

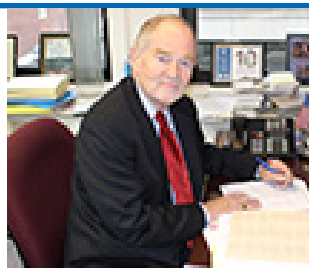


The Advocate

AFT Massachusetts
38 Chauncy Street
Suite 402
Boston, MA 02111

NONPROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Westboro, MA
Permit No. 100

October/November 2016



THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Thomas J. Gosnell
President, AFT Massachusetts

Vote NO on Question 2: Save Our Public Schools

Although every election is important, this year's election is exceptionally important. On the ballot is Question 2 which advocates an increase of twelve charter schools per year for eternity. Keep in mind the following facts about charter schools:

1. During the 2016-17 school year charter schools will drain approximately \$450,000,000 from the district schools throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The addition of more charter schools will drain hundreds of million dollars more.

2. Charter schools are exempt from local oversight. Even though district schools are subject to many local and state educational laws and regulations, charter schools are not subject to all of them. Local school committees have no legal authority to prevent the opening of a charter school even if the local community does not want it. For example, the city of Brockton, represented by many of its elected officials and its citizens, spoke against

the opening of a charter school there. Very few testified in favor. Nonetheless, the appointed Board of Elementary and Secondary Education chose to approve the opening of a charter school in Brockton. This is unfair to the students attending the public schools in Brockton.

See what YOU
stand to lose
from
Question 2
(page 11)

3. The law does not require that teachers in charter schools be licensed. The law requires that teachers in district schools go through a rigorous process to obtain a license.

No license means no teaching position in the district schools. Is it not twisted logic which asserts that one set of public school teachers need be licensed while the other set is exempt? Incidentally, although under the law charter schools are public schools, they actually operate like private schools.

4. District public schools accept all students. Students with severe special needs are welcome. English Language Barrier Students whose English is severely limited, if not, non-existent, are welcome. Some students are even illiterate in their native languages. Charter schools do not accept these students. Expansion

of the number of charter schools would move Massachusetts toward a two tier educational system. One system would not accept all students while one would accept all students including those whose educational needs would require significantly more resources.

Recently, the National Association for Colored People (NAACP) called for a halt to charter school expansion. Juan Cofield, President of the New England Area Conference of the NAACP and chair of the Vote No on Question 2 campaign, stated that "further expansion will lead to a dismantling of the public education system that serves the majority of our kids." Massachusetts schools have consistently been tops in the United States. Question 2 will jeopardize this position.

Between now and Tuesday, November 8, we must do all that we can to defeat Question 2. Participating in phone banks, canvassing the voters, speaking to family and friends, and doing dear friends are the most

effective activities in which to engage. Go to our website (www.aftma.net) to see how you can participate.

If you have questions or comments, you email tgosnell@aftma.net. ■

In This Issue

- 2 Advocate Cartoonist Counts the "Dayz"
- 3 JALSA Pursues Justice
- 4 Meet Your Colleague: Michael Maguire
Benefit Bulletin: iPhone. You Phone.
- 5 Educator Opinion: Advertising Advantages
Educator Opinion: Just Say "No"
- 6 2016 AFT MA Leadership Conference
- 7 AFT MA Endorsements
- 8 HGSE Debate re: Charter Schools
- 9 Schools Still "Safe and Supportive"
- 10 On Campus: What Higher Ed Unions Do
Educator Opinion: Keep the Cap
- 11 Retiree Corner: The Wonder of You



KEEPING GOOD COUNSEL

Boston City Councilor Tito Jackson argues against Question 2 at a recent debate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (for story, please see page 8)

Early Voting is
October 14 through
November 4

Election Day is
Tuesday, November 8

VOTE NO ON 2

AFT MA VOTES

Counting Down the Dayz

Cartoonist calendar a big hit with educators

Teaching is hard. Even though others may perceive the academic calendar as 180 “short” days, those in the schools know that the days are far from short and that to do the work well requires every day of the year. Some years, and even some weeks, it can be hard to keep a smile on your face through every day.

That is why Boston teacher and AFT MA’s resident editorial cartoonist Scott Hubeny has taken time out of many of his busiest days to put pen and ink to paper and create his popular series 180 Dayz (www.180dayz.com).

As has been seen in our publication for over a year, Hubeny’s inside perspective of what his fellow teachers go through on a daily and yearly basis is accurate and pointed. This, and his willingness to take aim at administrators and activists alike, help make Hubeny’s comics so amusing, even when they depict difficult situations, such as the ongoing fight against charter schools and other misappropriations of public education funds.

Hubeny’s comic has proven so popular among his colleagues that he recently decided to compile some of them in a calendar.

“Quite a few of my colleagues and 180 Dayz fans were asking me when some 180 Dayz merchandize would be coming on the horizon,” Hubeny recalls, noting that, among the suggest-

ed items were t-shirts, coffee mugs, and a calendar. “The calendar project really resonated with me as it seemed like something useful to teachers and also something that graphically lends itself to highlighting my cartoons.”

In his new academic year calendar (which is available on the 180 Dayz website and on www.Amazon.com), each page features

a new cartoon that is themed to that time of year. For example, the first September page depicts a teacher returning to their classroom after some time away and getting reacquainted

by sniffing the chalk. March offers a guide to what Hubeny suggests to be “The Teacher’s Ides of March.” The page for May includes more than the usual number of days, reflecting how the merry month can feel for many

teachers.

Though the cartoons are sharp and sharply-drawn, Hubeny was unsure as to whether there would be sufficient interest.

“I decided to launch a crowd-funding campaign on Kickstarter to try to raise awareness and funds.

“Interestingly enough,” Hubeny

notes, “the first person to donate to the campaign was not someone I knew or even someone who has been a fan of the 180 Dayz comic strip, but ...a teacher all the way from the United

Kingdom!”

As more and more of Hubeny’s more local colleagues got wind of the project, they too began to donate and spread the word. Eventually, Hubeny reached his goal and was allowed to proceed.

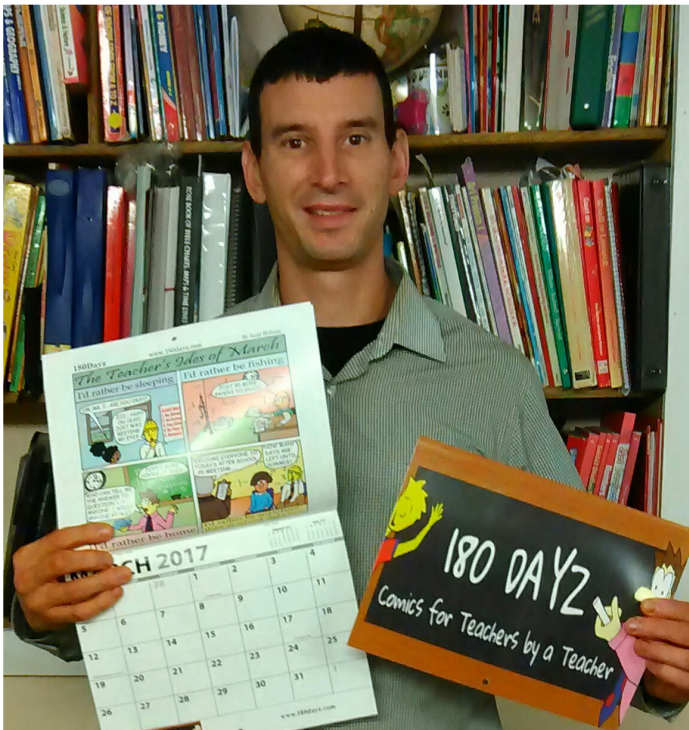
“Reaching the goal enabled me to print calendars and send them out to those who supported the campaign,” he says, noting that there are still a few left for purchase.

As each school year and each calendar leads to the next, Hubeny is already hard at work on next year’s edition and on other ideas and projects as well.

“I am part of the Wipro Science Teaching Fellowship,” he explains, “and as part of this Fellowship I need to complete a leadership project that will help teachers and the quality of instruction. My district coordinator and myself decided it would be a great idea to...create a sort of graphic novel that would help new teachers...survive the first few years of teaching.”

Those who wish to submit stories of early education career trials and triumphs are invited to send them to www.surveymonkey.com/r/5H7QYZZ (or to advocate@aftma.net).

