

December 15, 2017

1. **Opportunities to Participate in the Governance of Your Union:** Nominations are open for the following elected positions:
 - **MTA President, Vice President, At-Large Director for Ethnic Minority Membership on the Board of Directors, 17 District Director seats on the Board.** These positions will be filled by delegates at the 2018 Annual Meeting and have a nomination deadline of March 2. Nomination papers should be requested from the Division of Governance and Administration, MTAGovernance@massteacher.org.
 - **Three MTA seats on the NEA Board of Directors and two Alternate NEA Directors.** These positions have a nomination deadline of Jan. 12. Nomination papers should be requested from the Division of Governance and Administration, MTAGovernance@massteacher.org.
 - **Delegates to Annual Meeting.** Retired member delegate seats and regional ethnic minority delegate seats have a nomination deadline of Jan. 12. Those interested may self-nominate by using the form available at massteacher.org/nomform. *
 - **Delegates to the NEA RA.** The MTA holds elections for statewide, regional and retired delegate seats to the NEA Representative Assembly (June 30-July 5 in Minneapolis). These seats have a nomination deadline of Jan. 12. Those interested may self-nominate by using the form available at massteacher.org/nomform. *
 - **Candidate Recommendation Committee.** The committee is responsible for making recommendations to MTA members to support candidates for state and federal office. Elections will be held to fill seats representing the following congressional districts: CD1, CD3, CD4, CD6, CD7, CD8 and CD9. These seats have a nomination deadline of Dec. 28. Those interested may self-nominate by using the form available at massteacher.org/nomform.
 - **Retired Members Committee.** The committee serves as an important voice for retired members within the MTA. The seats have a nomination deadline of March 2. Four members of the committee will be elected by Statewide Retired District delegates to the 2018 Annual Meeting. Those interested may self-nominate by using the form available at massteacher.org/nomform.

**In addition, local associations elect their own delegates. Those interested should contact their local president and vice president in January for details on the local's election process.*

Please go to massteacher.org/2018governance for further details on all election opportunities.
2. **BESE Meeting:** The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will hold its regular meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 19. A summary of the meeting agenda is provided below:
 - Proposed Implementation of School and District Accountability System
 - ✓ The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will present its current plan for implementing a new accountability system that will meet the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act.
 - ✓ The Massachusetts State ESSA plan was approved by the U.S. Department of Education in September; the plan included a framework for a new accountability system.
 - ✓ Based on materials presented to the DESE Accountability and Assistance Advisory Council on Wednesday, December 13, the DESE has made substantial changes to the accountability system described in the state plan. There has been little or no input from the field on the changes to the system.
 - ✓ The new proposed system includes:

- A system that labels schools for “meeting targets,” partially meeting targets” and “not meeting targets.”
 - Identification of targets for each accountability indicator for all students and for the “bottom 25 percent” of students.
 - A system for calculating whether schools are meeting targets and creating a composite “meeting targets” statistic.
 - Calculating an accountability percentile for all schools.
 - Identifying schools for comprehensive support and for targeted support (ESSA requirement).
- ✓ The proposed system appears to use the same indicators that were included in the Massachusetts State ESSA plan – MCAS scaled scores and SGP, chronic absenteeism, high school completion measures, English language proficiency scores, percentage of students passing all ninth-grade courses and percentage of students completing advanced coursework.
 - ✓ Additional information is needed in order to understand how the system is intended to be implemented.
 - ✓ In January the BESE expects to discuss how the accountability indicators will be weighted in order to calculate scores.

English Learners

- ✓ The BESE materials include a memo on the impact of the recently approved “Act Relative to Language Opportunity for Our Kids.” (LOOK)
- ✓ The DESE summary of LOOK provisions is provided below:

Language Acquisition Programming Flexibility and Oversight

- Provides districts with flexibility in choosing a language acquisition program that best fits the needs of their English Learner population while ensuring accountability through department oversight.
- Requires districts that intend to offer new programs for ELs to submit specific information for review by the department and the district’s parent advisory council. All programs must be based on research and best practices.
- If the department finds that a proposed program fails to meet the applicable requirements, the department will notify the district and provide the corrective steps that the district must take before commencing such a program.
- Districts that intend to offer a new Sheltered English Immersion or alternative instructional English learner program in the next academic year must submit the required information to the department and the district’s parent advisory council by Jan. 1 of the current academic year, which means new EL programs may open no earlier than the 2019-2020 school year.

Increased Input from Parents and Guardians

- Requires districts that serve a significant population of ELs to create EL parent advisory councils made up of parents/guardians of ELs in the district.
- Requires districts to provide notification to parents/guardians of ELs regarding various topics, including their right to choose a language acquisition program among those offered by the district.
- Parents/guardians of ELs may select any language acquisition program offered by the district, provided that the program is appropriate for the age and grade level of the student.

- Parents/guardians may request a transfer of the student to another language acquisition program available in the district, subject to approval by the superintendent.

