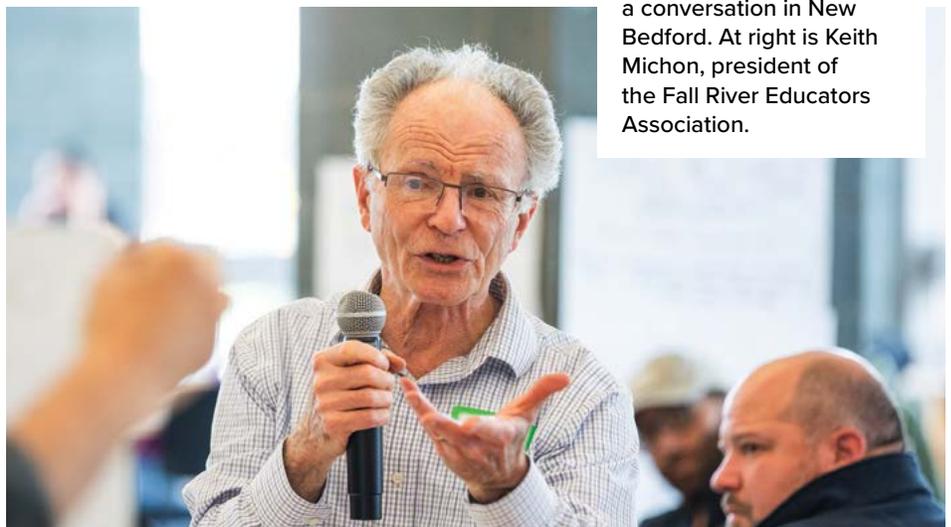
in a final report to the governor's Graduation Council, the Legislature, the state board of education, and to the public.

The forums are being co-sponsored by the Cambridge Education Association, Somerville Educators Union, Fall River Educators Association and New Bedford Educators Union.

Mary MacDonald contributed to this story.

If you are interested in working on a People's Forum in your area, contact Kathy Greeley at [kegreeley@gmail.com](mailto:kegreeley@gmail.com).

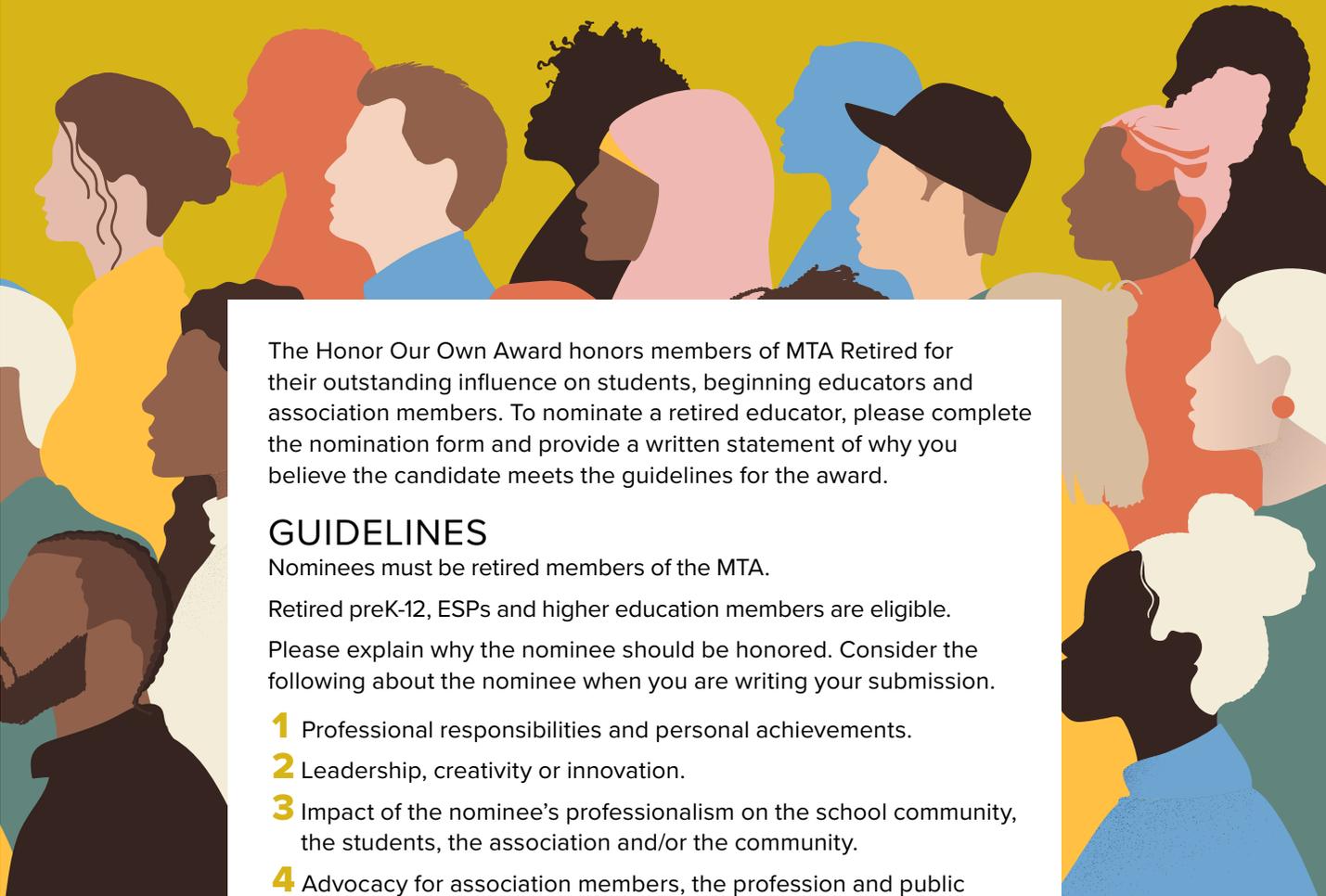
Alain Jehlen, a board member for Citizens for Public Schools, facilitated a conversation in New Bedford. At right is Keith Michon, president of the Fall River Educators Association.