“With all that teachers have to face these days,” Hubeny observes, “it is important that they all try to keep a sense of humor and try to find a creative outlet with which they can deal with the stresses that come with serving our students. I hope my calendar can help with that!” ■



KEEPING SCHOOL DAYS IN ‘TOON
Educator/Artist Scott Hubeny

The Advocate

The official publication of
AFT Massachusetts, AFL-CIO

Thomas J. Gosnell, President
Brant Duncan,
Secretary-Treasurer

VICE PRESIDENTS

Tim Angerhofer
Kimberly Barry
Deborah Blinder
Marie Cawlina-Kasle
Brenda Chaney
Donald Dabenigno
Kathy Delaney
Patricia Driscoll
Marianne Dumont
Brant Duncan
J. Michael Earle
Margaret Farrell
Paul Georges
Daniel Haacker
Debbie LaFond
Susan Leahy
Michael Maguire
Catherina Mastronardi
John McInnis
Francis McLaughlin
Christine Moyer
Bruce Nelson
Sheila O’Neil
Bruce Sparfven
Jonathan Staveley
Richard Stutman
Jessica Tang
Gale Thomas

Matt Robinson, Editor
38 Chauncy St., Suite 402
Boston, Mass. 02111
Tel. 617-423-3342 / 800-279-2523
Fax: 617-423-0174
www.aftma.net / advocate@aftma.net
c. 2016 AFT MA, ARR

Remember:

Early Voting is October 24 - November 4

Election Day is November 8

AFT MA VOTES

BOLD PRINT

The hours for the Department
of Elementary & Secondary
Education (DESE) ‘Hotline’
(781-381-6600) are now Mon-
day through Friday, 9:00 AM-
12:00 PM and 2:00-5:00 PM.

□ □ □ □

Longy School of Music of Bard
College will mark their 100th
year this year with a series of
concerts and other events. Part of
the festivities includes a series of
100-second compositions, as well
as honors from the Cambridge
Chamber of Commerce &
the Harvard Square Business
Association, and nearly \$200,000
in grants for music library
expansion, building renovations,
and to support educational
initiatives.

For information, visit [www.
longy.edu](http://www.longy.edu).

□ □ □ □

Got news to share? Send it to
advocate@aftma.net

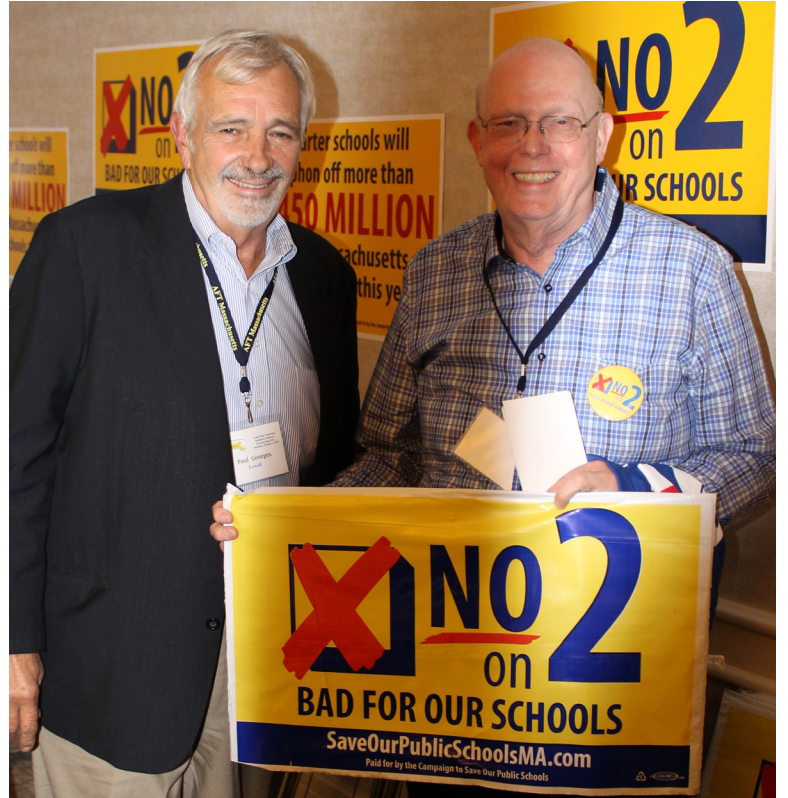
Thank you to our Leaders!

On Saturday, October 8, leaders from across the Commonwealth gathered for the 2016 AFT MA Leadership Conference. We thank them (and all members) for their dedicated service and support. (Please see story on page 6.)



STANDING UP FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS

AFT MA Field Representative Jeremy Shenk with members of the Springfield Federation of Paraprofessionals



LOWELL AND LIBRARIES

United Teachers of Lowell President Paul Georges with MA Library Staff Association member Dan Haacker



COURAGEOUS CONTRIBUTORS

Advocate contributors Anna M. L. Williams and Miriam Fusco



NORTH SHORE SUPPORT

Lynn Teachers Union Recording Secretary Sheila O'Neill and Harrington Elementary School teacher Nancy Doherty

“Justice, Justice Shall You Pursue” JALSA plays key role in fight for public education

One of the most prevalent tenets of Judaism concerns the idea of *tikkun olam*, which is usually translated as “repair of the world.” The ancient logic suggests that the world represents a splintered tunity, and that the role of Mankind is to put the “broken” pieces back together by doing *mitzvot* (“good deeds”).

Today, the world of public education is being broken by those who support charter schools. Though supporters claim that charter schools are public schools that accept all students (as was stated by representatives of Great School MA in the official MA voter’s information guide, and elsewhere), many of these people are false prophets. Even if a charter school accepts students that even partially represent its surrounding community, students who need additional supports are usually ushered out in short order.

The question of whether or not to expand charter schools has become not only a moral question, but also a legal one that will be put to voters on November 8. Many have united under the banner of Save Our Public Schools (www.saveourpublicschoolsma.com) to spread the truth and fight against

those who would remove an additional \$400 million in funds from traditional public schools in order to subsidize charter schools. Among the member organizations are AFT MA, MTA, Citizens for Public Schools, and other education-related groups. However, there are also many organizations that do not always focus on education (at least not exclusively). Among these is the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (www.JALSA.org), a Boston-based organization dedicated to defending civil rights and justice for all.

“Democracy doesn’t work unless you have an educated electorate,” observes JALSA Executive Director Sheila Decter. “Every student needs quality education to make our system work effectively. And that means an investment in our educational system that helps every child to succeed. You can’t use public money to educate one group at the expense of another.”

As they are so dedicated to ensuring justice for all (as guided by the Old

Testament entreaty that “Justice, Justice shall you pursue”), JALSA works with other organizations, both within and outside of the Jewish community, to amplify their voice and support their like-minded colleagues and

friends. Among JALSA’s closest allies is AFT MA.

“JALSA is a long-time ally of AFT MA,” maintains Decter, who cites collaborative efforts that go back to the early 1980s. JALSA is also

a member of the Steering Committee of Raise Up Massachusetts (<http://raiseupma.org>), another organization with which AFT MA is tightly aligned.

For over 15 years, JALSA has been standing with and standing up for people and groups that are facing oppression and unfair treatment. As public school educators are clearly in this group, it may be no surprise that JALSA has become involved with the fight against Question 2.

“Question 2 would harm the local public schools that educate 96% of MA students,” says JALSA’s Director of Advocacy Barbara Gutman. “In coalition with AFT-MA, JALSA advocates

for the rights for all students to have a quality education. It’s justice at its core!”

“JALSA believes that public education is the cornerstone of American democracy,” Decter maintains. “Recognizing that democracy cannot flourish without an educated electorate, JALSA has long recognized that educating all students is a core responsibility of our government.

Another of JALSA’s most firmly-held beliefs when it comes to education is that the “essential responsibility to provide adequate education for all students” is not being met by using public funds to, as Decter puts it, “privatize education for a part of the student population at the expense of the most vulnerable remaining students.” That is another reason why JALSA is against Question 2.

“Over the years, JALSA has learned from its educator allies the need for schools to be able to help the full range of students,” Decter explains, “from those ready to learn on day 1, and those who must face additional challenges of needing to learn English first, needing special services for learning, or those who need breakfast supplied to start the day.... We believe that well-funded public education is essential, and retaining the cap on the development of charter schools is a clear policy choice.” ■

Meet Your Colleague: Michael Maguire

While the real-life stories of teachers may not be so glamorous (especially these days), Hollywood is still able to spin an inspirational yarn once in a while that leads film fans from the cinema into the classroom. Such was the case with recently-elected AFT MA Executive Board member Michael Maguire.

A graduate of Boston Latin Academy who now teaches at BLA, Maguire was on a different professional path before turning to teaching. While preparing for law school, Maguire had an experience that, he suggests, was straight out of the Richard Dreyfus film “Mr. Holland’s Opus.”

“I was working at a Roche Brothers grocery store while I was prepping for the LSAT,” Maguire recalls. “My high school senior year Latin teacher, Mr. Sullivan, called me to ask if I would be interested in substitute teaching. I thought to myself ‘Why not?’ and I never looked back.”