Educator Qualifications

- Requires the department to establish licensure endorsements for various language acquisition program types (for example, two-way immersion programs).
- Requires the department to provide districts annually with reports of all educators who have current language acquisition program endorsements.
- Requires districts to verify, prior to the beginning of each school year, that each educator in an English learner program is properly endorsed for that program.

Benchmarks, Guidelines and Templates

- Requires the department to establish: (i) benchmarks for attaining English proficiency for ELs; (ii) guidelines to support districts in identifying ELs who do not meet benchmarks; and (iii) an EL success template for use by districts to assist ELs who are not meeting English proficiency benchmarks.
- Requires districts to provide a copy of these materials from the department to parents/guardians of ELs within the timeframes specified in the law.
- Requires districts to adopt procedures to identify ELs who do not meet the English proficiency benchmarks and establish various processes relating to them.

Data and Reporting

- Expands EL-related reporting requirements for districts to the department.
- Establishes a data commission to study the collection and dissemination of data on ELs and to make recommendations on streamlining data reporting.

State Seal of Biliteracy

- Directs the BESE to establish the State Seal of Biliteracy. Districts may award the seal to students who meet the state criteria in attaining a high level of proficiency in English and at least one other language.

- RETELL for Vocational Technical teachers
 - ✓ The DESE is considering extending the SEI Endorsement requirement to vocational technical teachers. To this end, the DESE is offering two pilot SEI Endorsement courses at Greater Lawrence Vocational Technical High School and Worcester Vocational Technical High School.
 - ✓ About 50 teachers are participating in this voluntary pilot program.
- BESE meeting documents are posted [here](#).
- Livestream of the BESE meeting will be available [here](#).

3. **Change in Senate Leadership:** On Monday, Dec. 4, Senate President Stan Rosenberg (D-Amherst) [announced](#) he was temporarily stepping down from his position pending the outcome of an [investigation](#) into allegations of sexual misconduct brought against his husband, Bryon Hefner, as well as reports of Hefner claiming to have influence over Senate business. The allegations stem from a *Boston Globe* [report](#) that detailed allegations by four men who said they were assaulted or harassed by Hefner and feared coming forward due to his perceived sway over legislative decision-making. While the *Globe* found no evidence that Rosenberg was aware of the alleged incidents, the Senate president faced increasing pressure to step aside for at least the duration of the probe.

After a daylong meeting following Rosenberg's announcement, his Senate colleagues elected majority leader Harriette Chandler (D-Worcester) as acting Senate president. Chandler is managing the day-to-day

business of the Senate until the investigation is concluded, after which she has said she will step aside from the top leadership post. It appears that Rosenberg plans to resume his tenure as president after the investigation provided there are no findings of wrongdoing, but it may ultimately prove [difficult for him to return](#). At least [four other senators](#) used the recent developments as an opportunity to gauge support among their colleagues for potential bids for the presidency.

4. **Republican Dean Tran Wins Senate Seat:** Republican Dean Tran of Fitchburg [was elected as the new state senator](#) for the Worcester and Middlesex District, defeating MTA-recommended candidate Sue Chalifoux Zephir, a Leominster Democrat, by approximately 600 votes. Two other candidates, one of whom was unenrolled and the other a Green-Rainbow party candidate, finished a distant third and fourth respectively but likely pulled votes away from Chalifoux Zephir. The special election was held to replace former Senator Jen Flanagan (D-Leominster), who resigned earlier this year to take a position with the Cannabis Control Commission. While Tran's victory means the GOP now controls seven of the 40 seats in the state Senate, Democrats still retain their supermajority, with 33 sitting members.
5. **State Kicks Off FY19 Budget Process:** Although FY18 began just five months ago, state officials are already working to develop the FY19 budget. As part of this process, the Joint Committee on Ways and Means and the Executive Office of Administration and Finance on Dec. 6 held their annual consensus revenue hearing. This hearing provides a forum at which state officials, local economists and other experts can share their thoughts on the revenue and economic outlook for the coming year.

Testimony from the hearing will be considered by A&F Secretary Michael Heffernan, Senate Ways and Means Chair Karen Spilka (D-Ashland) and House Ways and Means Chair Jeffrey Sánchez (D-Boston) as they develop an initial FY19 revenue projection, which the three officials are required to release publicly by Jan. 15, 2018. The revenue figure they agree upon will be used as the basis from which the governor, House and Senate will draft their FY19 budgets.

