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Greetings,

This has been an exciting and productive past few weeks for our union. Between September 11 and September 15, we held two lively regional forums and an All Presidents' Meeting that included a model forum component. The meetings were well attended (more than 200 members came to the presidents' meeting alone), and the conversations were robust.

The fast pace continues, as we have 20 more regional and local forums scheduled. If you want to hold one in your local, please just contact your association president or send an e-mail to Governance Assistant Jennie Holland at [jholland@massteacher.org](mailto:jholland@massteacher.org).

As we build our union's strength and solidarity, our activism will take many forms. One form is working to elect pro-public-education candidates. The MTA is recommending Martha Coakley for governor, and we will also be recommending legislators in state and congressional races. I urge you to get involved, talk to neighbors and friends, call fellow members and reach out to the candidates about the issues that matter to us. Be sure that the issues that matter to you also matter to the candidates you support. For information on how to participate, e-mail Jo Ann Fitzgerald, director of grassroots campaigns, at [grassrootscampaign@massteacher.org](mailto:grassrootscampaign@massteacher.org).

Perhaps your activism includes telling U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan how you feel about policies and mandates at the national level that are affecting us at the local level. If so, I hope you can join a protest that has been organized by some MTA retirees and Citizens for Public School on Friday, September 19, at 8:30 a.m. - just before Duncan is scheduled to speak at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. (Unfortunately, the talk is during the school day - but for retirees, this is a chance to activate and agitate!) Protestors are asked to meet in front of Gutman Library on Appian Way, off Brattle Street.

Those of you who want to extend your activism to issues beyond education may want to join the People's Climate March in New York City this Sunday, September 21. The Massachusetts Nurses Association still has seats available on its buses. Contact me for more information.

Or you can connect with Raise Up Massachusetts to canvass in favor of Massachusetts Ballot Question #4, on earned sick time.

Meanwhile, some recent examples of MTA members organizing and mobilizing include UMass faculty and staff hitting the streets on September 5 to protest stalled contract talks and demands for givebacks.

MTA members also joined a news conference and stand-out on September 8 in support of Holyoke Teachers Association President Gus Morales after the Department of Labor Relations issued a complaint finding probable cause that the Holyoke administration violated Morales' rights when he was fired for engaging in union activities.

We are at a critical moment for reclaiming public education and the public good. MTA members are organizing and taking action.

In solidarity, and in anticipation of many great things ahead,

Barbara