# HONOR OUR OWN

A W A R D S

Is there an MTA retired member who: Encouraged you professionally?  
Fostered Your involvement in the MTA? Mentored you as a beginning educator  
or helped you as a student?



The Honor Our Own Award honors members of MTA Retired for their outstanding influence on students, beginning educators and association members. To nominate a retired educator, please complete the nomination form and provide a written statement of why you believe the candidate meets the guidelines for the award.

## GUIDELINES

Nominees must be retired members of the MTA.

Retired preK-12, ESPs and higher education members are eligible.

Please explain why the nominee should be honored. Consider the following about the nominee when you are writing your submission.

- 1** Professional responsibilities and personal achievements.
- 2** Leadership, creativity or innovation.
- 3** Impact of the nominee's professionalism on the school community, the students, the association and/or the community.
- 4** Advocacy for association members, the profession and public education.
- 5** Improving the image of public education.

For a digital nomination form, please visit [massteacher.org/honorourown](https://massteacher.org/honorourown).



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# HONOR OUR OWN

A W A R D S

## 1 Complete the nomination form.

### NOMINEE INFORMATION

Nominee is a member of MTA Retired.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### SUBMITTED BY (Please check one)

Member of \_\_\_\_\_ Association

MTA Retired

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

## 2 Attach a written explanation of 250-500 words on why the nominee meets the guidelines for the award.

## 3 Mail or email the completed application.

HONOR OUR OWN AWARD

Lisa Lemieux, MTA

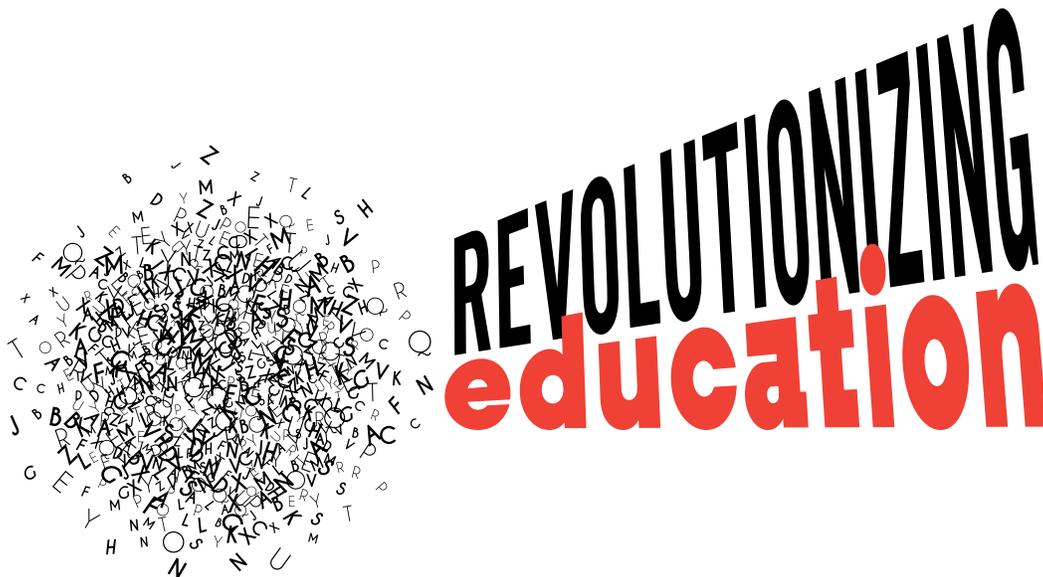
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[honorourown@massteacher.org](mailto:honorourown@massteacher.org)



Please visit [massteacher.org/honorourown](https://massteacher.org/honorourown) for a fillable form that you can download and email.

Materials must be received by the MTA no later than **July 15.**



## Announcing the launch of **REVOLUTIONIZING EDUCATION: a Journal of Education Policy and Practice**

The MTA is excited to announce the launch of this pioneering open-access journal dedicated to challenging entrenched inequities within education. The journal is dedicated to advancing education policy and practice in Massachusetts. Our journal prioritizes innovative research that challenges entrenched inequities within education, amplifies voices often marginalized, advocates for transformative practices that dismantle power hierarchies, and understands education as a tool for liberation rather than the reproduction of inequality. We welcome scholarship from diverse disciplines, multiple methodologies, and topics covering prekindergarten to higher education.