As he had won Boston University’s top student honor - the Buck Fellowship - while an undergraduate majoring in Political Science and Classical Languages and Literature, Maguire was able to take his full scholarship to Greece for a summer. It was there that he truly fell in love with Latin and with the ancient spirit of engaging stu-

dents in discussion in order to enlighten all involved.

When he started at BLA, however, all was not well in the *Agora*. “I was the third teacher that year for seventh, eighth, and ninth grade Latin,” he recalls. “I started subbing in March, and the students were not happy to have yet another teacher.” Fortunately, Maguire enjoyed strong support from the BLA staff, which included many of his former teachers.

Since 1994, Maguire has taught Latin and Ancient Greek at BLA. He has also taught Latin, English, and math in summer school. One of his proudest achievements, however, is organizing annual trips with BLA students that allow and encourage them to see and explore the larger world and to bring back their findings and stories, just as he did from Greece. In 2016, he led 79 students and 11 chaperones to Paris and Rome, the largest contingent of foreign travelers in the history of the Boston Public Schools. He recently returned from Ireland and Scotland with students and has already helped plan four other trips as well.

In addition to supporting students, Maguire has also striven to give back to his colleagues, first as a building

representative and member of BTU’s Executive Board. “I wanted to help other teachers the way my teachers helped me in my first days,” he explains. “Now I hope to do the same here at the AFT MA Executive Board.”

At this particular time, Maguire is especially interested in engaging colleagues and community members to educate them about the dangers of charter school expansion and to work to vote down Question 2 in November. “My goal is to help charter school teachers find a voice in their schools,” Maguire says. “Massachusetts’ schools are again ranked #1 in the nation. I believe it’s due to our strong unionized schools where teachers are not afraid to lose their jobs over disagreements with management. The same cannot be said in the growing charter school movement.”

As a graduate of Boston public schools, Maguire is now a proud parent of two BPS students. “Public education is important to me and to my family,” he maintains. “I love that my children attend school with so many kids of many different backgrounds. I see the attacks on public education as attacks on my children and upon their friends. As a parent, I cannot let that happen. As a teacher and a union member, I won’t let that happen!” ■

This is the third in a series of pieces intended to introduce AFT MA members to new Executive Board members.

Plus, when you buy your iPhone from AT&T and choose the new AT&T Mobile Share Advantage Plans, you’ll enjoy the following features:

- No overages charges
- Unlimited talk and text within the US
- Unlimited texting from the US to over 140 countries
- Sharable and rollover data

Early Voting
10/24 - 11/4

AFT MA VOTES

ATTENTION NEW(ER) TEACHERS

Have you been teaching for fewer than five years?

Do you want to share why you entered education?

Do you have life lessons to impart?

Do you want to support your colleagues and community?

Do you want to be published and paid to write?

Contact
advocate@aftma.net

Benefit Bulletin: iPhone. You Phone.

The new iPhone 7 and 7 Plus are now available. The iPhone 7 has the best battery life, display and performance of any iPhone, but did you know there are three reasons why you should buy your new iPhone - or any wireless device - from AT&T?

Here are some:

1. Exclusive AT&T wireless discounts just for AFT members. With the AT&T wireless discounts through AFT +, union members can save 15% on the monthly service charge of qualified AT&T wireless plans and 20% on select accessories.
2. AT&T is the only nationwide unionized wireless carrier. When you choose AT&T, you’re choosing to support the nearly 150,000 union members from the Communication Workers of America (CWA) employed there. AT&T retail stores are staffed by CWA members, so when you visit an AT&T store, you’ll be helped by a fellow union member.
3. Ranked #1 in cus-

tomers service amount U.S. carriers. AT&T ranks highest in wireless purchase experience (both in store and online) among U.S. carriers, according to a recent study by JD Power. With a network that covers 99% of Americans, that’s a lot of positive feedback!

The decision is clear: whether you are looking to upgrade your current smartphone, add a new line or switch to AT&T, choosing to purchase the iPhone 7 from AT&T is a smart choice for AFT members.

To learn more and save on AT&T wireless service, visit UnionPlus.org/ATT. ■

For Every Part of Your Life



A Union of Professionals
AFT +
Member Benefits

From buying a home or a car to savings on wireless service and travel, Union Plus provides money-saving benefits and services uniquely designed to meet the needs of AFT+ members and their families.

Learn more at
UnionPlus.org/AFT

SAVINGS • SERVICE • SOLIDARITY

Public Schools: Advertising Our Advantages

Educator Opinion By Ronda Goodale

I have watched the ads for and against the expansion of charter schools and am dismayed by the distortions, misrepresentations, and ignored facts presented to the voting public as realities.

In one pro-charter ad, a woman is represented as a public school teacher. It is totally unclear, however, whether she is working at a charter school, since charter school supporters pose their privately-held institutions as public schools and do not differentiate themselves from traditional public schools. It makes one wonder- if they truly were public schools, why we would need to vote on them as a different entity?

In the ad, the woman claims that charter schools are not siphoning off funds from public schools, when clearly this is the whole reason we need to vote because it is a critical funding issue. She speaks of the charters as an option for all students. In reality, however, charter schools serve only a little more than four percent of students and, in some communities, funnel as much as 18 percent from their host district's educational budgets.

The message of the ad is that parents are getting choice without anything being lost. As we all know, however, this is far from the truth for the majority of students and their parents.

Clearly, the money lost impacts key components of programs, including such vital offerings as music, theater, and art (many of which are already threatened as it is). When the ads describe the success of charter school

programs, they never mention that charter schools generally do not serve students with intellectual disabilities and underserve students with behavioral disabilities as well as students on the autism spectrum.

There is a significant cost for serving students with severe disabilities and, even with their already diminished budgets, public schools need to do what it takes to fully address the educational, emotional, social and physical needs of every student. The money that is diverted to charter schools diminishes the total funds allocated to schools and so results in less funds for programs that should be an integral part of a strong educational program and not just considered enrichment.



As much as one can decry the misinformation of the charter school campaign, there are also issues with the ads being run in favor of limiting charter school expansion and promoting traditional public education. Charter schools were created to develop innovative programs that would spark similar innovation in public schools. While the charter school ads fail to highlight any innovations they have implemented in their schools, even though this was supposed to be one of their prime missions, the ads supporting public schools often fail to depict or discuss the many innovations that have been created or adopted by tradi-

tional public schools, such as extended school days, tutoring for students, courses at local colleges, and community service projects.

Another area that is not fully addressed is the attrition rate. Even if a charter school accepts all students or offers a truly need-blind lottery for admission, many of the students with learning or language challenges are soon pushed back out and pushed back into public schools that no longer have the funding necessary to support them, but must find them at the expense of cutting something from the program. Traditional public schools are mandated to reach and teach every single student regardless of their abilities and needs. Charter schools are

not so mandated and often take full advantage of this fact.

In addition to student attrition, charter schools also suffer from a larger incidence of teacher attrition. Most research suggests that it takes a full 10 years for a teacher to be truly expert in their field. Unfortunately, as charter school teachers are often asked to work longer hours for less pay, many educators who enter a charter school full of energy soon find themselves worn out and leaving the school and often the educational field altogether after only a few years. In addition to disrupting their professional lives, such circumstances also disrupt the

learning of their students who are unable to get to know them and to count on them in later years.

It is predicted that, in the next 10 years, there will be a lack of teachers in special education, as well as in math and science. Neither the supporters of charter schools nor public schools speak to the impact of limited resources and the overall impact on sound education. The fact that charter school teachers come and go so quickly only hastens these challenges.

Even for the students who are allowed to remain, charter schools often do not provide them with the same level of support. For example, while many traditional public schools offer technical programs in addition to their college preparatory programs, most charter schools do not. As a result, they are less qualified and less willing to support students for whom such an alternative may be most effective.

When parents are polled about their overall satisfaction with their children's education, almost all public school parents indicate a high level of satisfaction. Unfortunately, such parental feedback is also not well represented in the ads. This is especially glaring as it is the parents who will be voting on November 9.

Many ads that support charter school distort the truth. On the other hand, ads in favor of public schools do not include enough to underscore their strength and vibrancy. Hopefully, voters will be able to get to the truth before they go to the booth ■

Ronda Goodale is a retired Boston teacher who now teaches at Cambridge College and other area colleges and universities.

Just Say "No"

Educator Opinion By Miriam Fusco

How do you respond to someone who wants to move a child into a charter school?

Do your homework!

Here are the facts about charter schools:

Their original purpose was to serve as a laboratory in which best practices could be developed and from which traditional public schools could learn.

In my many years as an educator in the public school system who shares responsibilities of educating students in a community where a handful of charter schools exist, not once have I encountered the sharing of any "wisdom" obtained from charter schools.

