

The MTA Legislative Package for 2015-16

Our increased outreach to reenergized members produced over 120 written suggestions from across the state. On two dates, members came in person to explain their ideas to our Committee. This proposal to the Board is an attempt to reflect our members concerns within both the mission of MTA and our vision of public education.

This first group of proposals - organized into three themes - is central to our work. These issues are likely to engage our members, involve us in broader coalitions, and help us support the social and economic conditions that allow families and communities to thrive.

The Schools Our Children Deserve

Stop the High-Stakes Testing Mania

The MTA will have a bill filed that imposes a three-year moratorium on PARCC and high-stakes testing.

Prohibit the Linkage of Evaluation and Licensure

Pending the outcome of efforts to stop BESE's proposed plan to link evaluations and test scores to licensure, the MTA will draft a late bill filed that prohibits such a plan.

Stop the Expansion of Charters and Level the Playing Field for the Remaining Schools

The MTA will have legislation filed imposing a three-year moratorium on charter schools.

The MTA will also have legislation filed that ensures that all charters operate on a level playing field, addressing the following issues:

- requiring all teachers working in charter schools to be licensed
- insist on financial transparency
- ensure enrollment reflects district demographic (e.g. ELL, SPED) and that there are sufficient licensed staff to provide necessary services
- require SEI certification in accordance with state regulations
- guarantee if students leave a charter school and return to the district after the charter school has been reimbursed that the district is proportionally reimbursed for students who return

Restore Bilingual Education

The MTA will have legislation filed amending Chapter 71A to eliminate the section that requires most ELL students to be placed in regular classrooms within one year; and will affirm a variety of pedagogies rooted in the wisdom of teachers and local districts, in support of the MTA Task Force on ELL and the existing coalition working for bilingual education.

Expand the Commonwealth's Commitment to Public Education by Providing Free PreK and Mandatory Full-Day Kindergarten

Reflecting our society's new understanding of what constitutes the education necessary to thrive in our world, the MTA will have filed bills establishing universal access to high quality pre-kindergarten, mandatory full-day kindergarten.

Invest in Higher Education Faculty and Staff

MTA will have legislation filed to institute a plan for achieving the goal of 75 percent of all public college and university courses taught by full-time, tenure-track faculty by 2021; raise part-time and adjunct faculty pay by tying individual course compensation to that of full-time, non-tenure-track faculty; provide health insurance and pension benefits for part-time and adjunct faculty whose total work at public colleges or universities in the Commonwealth amounts to at least half-time.

Furthermore, the MTA will have legislation filed (see below as well) establishing a \$15/hour living wage for all employees of the Commonwealth and employees of private sector firms under contract with the Commonwealth.

Excessive and Unfunded Mandates

Our members have been burdened with unfunded mandates, excessive reporting requirements, and other demands that rob them of their time and their respect. The MTA will have legislation filed to require cost accounting for all mandates, and work (through having re-filed H3722) to limit and streamline information required by the state and federal governments.

Amplify and Protect Educators' Voices

Educator Seats on the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

The MTA will have legislation filed placing two teachers on the BESE. The teachers will be chosen by sending the Governor a list of three teachers chosen by the MTA three teachers chosen by the AFT-MA. The Governor will choose one teacher from each list.

Bullying in the Workplace

In response to New Business Item 12 at the 2014 MTA Annual Meeting, the MTA will have legislation filed to amend MGL, Chapter 71, Section 370, to include educators as a class protected against bullying. MTA also supports H1766, the Healthy Workplace Bill.

Protection from Capricious Dismissal

In response to the wrongly decided *Lexington v. Zagaeski*, MTA will have legislation filed to re-establish fairness in PTS teacher dismissal cases.

Protection of Collective Bargaining Rights

The MTA will (in alliance with AFT-MA) seek a change to the Education Reform Act of 2010, by reinstating collective bargaining rights for educators at Level 4 and 5 schools.

The Well-Being of Educators, Families and Our Communities

Living Wage

The recently passed minimum wage increase will still not bring many of our lowest-paid members up to a living wage. The MTA will work with allies to have a bill filed calling for a living wage of \$15 per hour, applicable to all employees of the Commonwealth and employees of private sector firms under contract with the state. Cities and towns would be allowed to set a higher living wage.

Progressive Income Tax

The MTA will support efforts to establish a progressive income tax that raises a significant amount of new revenue either through legislation or through a constitutional amendment.

Increase the Cost of Living (COLA) for Retirees

Because our retirees deserve a dignified retirement, the MTA will call for an increase in both the base on which the cost of living adjustment is calculated (currently \$13,000), as well as the yearly percentage raise (currently 3%).

Another group of proposals contain ideas that are widely supported within MTA, and reflect the concerns of our members and allies. Some of this legislation has been filed and supported by MTA in the past. While most of our resources should be directed towards the proposals in the group above, these deserve attention as well.

Eliminate the Fee for Fingerprinting

Our members have unfairly paid the cost of fingerprinting and background checks. The MTA will support efforts to have the state pay the fee.

Address Special Education Costs

The MTA will support efforts - via the Foundation Budget Review Commission and legislation it proposes - to increase the circuit breaker and the SPED factor in calculating the Foundation Budget.

Public Employee Right to Strike

We must continue to argue for the basic right to strike enjoyed by public sector unions in other states.

Massachusetts Teacher Retirement System membership for Board Certified Behavior Analysts

MTA will work to create licensure for BCBA's that would give them membership in the MTRS.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah McCarthy (Chair), Hull Teachers Association
Barbara Barry, Watertown Educators Association
Andrei Joseph, Concord-Carlisle Teachers Association, Retired
Jackie Lawrence, Somerville Teachers Association
Arthur MacEwan, UMass Boston, Retired
Max Page (Co-Chair), UMass Amherst
Dean Robinson, UMass Amherst

Janet Anderson, MTA Vice-President
Barbara Madeloni, MTA President