Our mission is to provide a platform for researchers, scholars and practitioners to share their groundbreaking work, free from financial barriers and accessible to all.

Submissions are now open, and we invite researchers from all fields to contribute their work. Revolutionizing Education: a Journal of Education Policy & Practice is a multidisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal covering issues related to prekindergarten through higher education from a labor and anti-oppression lens. Topics will include:

- The organizing history of educational unions.
- Labor education practices and approaches.
- The charter school movement.
- High-stakes testing and alternatives.
- Educator labor, political trends and the evolving economy.
- Political, economic and social context of education in the state.
- The politics of school finance and the economics of education.
- Participatory budgeting.
- Full-service community schools.
- Public policy and its intersection with educational policy and practice.
- Curriculum and instruction.
- Trends in education privatization.
- Governance and finance of public schools and higher education.
- Privatization in public higher education.



For more information visit  
**rev-ed.org**



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# SUMMER CONFERENCE, Now More Than Ever

The voices of retired members are needed, “Now More Than Ever,” at Summer Conference. The event, held from July 27 – 30 at UMass Amherst includes sessions and programs that are of interest to retired as well as active educators.

For the first time, a session aimed at organizing and mobilizing retired educators will be held as part of the professional development offerings.

“Retiree Activism in Times of Political Turmoil” will be led by members Bill Forster, Rick Last and Kathy Greeley. It will include discussion of the potential of retired members as an under-tapped political force and engage participants in effective strategies for organizing change. This session is from 9 a.m. to noon on Monday, July 28.

Retired members also are encouraged to consider other sessions, such as a discussion of pensions and retirement security, and any number

of union- and solidarity-building workshops.

Summer Conference also features nationally known keynote speakers on Sunday, July 27, including Cornel West, an American philosopher, political activist and social critic, and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, an author and scholar. Maurice Mitchell, national director of the Working Families Party, will be featured at the closing plenary.