All details of charter school operation – including the school's name, organization, management, and curriculum – are set by the charter, which also outlines how the school will measure student performance. A charter school has freedom and autonomy from state and local rules in terms of staffing, curriculum choices, and budget management. Charter schools can be operated by any person who can meet the require-

ments for opening a charter school. They can also determine the rules of hiring and firing and accepting or rejecting whomever they want, including students, despite the ostensible use of a lottery system. Charter schools can also choose how much funds will be allocated to the actual student learning and they can decide what students should be learning and how their learning will be measured.

These freedoms seem to offer an unbalanced amount of power among charter school operators, parents, educators, and students and creates a

system that historically has been proven ineffective and unhealthy for developing successful participants in any community.

If your child's school is falling short, instead of running to another school with its own set of problems, stand up and fight for more funding to make your child's school a place you want your child to be. Voice your opinion,

get involved, and I promise that you will be surprised with the results.

Why gamble with your child's education? Charter school rules on funding, operational requirements, and accountability vary widely across the nation. Why send your child to a school system that has no continuity or guarantee for your investment?



"KEEP THE CAP"
Miriam Fusco

Why trust a school system that does not allow taxpayers to know, decide, or voice how their tax dollars are used?

Charter school staff tend to have fewer years of experience and are paid less than those at a traditional public school. Nearly 30% of charter school teachers have less than three years of full-time teaching experience compared with 12% percent of those at traditional public schools. How can you trust that your child will receive a quality education when the school system's teachers work with such minimal experience and support? Personally, I would not like my child to always be educated by a "beginning" teacher. I would prefer that my child have the benefit of being educated by a more seasoned teacher for as many years as possible.

The charter school system is designed to use funding earmarked for the traditional public schools, leaving them with less resources to educate the students the charter school system does not. How can one support a system that takes away financial support from the very system it was designed to help improve? The concept doesn't make sense at all! The charter school system was designed to offer another educational option for some students, not to replace one that was designed for all. How can one support this movement, knowing that it operates to serve a few by weakening a system that serves many more?

As we have so much at stake, both

in terms of our livelihoods and our children's education, I call on all of us to do all we can to oppose the growth of the charter school system in Massachusetts (and across the nation) until the rules and regulations and funding policies are changed so that they do not negatively impact the traditional public school system. We must continue to oppose a system that is not accountable to the communities in which they operate. Local communities should have the final say in what kind of schools they want in their communities. We must continue to oppose a system that provides a separate and unequal education to all students.

The U.S. Constitution requires that all children be given equal educational opportunity no matter what their race, ethnic background, religion, sex, or whether they are rich or poor, citizen or non-citizen. So, this November, I'm hoping everyone will raise their voices by voting no to the lifting the cap on charter schools. Just say "NO". ■

Miriam Fusco, M.S. CCC-SLP, is an 18-year bilingual speech/language pathologist in the Lynn Public Schools.

**Get the latest
AFT MA news at
www.aftma.net**

A Gathering of Leaders

Leadership Conference Unites Members

“This is a big time for us,” observed AFT MA President Tom Gosnell in his introduction to the nearly 90 members in attendance at the 2016 AFT MA Leadership Conference. “We have a big challenge, and it is not just for K-12 schools.... Question 2 affects *all* of us!”

Noting how AFT MA also represents 31 public libraries and groups of paraprofessionals, custodians, and other dedicated workers, as well as public and private sector institutions of higher education, Gosnell suggested that, “We’re all part of the challenge.”

This encouragement of inclusion and engagement was echoed by Lynda Tocci from Save Our Public Schools (<https://saveourpublicschoolsma.com>).

“We have been accused of funding the campaign through the teachers’ unions,” Tocci explained. “And we are proud of that!”

As people “trust” teachers, Tocci maintained that the members of AFT MA and its affiliates are “the best messengers” and urged everyone to do everything they could to defeat this ballot initiative.

“Our opponents want to make [this campaign] about...[only] places where parents are looking for choice and change,” Tocci observed. “Tom [Gosnell] was one of the first people to say that we can’t let them pin us down to those areas. Every community is at risk for losing students and funds to charter schools.”

In describing our pro-charter opponents, Tocci cited such immoral practices as false enrollments and recruiting for what is purported to be a fair and equitable lottery system. She also noted that the advertising agency that was working in favor of Question 2 was the same one that produced the infamous “Swiftboat” ads against then Sen. John Kerry.

“They have outspent us about two to one,” Tocci explained, noting how, according to polling, the anti-Question 2 message is prevailing. “Our message works.... Because we have all of you, we win on the ground.”

As of the time of this publication, over 140 MA communities had drafted resolutions against Question 2 (as opposed to none in favor). Even so, Tocci encouraged everyone to keep up the fight as we sprint towards the finish on November 8.

“Tell your stories,” Tocci urged. “Make it personal. When people hear the truth, they vote in our favor.”

When asked how to be convincing, AFT MA Political Organizer Brian LaPierre advised members to “Introduce yourself as a public educator... and explain how each community is losing millions of dollars and that those funds are coming out of your [neighbors’] kids’ schools. He also advised members to mention specific examples of programs that have been cut, as well as increased class size. “After you educate,” LaPierre encouraged, “you turn people into ‘No on 2’ supporters.”

Citing a recent event during which 80 Lynn students spoke to voters and convinced hundreds of voters to vote against Question 2, LaPierre suggested

that, “the kids are our best messengers,” and emphasized that, “there is nobody who will vote against a teacher with their student.”

Noting that early voting starts October 24, Tocci also suggested that people also write to legislators and local newspaper editors, share the campaign on Facebook and Twitter, and get more involved by texting “Keep the cap” to 313131.

“We are usually the biggest union in every town,” observed AFT MA Field Representative Jeremy Shenk before encouraging members to “throw their weight around” and to “show your superintendents that our membership is mobilized and serious.”

Field Representative Eric Blanchet noted how, in Labor history, we are strongest when overcoming struggles

“We need to re-learn that,” he suggested. “We need to get our members to...come together over something.”

Boston Teachers Union Representative Johnny McInnis also made sure to mention that we must all reach out to the Black and Latino communities and to make sure that they are on our side as well, especially as many of our opponents court them with false promises.

“We have to remember everyone,” Tocci agreed, mentioning a “very large event” that was being planned for the middle of October.

When AFT MA Director of Educational Policy and Programs Dan Murphy asked Tocci what to say to those who talk about helping “underserved communities,” Tocci advised emphasizing how 96 percent of students do not go to charter schools.

Though many charter schools act without any local oversight, Gosnell warned that, even though most people only think of charters as affecting urban and so-called “low-performing” districts, Question 2 would make them a reality for every city and town.

“Those of us in Lynn and Lowell and Boston and Lawrence already know about charter schools,” Gosnell observed. “This may bring them to other communities as well.”

Speaking of Lowell, United Teachers of Lowell President Paul Georges remarked that he has been discussing this issue often on his radio show on WCAP (<http://98owcap.com>). He also noted that many of the alleged pro-charter supporters are actually being paid to canvass while all the anti-Question 2 people he knows are doing it because they truly know and believe how bad charters are for public education.

“They are doing it on their own time because they care about the state of education in this state,” Georges maintained. “That is personal and people respond to it.”

When Field Representative Andy Powell asked if the opposition is trying to build a ground campaign, Tocci responded that they are “desperately trying,” but echoed Georges in reiterating that “our stories are more powerful than their money.”

Speaking of the money, Lawrence Teachers Union President Frank McLaughlin suggested that the untraceable “dark money” is “like a disease” in

that it is also infiltrating other campaigns as well.

“The money is lost forever,” Gosnell observed, noting how the imbalance of funds between the two sides of this issue has emphasized “the value of affiliation.”

As the budget is tight and as there are rules concerning campaigning about political issues, LaPierre advised members to take as many materials as they could from the event but to use them efficiently. He also warned them not to use school property (e.g., copy machines and paper) to increase their material stores, but encouraged them to engage people before and after school, as so many did on Walk-In that was sponsored on October 6 by the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools (www.reclaimourschools.org).

“We need to have activism seven days a week,” LaPierre urged, encouraging members to make calls and go door-to-door to enhance that personal connection and to make sure their friends and neighbors understand the issues and know the truth. “We need to step it up. We cannot look back November 10 and say we could have done more.”

When asked what to do if a campaigner is asked about their union affiliation, Gosnell urged them to proudly claim it.

“Say ‘Yes- I am with a teachers union,’” he advised, “and then explain what teachers do- We fight for smaller class sizes and for keeping the resources in the public schools.”

Gosnell also reiterated the point he made while a guest on Dan Rea’s “Nightside” on WBZ AM 1030 (where he will probably appear again before the election) that, while charters may accept student with “mild” special needs and language issues, “they do not take as many or as severe issues as the public schools do.”