GR staff attended the hearing. Here are some key takeaways:

- The Massachusetts Department of Revenue projects that FY19 revenues will total between \$27.37 billion and \$27.58 billion, representing a 3.3-4.1 percent increase over the FY18 benchmark of \$26.504 billion. Through November 2017, FY18 state revenues are running \$204 million above the year-to-date benchmark. This is welcome news considering the Commonwealth's poor revenue performance in recent years.
 - State officials are closely monitoring the national discussions on health care and taxes, both of which could adversely affect Massachusetts depending on which proposals are enacted by Congress. On a positive note, the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation estimates there could be a one-time influx of \$450 million in capital gains tax revenue in FY18 should the Republican tax plan be enacted this year.
 - The MTF estimates that the 2018 ballot initiative reducing the state sales tax from 6.25 percent to 5 percent would lower revenues by approximately \$650 million in FY19 and \$1.5 billion in FY20. The Fair Share Amendment would bring in an estimated \$1.9 billion in revenue in FY20, according to the measure's supporters. The state Department of Revenue did not provide revenue estimates associated with ballot questions.
6. **2018 MTA All Presidents' January Meeting:** Saturday, Jan. 20, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.; Doubletree by Hilton Boston-Westborough. The meeting will include a focus on legal, contractual, budget and membership engagement issues in preparation for the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in the *Janus* case and the anticipated negative

outcome for unions. We build our strength when we include more voices. Presidents are encouraged to have treasurers and one other leader join them. Together we will learn from each other. We are stronger together when we are ALL IN.

7. **Union Skills Winter Conference:** Please join us on Saturday, Jan. 6, for MTA's first Union Skills Winter Conference. The day will include a wide variety of 90-minute workshops related to the core activities of local unions. This is a great opportunity to develop new member leaders and broaden the expertise of the local in essential union skills. Do you need more members who can assist with grievances? Have some of your members attend our grievance workshops. Are you entering negotiations this spring? Join our collective bargaining sessions. Do you want more trainings for the member leaders of your All In campaign? Take advantage of our member engagement workshops! **To help us in our planning, please encourage your members to register ASAP. There is no need to register as a team.** Don't Delay! Jan. 6 is right around the corner. A complete list of workshop descriptions for this free event is available [here](#). Register today: <http://massteacher.org/unionskills>.

Request for Proposals: MTA ESP Conference Workshops: The MTA Education Support Professionals Committee invites you to share your expertise with ESPs from across Massachusetts at the annual ESP Conference, to be held on Friday and Saturday, April 6-7, 2018. The conference will offer education support professionals the chance to discuss some of the most pressing issues in education today — as well as opportunities to attend workshops to build skills and broaden professional networks. Education support professionals have a wide range of responsibilities and jobs. To provide a better understanding of the many functions and roles of ESPs, the following is a list of career categories (in order of largest to smallest).

- Paraeducators
- Clerical Services
- Custodial and Maintenance Services
- Food Services
- Transportation Services
- Technical Services
- Skilled Trades Services
- Security Services
- Health and Student Services
- Higher Education (included in all the categories above)

The committee is currently accepting proposals for two-hour workshops. Presenters will be paid \$200 per workshop. Proposals will be evaluated based on the strength of their descriptions (250 words or less).

Please include the following information:

- Goals/objectives that will make sure ESPs leave the workshop with practical skills, tools and techniques they can immediately apply to their work.
- Interactive teaching strategies to model excellent pedagogy aligned to the content of the workshop.
- Clear description of the intended audience for the workshop (job roles, grade levels, skill levels, etc.).

The committee has chosen the following strands to focus on at this year's conference:

- Health and Wellness — For students and educators. Includes topics on stress management, mindfulness, social/emotional learning, student substance abuse, bullying, suicide prevention, etc.

- Classroom Instruction and Management — Skills and strategies that can be used to support students in the classroom.
- Technology — May include devices and software for office, classroom or personal use.
- Union Skills — Including organizing skills, bargaining, grievance procedures, etc.

When selecting workshops, the committee will choose from the strongest proposals that provide a balanced program to meet the needs of our diverse group of participants. The committee prefers that at least one of the presenters for each workshop be an ESP. About 350 ESP members from across the state are expected to attend. Workshops range in size from 10 to 60.

The submission deadline is Sunday, Jan.7, 2018. [Submit your abstract here.](#)

8. **Do you know a great place for meetings?** In an effort to create a database of affordable meeting and event venues, the MTA Division of Training and Professional Learning needs your help. We are looking for local association offices, schools or colleges that could accommodate evening meetings and/or larger conferences.

What we're looking for:

- Local association offices (or other community venues) that can accommodate:
 - 20+ people for a meeting with food
 - Restrooms
 - Parking
 - Wi-Fi
- Schools or colleges that can provide:
 - Large meeting space (e.g., auditorium)
 - Dining space (e.g., cafeteria)
 - Classrooms (with projectors)
 - Hallway/lobby space for registration and exhibits
 - Restrooms
 - Parking
 - Wi-Fi

Please send your suggestions to events@massteacher.org. TPL will follow up with the venues for specific information. Thank you for your help!

9. **MTA Benefits:** Make it easy for your members to discover all of the benefit programs and discounts available to them through MTAB. Put a link on your local's website! If you'd like a copy of our logo for use on your website, please contact Carolyn Cassiani at ccassiani@mtabenefits.com.