A Member Art Show is being introduced for the first time, and members are encouraged to submit their original work in painting, photography, sculpture and visual art, among other specialties. (See the submission QR code above).

Best of all, attendance is FREE for all members who register by July 10. This covers all workshops and social events. Hotel rooms can be booked in the Amherst area. For members who would like to stay overnight in campus dorms, the price is \$130/night per person for up to three nights and includes meals from the award-winning UMass Dining.

Commuters can attend the conference for free and purchase meals at the Dining Commons or Blue Wall food court. (Anyone who registers after July 10 will be charged a \$40 late registration fee by UMass Conference Registration Services.)

**REGISTER TODAY FOR**  
Summer Conference at  
[massteacher.org/summer](https://massteacher.org/summer).



**2025**  
**SUMMER**  
**CONFERENCE**  
Now More than Ever

**JULY 27 - 30**  
**UMASS AMHERST**





# Three Simple Steps to Improve Your Hearing Health

How often do you check your hearing? If you're like most people, probably not as often as you should. Hearing health is an essential part of your overall well-being, yet it's often overlooked until a serious issue arises. When hearing concerns go unaddressed, they can silently develop into more complex problems over time.

If you experience constant ringing or buzzing in your ears or struggle to follow conversations, don't wait to take action. Hearing aids can significantly improve your quality of life — from boosting mental wellness to enhancing social interactions. Here are three simple ways to start taking better care of your hearing health today.

## 1. Get regular hearing checks.

Just like scheduling your annual physical and eye exams, make

hearing checks a routine part of your health care. Catching issues early can prevent further deterioration and related health risks.

## 2. Stay informed.

Many people don't realize that untreated hearing issues can lead to cognitive decline, social withdrawal, and even depression. The more you know about the early warning signs — like often asking people to repeat themselves, turning up the volume on devices, or struggling to follow conversations in noisy environments — the better prepared you'll be to recognize changes in your own hearing and take the steps necessary to protect your hearing health.

## 3. Advocate for awareness.

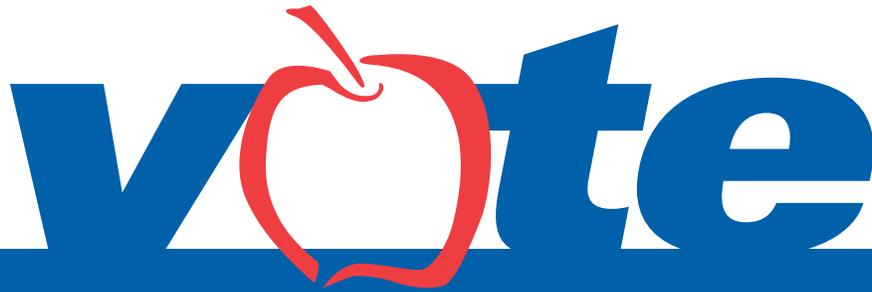
Share information with your friends and family about the importance of hearing health. By spreading the word, you can help break down

stigmas and encourage others to prioritize their hearing. By focusing on your hearing today, you can ensure a healthier tomorrow.

MTA members have access to hearing care through TruHearing, a comprehensive hearing care solution that offers high-quality hearing aids at 30 to 60 percent off the average retail price. Get started by calling TruHearing at 1-844-547-0934 | TTY: 711 to learn more or to schedule a hearing exam with a nearby provider.

Check your hearing for free and see how easy the journey to better hearing health is by visiting [TruHearing.com/mta](https://TruHearing.com/mta).





## VOICE OF TEACHERS FOR EDUCATION

# We need real allies in public office.

VOTE is the **MTA's Political Action Committee (PAC)**. At a time when public education, our democracy and rights are under attack, we need to count on allies in public office for the difficult fights ahead.

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

Recurring contributions are most helpful for this need.

**Please consider making  
a contribution to the  
VOTE PAC today.**

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



[massteacher.org/votepac](https://massteacher.org/votepac)

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



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Help a friend/colleague become an MTA and NEA Retired Member



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[massteacher.org/RetiredSignup](https://massteacher.org/RetiredSignup)