With the issues laid out, the Conference turned to other matters, including other financial matters. Secretary-Treasurer Brant Duncan advised the assembled leaders on their fiscal responsibilities and Special Assistant to the President Ed Doherty spoke of the campaign for the proposed constitutional amendment known as “fair share tax” or “millionaire’s tax.” Encouraging members to get involved with Raise Up MA (www.raiseupma.org), Doherty explained that, if passed, the amendment will raise income taxes of those who make over \$1 million a year to 9 percent, which will result in a predicted budget increase of over \$1 billion, all of which is intended for infrastructure, public transportation and public education.

Gosnell then spoke briefly about the forthcoming presidential election, noting that, while the decision may be “all over in MA, it is not over nationwide.” Gosnell also noted that, depending upon the Supreme Court appointments that are sure to come in the next few years, a troubling case like Friedrichs (see February/March 2016 issue) may arise again.

After lunch, Shenk and AFT Representative Erica McDuffie discussed the importance of member engagement

“We want to reach all 1.6 million of

our members,” McDuffie explained, recalling an engagement “blitz” that was launched by AFT. “It is all about member-to-member engagement.”

As our opponents are actively mounting campaigns (and even Supreme Court cases) against us, McDuffie and Shenk emphasized how important it is to engage all of our members and to educate the public as well. AFT MA Field Representatives Mike Regan, Caryn Laflamme and Powell discussed specific goals for our membership, including state-wide engagement and learning more about what our members want so AFT MA can serve them even more effectively.

“The movement is you,” Regan observed, thanking all members for all they do, especially considering how overwhelmed so many are by academic and other job-related duties.

“I know what you do in addition to your full-time job because I did it,” the former Medway teacher and coach said. “All of have something in common...you all feel an obligation to serve...which speaks volumes of you.”

As so many members are so committed and as there are so many members to engage, the best way to make each member’s job easier, Regan suggested, is to get more people on board to help them do it.

“We are committed to making this union a better place for all of us,” Regan pledged. “We need your help.”

Defining “activists” as “members who regularly participate in union activities and who can be counted on to regularly advance union objectives,” Laflamme asked the assembled members how they became involved and encouraged current members to reach out to new members and become their “first friend and best friend.”

Admitting that he hears many people say they do not know what the union does for them, Powell explained that a major goal of both AFT MA and AFT is to “identify what is important to [our] members...so we can bring that value back.”

“Find out what your members want,” advised Springfield Federation of Paraprofessionals President Cathy Mastronardi, who also promoted programs like FirstBook (www.firstbook.org) as a means of community engagement

“We remind our members that it’s not *the* union,” suggested North Attleboro President Nicole Reminder, recalling a campaign to connect with every member by distributing individual membership cards, “it’s *their* union.”

Shenk then noted that additional trainings were in development to help ensure that each and every member was best prepared to participate.

“You need to assess where you are before you can get where you want to go,” Shenk observed.

No matter what they do, the Leadership Conference made it clear that presidents, treasurers, and each and every member has a vital role to play in the future of our union and in the future of public education.

“The survival of the union depends on engagement,” McLaughlin observed. “We have so much going on, the only way to do it all is to get more people involved.... The time is now!” ■

AFT MA RECOMMENDS

The American Federation of Teachers MA endorses candidates because elected officials make many decisions affecting its members. We try to elect those who support public schools, public libraries, unions, and labor issues. Those listed below have been endorsed by the Executive Board of the American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts because of their voting records or because of the positions they have taken.

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA HILLARY CLINTON (D)

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	
DISTRICT 2	U.S. REP. McGOVERN (D)
DISTRICT 3	U.S. REP. TSONGAS (D)
DISTRICT 4	U.S. REP. KENNEDY (D)
DISTRICT 5	U.S. REP. CLARK (D)
DISTRICT 7	U.S. REP. CAPUANO (D)
DISTRICT 9	U.S. REP. KEATING (D)

ENDORSED STATE REPRESENTATIVE AND STATE SENATOR INCUMBENTS

- REP. CHRISTINE BARBER (D – Somerville)
- REP. GERRY CASSIDY (D – Brockton)
- REP. TACKEY CHAN (D – Quincy)
- REP. BRENDAN CRIGHTON (D – Lynn)
- REP. DANIEL CULLINANE (D – Dorchester)
- REP. JOSH CUTLER (D – Duxbury)
- REP. MICHAEL DAY (D – Stoneham)
- REP. MARJORIE DECKER (D – Cambridge)
- REP. DIANA DiZOGGIO (D-Methuen)
- REP. RADY MOM (D-Lowell)
- REP. FRANK SMIZIK (D-Brookline)
- REP. PAUL TUCKER (D – Salem)
- REP. STEVEN ULTRINO (D-Malden)
- SEN. PATRICIA JEHLLEN (D – Somerville)
- SEN. BARBARA L’ITALIEN (D – Andover)
- SEN. ERIC LESSER (D – Longmeadow)
- SEN. JASON LEWIS (D – Winchester)
- SEN. THOMAS McGEE (D – Lynn)
- SEN. MICHAEL MOORE (D – Millbury)
- SEN. PATRICK O’CONNOR (R- Weymouth)
- SEN. KATHLEEN O’CONNOR IVES (D - Newburyport)
- SEN. MARC PACHECO (D – Taunton)

ENDORSED NON-INCUMBENTS

- FOR REP. MICHAEL CONNOLLY (D-Cambridge)
- FOR REP. NATALIE HIGGINS (D – Leominster)
- FOR REP. PAUL JACQUES (D – Rehoboth)
- FOR REP. JACK LEWIS (D – Framingham)
- FOR REP. JOAN MESCHINO (D – Hull)
- FOR REP. JENNIFER MIGLIORE (D – Saugus)
- FOR REP. KARA NYMAN (D – Hanover)
- FOR SEN. ADAM HINDS (D – Pittsfield)
- FOR SEN. WALTER TIMILTY (D –Milton)

Early voting starts October 24
Election Day is November 8

VOTE

Begging the Question

Harvard hosts HubWeek debate re: charter schools

As part of the HubWeek Festival (www.hubweek.org), Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) hosted a debate concerning the question of whether there should be more charter schools. Though the debate was hosted in Cambridge and though the issue is a major one for all residents of the Commonwealth (for whom it will be posed as ballot question 2 on November 8), the debate had much further-reaching ramifications, as many other states are looking to MA for leadership in this element of public education, just as they have long looked to our state for leadership in education overall.

The main hall was filled to capacity, with two overflow locations and live streaming being offered. Guests were encouraged to have their voices heard by participating in a real-time poll regarding their stance on what will be Question 2- namely, whether or not the cap on charter schools should be lifted so that 12 new charter schools may open each year.

The debate, which is the first in HGSE's series of Askwith Forums, was moderated by Paul Reville, a former MA Secretary of Education who now serves as HGSE's Francis Keppel Professor of Practice of Educational Policy and Administration. Panelists included Boston City Councilor and Chair of the Council's Committee on Education Tito Jackson, MA Charter Public School Association Director Mark Kenen, charter parent LaTasha Sarpy, and Michael Robinson, whose children - all of whom have neurological disorders - left a charter school to reenter a traditional public school in Mansfield. Among the audience members were educational thought leaders, public and charter school educators, members of the Harvard administration, and HGSE students who will soon be entering the field.

Professor Reville opened the Forum by offering context for the discussion, recalling the original intention of charter schools, which was to act as a system of experimental schools that would develop and then share best practices with their traditional public schools. Reville then focused on the history of charter schools in MA, citing their original goals, among which were to provide an alternative means of education that would hold teachers and administrators accountable for the quality of public education.

"It has not been easy," he admitted, citing the "David and Goliath" scenario that has emerged.

Speaking specifically of the cap, Reville explained that, "The original proposal capped the number of charter schools in various ways," but then went on to point out how, "at various times, the caps...have been lifted."

In his opening statement, Kenen expressed his excitement over the interest that has been shown in this issue and what it says about the importance of education in MA.

"We don't consider this a war," Kenen said, revealing himself as a coauthor of the ballot question and inviting people to join his organization's "road show" as it continues towards the election. "We consider it an activi-

ty in democracy."

Promoting charter schools as public, Kenen suggested that the issue of whether funds are being redirected away from public schools is largely moot, as the original statute regarding charter schools defines them as "public."

"You may not like or agree with the kind of public schools we are," he said, "but we are public."

Kenen also cited Harvard studies that allegedly prove the superior performance of charter schools before mildly denigrating BPS parents and others who are fighting against them.

Councilor Jackson opened by noting how this is the first time in history that we are taking money away from existing schools and giving money to schools that do not even exist yet.

"I do not have children of my own," he said, "but I have 70,000 children who are mine...and they are all gonna' get beat up!"

schools and that charter students use BPS buses and other public systems, Jackson asked Kenen why the question does not mention funding.

"This does not help the charters who are here already," Jackson pointed out. "They should be receiving more funding as well...but [the public schools] are \$1 billion underfunded.... Why are you taking from districts instead of giving to all?"

Jackson also brought up how most charter school boards do not include parents and how many charter schools are run remotely with no district oversight or administration. Along these same lines, he questioned how the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) can oversee every school from one central office.

"How can once board in Malden control every school across MA?" Jackson asked.

As so many charters and education administrators are out of touch with

that exist and not create a separate but unequal system."

As a professor at Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC), Sarpy emphasized the importance of education and said that she had seen students coming from diverse backgrounds and also from both traditional public and charter schools.

"Many of my students are frustrated by the stratification of the education system," she said, noting how many students are placed in remedial courses at BHCC because their high schools do not effectively prepare them for college.

Though others may pose the question of charter schools as one of access and accountability, Sarpy chose instead to focus on the idea of choice.

"Lifting the cap does not hurt those who already have good district schools," she suggested, "but it helps those who do not."

As a consultant who had only taught religious school classes himself, Robinson admitted his lack of expertise in educational policy (though many members of his family taught, including an uncle who was at Boston Latin School for over 40 years), but emphasized his ability to work with data.

"The metrics of success were never established," he said of charter schools, suggesting that the charter model is therefore a "failed model." He also noted how, despite Kenen's fervent claims of "transparency," charter school data was difficult to find, especially those pertaining to per-pupil expenditure and teacher salary. On the other hand, Robinson said it was easy to find the many charter board members who come from the financial sector and suggested that this might constitute a "conflict of interest."

As a parent, Robinson also emotionally emphasized how it feels to have children mistreated in charter schools.

"I am here to represent the voices of children who are not heard in this debate," he said, making special mention of children who, like his own, have special needs and who, historically, are underrepresented and underserved by charter schools.

Combining the ideas of failed models and failed students, Robinson said, "the school treated my daughter like garbage," recalling daily calls to pick up his "noncompliant" daughter who has paralyzing Tourette's syndrome, "and that is a failure!"

Recalling that he had originally entered the charter lottery because there was no other full-day alternative in his town, Robinson explained that he had heard stories in which charter schools had proven "harmful" to students, but literally had no choice.

"We thought those people were just angry about the funding that was taken away from public schools," he said, referring to the people who had shared horrific stories of mental and physical abuse. "We should have listened."

Though most charters claim to allow in students with special needs in the same way as they admit all other students (i.e., through the lottery), Jackson mentioned how the law had to be changed in order to "force" char-

Continued on page 7



NO on 2

BAD FOR OUR SCHOOLS

QUESTION 2

on the ballot this November would allow the state to approve 12 new Commonwealth charter schools every year forever, eventually draining billions of dollars from our schools and destabilizing our public education system. It would encourage charters to expand into areas where they don't exist now, taking critical resources away from successful public schools.



LOST FUNDING

This year alone, charters will divert more than \$400 million from public schools. That's money districts desperately need so they can offer more science, technology, arts and music classes, as well as preschool services and smaller class sizes. The money should be kept in the public schools for the benefit of all students.



NO LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Charter schools are not accountable to their local communities. The state often approves them over the united opposition of the communities where they will be located. That's wrong. Local communities should have the final say on what kinds of schools they want.



'SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL' EDUCATION

Charter schools are divisive, creating a two-track system described by the NAACP as "separate and unequal." They typically underserve English language learners and special needs students, leaving public schools with fewer resources to educate a higher-need population.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Our opponents have millions of dollars from hedge funds and corporate backers. We rely on people power to stand up for children in our public schools. If some of our public schools are falling short, we should fix them — not keep taking money away and giving it to unaccountable charters.

 SaveOurPublicSchoolsMA.com

 [@SOPublicSchools](https://twitter.com/SOPublicSchools)

 [FB.com/SaveOurPublicSchools](https://www.facebook.com/SaveOurPublicSchools)

Printed in house.

Jackson went on to posit that, despite the title, this really was not a debate about having charters or no charters. Rather, he suggested, it was about adding new schools without adding to the education budget.

"This is 12 schools each year, every year, forever," Jackson emphasized, suggesting that we already have too many schools to support with the given budget and noting that Question 2 will mean an additional \$400 million being extracted from two-thirds of the districts in the Commonwealth. After noting that \$175 million of the annual \$235 million education budget in Boston alone already goes to charter

the students and communities they serve, and as many see charters as segregated through their common practices of suspending and expelling students of certain backgrounds or with certain life circumstances, Jackson could see why the Black Lives Matter movement and the NAACP had both come out against Question 2.

"Boston is...the best public school system," Jackson maintained, noting how only four percent of Boston students are in charter schools and how BPS students do nearly as well and often better in terms of long-term academic persistence and success. "Let's do right by the public schools

HGSE Debate

Continued from page 6

ter schools to take more students with special needs and Robinson used data and personal stories to explain how many such students, even if accepted, do not stay long.

“If you are disabled, you are twice as likely to be suspended,” he said, citing evidence from www.mass.gov, “and students with IEPs are likely to have more than 10 days of suspension from charter schools.”

Since leaving the charter school and returning to a traditional public school, Robinson’s children have recovered, but only after years of therapy and special supports. Fortunately, the public school welcomed his children with open arms and helped start the healing right away.

“Our district has been a true partner and helped our children,” Robinson maintained, noting that his children have reached social and academic benchmarks in their public school that would have been impossible in the punitive charter system. “Most importantly, they have become comfortable with learning and socializing again.”

Responding as a fellow parent, Kenen admitted that it “hurt” to hear of Robinson’s suffering, but suggested

that his children have classmates with special needs who do not experience the same problems. He then posited that it is “parent demand” that insists upon the passing of Question 2, explaining that a parent poll revealed that 83 percent of parents of color supported more charter schools.

In fact, Kenen maintained, it is the teachers and union leaders who are “primarily white” (as are the charter school leaders, Jackson countered) that are causing all the problems.

Though he never saw himself as a “pro-union guy,” Robinson noted that, if charter school teachers were members of the Teachers’ Union, they would be treated far better as well.

Jackson took Kenen’s comments regarding alleged demand for charter schools as an opportunity to discuss charter schools’ infamously bogus waiting list statistics (please see the April/May, 2016 issue). Though the most often cited number has been lowered from 37,000 to 32,000, Jackson assured the audience that this number is still inflated, mostly by charter schools that rollover past waiting lists into the current count. As evidence, Robinson told of a friend who received a letter about her fifth grade student from a charter school he had applied for in kindergarten! Jackson

then went on to point out how over 70 percent of students who are accepted to charter high schools turn down the offers and how the actual waiting list numbers in Boston are about equal for charter and traditional schools.

As Robinson had shown to be the case with students with special needs, Jackson then discussed the many students of color or new immigrants who are accepted but then suspended or expelled after just a few months and how many of these students are sent back to traditional schools in the middle of the semester and are therefore at a great disadvantage in terms of both social and academic acclamation and achievement. While one such student was expelled from a charter school and went on to be honored at the White House, Jackson also told the story of another student who attended the same charter school where Sarpy’s children went who had been suspended 17 times for alleged infractions that included wearing pink socks and not wearing a belt.

“Are we actually doing the right thing by our students?” Jackson queried.

When asked if charter schools were fulfilling their promise, Kenen cited Lawrence as evidence that they were and also as evidence that more

were needed to serve such communities, even though it has been the teacher-led public schools that have achieved the most growth since the city went into receivership. Denouncing the idea of using entire districts as examples, Jackson suggested that, “we need to understand how each charter is run as its own district,” citing a charter school in Boston that was recently closed.

Discussing the idea of innovation that helped birth the charter movement, Jackson cited such BPS schools as The Margarita Muñiz Academy, the Hurley School, and Boston International High School, all of which specialize in serving the very students that often end up being kicked out of charter schools. With that said, Jackson concluded that, instead of fighting amongst each other, all people who care about education need to fight for education as a whole.

“We need to support the schools that exist and not transfer resources to schools that do not exist,” Jackson reiterated, noting that more funding for public schools would mean more funding for charter schools. “We are a knowledge and economy and we all need to work for that.” ■

Still Safe and Supportive School protections vital as ever

August 13, 2014 forever changed the educational landscape. What some consider the biggest “education reform” that benefits all children was signed into law. The law was intended to support schools by creating and maintaining “safe and supportive schools” (SSS) which allows students to better focus thus improving their learning.

Safe and Supportive Schools is part of a larger gun violence-reduction act that had been inspired by the tragedy in Newtowne, CT, that provides a framework to integrate such important elements of school safety as bullying, truancy, and dropout prevention, as well as social-emotional education into a strong foundation for learning. It also established a statewide Safe and Supportive Schools Commission to advise the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) on proper implementation.

Teachers, paraprofessionals, related service providers, school nurses, administrators, students, parents, and the community at-large are more aware now than ever that safe and supportive school cultures are needed. You hear “trauma,” “social-emotional learning,” “bullying prevention,” “restorative justice,” and much more in the media, in our schools, and from

stakeholders. Supporting students with the appropriate and most effective tools so each can be resilient and focus on learning is front and center.

With the passage of the 2014 law, there are renewed efforts to support students so each feels safe and supported and with the greater goal that each school throughout the Commonwealth has a safe and supportive culture with integrated supports so that teachers and students can focus on teaching and learning.

A Safe and Supportive Schools Framework exists and guides the development of helping schools become safe and supportive schools with an on-line self-assessment tool which helps schools engage in this process. The Safe and Supportive Schools framework and self-assessment tool are organized by six elements of school operations and are currently being used by teachers and in schools. They are also continually being reviewed and updated so that they are consistent with best practices, user friendly for teachers and schools, and focused on students.

In December 2015, the Commission issued a report to the Legislature which has guided the Commission’s work this year. The Commission is co-chaired by Susan Cole, Senior

Project Director of Massachusetts Advocates for Children and Director of the Trauma Learning Policy Initiative and Rachelle Engler Bennett of DESE. The Commission has three strategic objectives of focus: Framework/Tool Refinement & Information Gathering, Initiative Refinement/Integration, and Funding/Resources/Communications. All objectives are detailed with specific deliverables that can be reviewed at www.doe.mass.edu/ssce/safety.html?section=commission.

Angela Cristiani, BTU Political Director and a School Psychologist, serves as the AFTMA representative on the Commission and leads the group that focuses on Funding/Resources/Communications. This year, with bipartisan support, the budget signed by Governor Baker included \$400,000 in funding for Safe and Supportive Schools and further specifies for DESE to hire a full-time individual who is charged with carrying out the provisions as set forth by law. The grant program, statewide and regional conferences, along with needed technological assistance for the on-

line assessment tool, will continue. “I’m thrilled to see the legislature embrace this work in a concrete way,” Cristiani said. “Every student within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts benefits. I’m excited about the work and early discussions with colleagues as to how we can continue to support our students and to assist teachers. I’m confident that we will continue to move forward so that every school within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts embraces a safe and supportive schools culture with appropriate funding and supports.” This year’s report of the Commission (2016), to include recommendations, will be submitted to the Legislature in December.

Cristiani was also excited to report that her colleagues were amongst those in attendance at the September 19th White House Conference, “Trauma-Informed Approaches in School: Supporting Girls of Color and Rethinking Discipline.”

“MA was well represented and we are leading the way,” Cristiani observed. “It’s our students who truly benefit.” ■



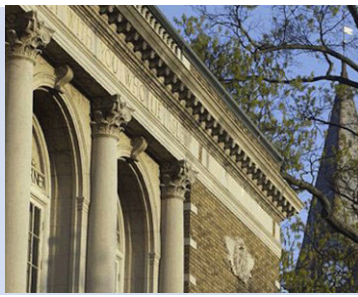
THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY
 Lawrence Teachers Union President Frank McLaughlin and Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin at the 20156 Greater Boston Labor Council Labor Day Breakfast

Early Voting
 October 24-November 4
 Election Day
 November 8
 AFT MA VOTES



On Campus

Susan Krumholz, President
UMass Faculty Federation, Local 1895



The Efforts of Higher Ed Unions

As I am writing this, we are barely a month into the new school year, and it is already a particularly busy one. National, state, and local matters are challenging us all at the same time. And that is no coincidence.

The upcoming elections are dominating the news, as they are consuming our time and energy. At this moment, the Presidential election looms large, and the consequences are no less than the future direction of the Congress, Supreme Court, and, of course, the Presidency. In addition to doing all we can to support our candidates, we are all working together to defeat Question 2 that, if passed, will hurt our public schools, and benefit big money interests that would use a victory to try to negatively impact unions across the Commonwealth and, it is very likely, across the nation..

Here at UMass Dartmouth, we face several additional challenges this academic year, the first of which is searching for a new Chancellor, who acts as the administrative leader of the campus. This is always an important position, but for us, at this time, it takes on special significance. In the twenty-six years I have been on this campus, we have had a somewhat steady turnover of Chancellors, and also of Presidents. At a time when we are emerging as a top 100 National University, according to the *U.S. News & World Report*, UMass

Dartmouth is struggling to define its place in the UMass system and in the academic world at large. As we are not recognized for any special identity (as is enjoyed by our flagship campus in Amherst and our urban campus in Boston), we continue to be somewhat invisible in the public eye. It is going to be important, therefore, that we find a steady leader with a strong academic background and the ability to illustrate the ways education can nourish and raise up the Southcoast region.

Yet another looming challenge is that we expect to return to the bargaining table this fall, at a time when there are some real concerns about the Governor's commitment to public higher education. I do not need to explain to this audience the significance of each round of collective bargaining, so I will use this topic to segue to what I want to talk about—the state of unions in higher education.

Last month, we all witnessed a disgraceful attempt to bust higher education unions and the power that faculty, when supported by students and other unions, can have. If you aren't familiar with the Long Island University (LIU) lockout, here's a brief overview. Faculty had a contract set to expire August 31. They had been negotiating with administration since April. On August 31, the faculty were presented with a "final" proposal from administration that contained signif-

icant concessions. Despite concerns about the terms of the proposal, union negotiators promised to bring it to membership for a vote at the conclusion of the Labor Day Weekend, as was customary. On September 1, administration locked out faculty, insisting that they would find "replacement teachers." Faculty immediately lost their salaries and health insurance and were locked out of their university email accounts. The lockout lasted twelve days, during which time union members, students, and others from across the country put pressure on LIU President Kimberly Cline to end the lockout. The most impressive (and possibly most important) support came from the almost two hundred students who threatened to drop their classes until the faculty returned. The lockout ended with a one-year extension of the existing contract. It was a victory, however temporary.

An officer of the LIU Faculty Federation said that one of the consequences of the lockout was that full-time faculty and adjuncts, who are all part of the same union, really came together to support one another. At UMass Dartmouth, tenure-track faculty and full-time and part-time adjuncts are also in one union. Despite some occasional tensions and some seemingly unanswerable questions (i.e., how do we pressure administration not to increase the percent of teachers who are not tenure track while not threatening

the livelihood of adjuncts), we work well together. Around the country, and particularly in MA, there has been a surge in adjuncts organizing, especially at private universities where tenure-track faculty are less likely to be unionized. At private colleges in the Boston area, adjuncts comprise an average of 50% of all faculty. Adjuncts often earn wages that keep them below the poverty level, and even in this time of expanding health insurance, most get no benefits. According to the New Faculty Majority, a group dedicated to organizing adjunct faculty, unions lead to better working conditions and "faculty working conditions are student learning conditions." I couldn't have said it better!

According to the Association of American University Presses (AAUP), only about 21% of all faculty and 35% of public university faculty are unionized. Despite what those numbers suggest, unions remain vitally important. In a recent column in *HigherEdJobs.com*, the interviewer cites an article that says, "with a legal faculty union, the administration by law must listen to faculty views and truly share governance of the university." A recent article in *The Nation* adds that, on average, unionized faculty in public, regional universities earn 15%, or about \$21,000 in pay and benefits, more than their non-union peers. Especially during challenging times, the most important part role of our unions is building community. ■

Why We Need to Keep the Cap

Educator Opinion

By Maurine McDermott

Opening charter schools takes away funding from public schools in every district in MA. It is projected by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) that, in 2017, MA public schools will lose \$451,338,729 to charter schools and that total will increase by \$100,000,000 each year. Boston alone will lose more than \$130,000,000 next year, without even adding any more district charter schools.

Money will always be an issue in education with budgets being cut as a result of depleted funding. What may be of more concern when discussing Question 2, however, is what will happen to those students who are underserved in charter schools.

Traditional public schools serve a large and growing number of students with disabilities, many who are also English Language Learners (ELLs) and some who suffer from comorbid-

ity (the simultaneous presence of two or more disorders). These students require specialized instruction and teachers who are certified, highly skilled, and experienced. Charter Schools historically underserve ELLs and students with disabilities while draining public schools of the resources needed to educate the most at-risk population of students.

Many charter schools hire teachers who do not meet the necessary qualifications and appoint administrators who lack educational experience. According to www.getcharterfacts-ma.org, "Approximately one-third of charter school trustees in MA are affiliated with the financial services and corporate sector. Less than one-quarter has educational expertise."

If Question 2 passes, the number of charters schools that could open would be unlimited. Question 2 provides that existing charter schools may be expanded based on "parent demand." However, there is no clear defini-

tion of what that means. Campaigns to vote "YES" on Question 2 have been deceiving parents by using the slogan "More opportunity for children," even though the NAACP has described the

charter school system as "separate and unequal."

When voting on November 8, it is important for us to remember that syphoning funds from public school education will not only negatively impact the academic progress of students with the most critical needs, but also will be detrimental to the futures of all students. Transition-

ing from high school into post-secondary education,

and having the ability to earn an income so that our children may live independently should be the priorities of all educational administrators and all those who claim to support education. It should not be increasing the Achievement Gap. We need to keep the cap on charter schools and vote no on Ballot Question 2 because the lives of our children depend on our votes. ■

Maurine "Mo" McDermott is a Special Educator and ESL Teacher.



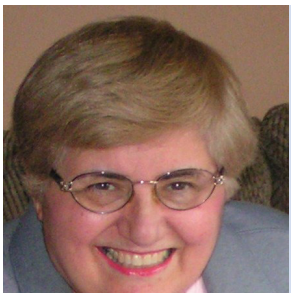
CAP KEEPER
Mo McDermott

**Do YOU know
someone who
should be
featured in
Summa Cum
Laude?**

**Send their
information to
advocate@aftma.net**

Thank you!





Retiree Corner

Marie Ardito, Co-founder
Massachusetts Retirees United
www.retireesunited.org



The Wonder of You

Did you ever notice that when some people are introduced, they are connected to someone else? For example, someone may say, "This is Dave Harris, Steve's father." Some are identified by the job or title they have. "This is Harry Jones. He is principal of my son's school." Others are associated with a location or time frame. "This is Peggy Martin. We grew up together in Maynard." Such connective introductions are fine (and often helpful), as long as they do not become our way of identifying ourselves to ourselves.

One of the hardest assignments I was given in a course was to come up with the words I would want put on my tombstone. In other words, the few terms by which I would want to be remembered. It is an exercise that can take hours, even days of thought and it cuts to the core of how you perceive and portray yourself.

As you approach or (hopefully) enjoy retirement, a little soul searching can be of value. What makes you feel happy? What do you truly enjoy doing? What makes you tense and what helps you relax? The very things that make one person happy may seem like work to others. For example, there are those who think gardening, cooking, or doing a remodeling project are work and there are others who find such tasks creative and enriching. You have to discover what works for you.

While you are looking at yourself, consider whether or not you have any form of addiction. These need not be related to gambling or drinking. An

addiction is anything that consumes us to the point that we ignore personal responsibilities or that we harm ourselves in some way. There are soap opera junkies, food junkies, Internet and TV junkies, and (even in retirement)



PREPARING TO BE FIRST
BTU retiree Loretta Sparrow
unpacks books for the latest BPS
distribution from First Book

work junkies. The large amount of so-called "free" time one has in retirement can feed the addiction just by allowing more time to dedicate to it. That is why one of the things we should address in our preparation for retirement is how to eliminate or at least control the addictions in our lives, regardless of how benign they

In addition to what you like doing, there is another important thing to discover about yourself. What are your strengths? What are you really good at doing? A lot of people claim to know their faults but may not pay as much attention or give as much weight to their strong points. Maybe that is why so many really great things are never accomplished. There is something you can do that probably no one else can do or at least not the way that you can. There is some gift, talent, or ability you have that may have been dormant to this point. It can be something as simple as your smile that puts sunshine in the life of other people. It may be the way you listen intently to what someone is saying and make them feel that you really care. Maybe it is the ability you have to make other people feel like you have all the time in the world for them and that they are more important than anything else, at least for that moment. You may have a gift of being able to relate well to people. You have strengths. Learn what they are and capitalize on them!

Remember you are capable and lovable. Feel comfortable with yourself. Become your own best friend because you have been with you for a long time and hopefully will continue to be with you for a long time to come. There is no one you will spend more time with than you. Learn to be good to yourself and to feel comfortable with yourself. You are important, you are great, and you are unique. There never was, nor is there now, nor will there ever be another you and that is wonderful! ■

SENIOR SEMINARS

Preparing for Retirement

These free seminars deal with most of the issues one should address in preparing for retirement from a public sector job in MA. They are open to all.

Wednesday October 5, 2016

3:15-5:15 PM

Natick High School

15 West Street, Natick, MA

Thursday March 30, 2016

3:30-5:30 PM

Methuen Educational Association

184 Pleasant Valley Street, Suite 1-204

Methuen, MA

Protecting Your Nest Egg

This two-hour seminar by Elder Law Attorney Mary Howie deals with should you have a will or a trust? Trusts (irrevocable and revocable) gifting Medicare Qualifying Trusts, probate, joint tenancy, direct transfers upon death, Aid and Attendance, and much more

Saturday October 29, 2016

10 to noon

314 Main Street, Unit 105

Wilmington, MA

NOTE: MRU will be conducting seminars on Living in Retirement as an Informed Retiree throughout the state. If your retirement group is interested in hosting a seminar, please contact Marie to schedule one of these informative free two-hour seminars.

To request or register for seminars, call MRU at 781-365-0205 or email contact@retireesunited.org. Please give the name of the seminar, your name, phone number and the number of people who will be attending.

Remember: Lack of information or misinformation is costly!

What AFT MA Stands to Lose

The following is a partial list of funds that AFT MA districts stand to lose in the 2016-17 academic year if Question 2 passes:

Amesbury - \$578,733

Billerica - \$2,581,916

Boston - \$136,715,535

Chelmsford - \$1,448,478

Chelsea - \$8,296,075

Fall River - \$12,501,231

Holliston - \$84,013

Lawrence - \$17,610,949

Lowell - \$17,198,243

Lynn - \$13,888,936

Medway - \$133,878

Nashoba Valley - \$323,698

New Bedford - \$10,268,033

North Attleborough - \$1,048,499

Peabody - \$486,437

Pittsfield - \$2,114,813

Springfield - \$35,883,246

Westport - \$65,514

Find **YOUR** district at

<https://saveourpublicschoolsma.com/the-facts/>

Vote **NO** on Question 2

NO on 2 **BAD FOR OUR SCHOOLS**



BROAD SUPPORT

Members of the Lynn Teachers Union prepare to participate in the national Walk-In on October 6



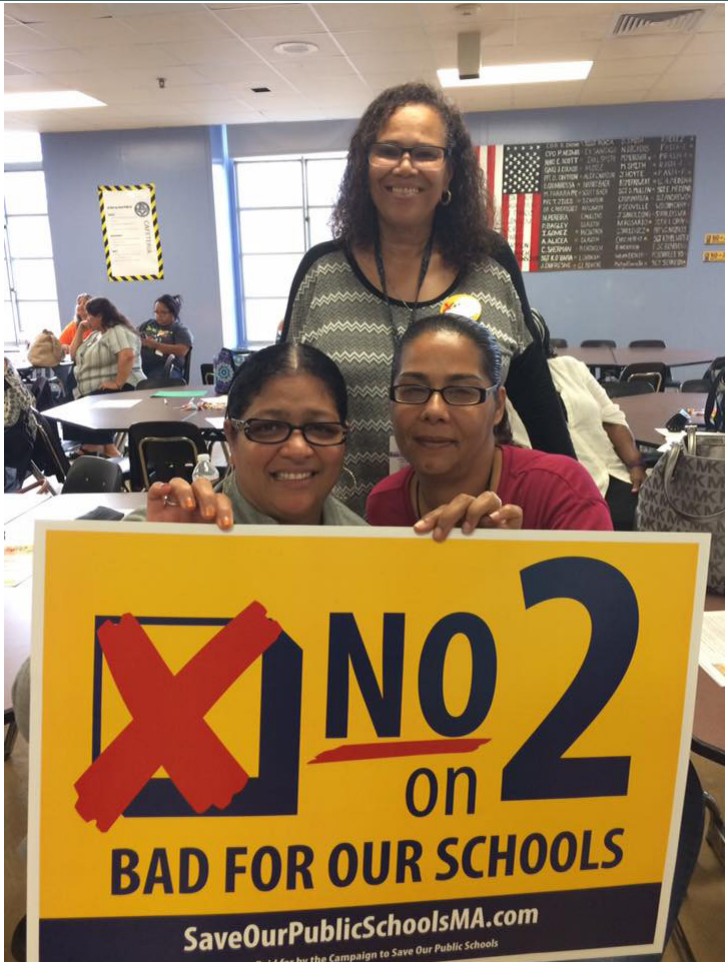
SPEAKING OUT WHILE WALKING IN

BPS educator Vanessa LaRoque is interviewed by CBS as she and others at the McKinley School participate in a Walk-In October 6



ANSWERING THE QUESTION

AFT MA representatives and public school supporters rallied against Question 2 at a meeting at the Lynn Teachers Union September 21.



GETTING BEHIND IT

AFT MA representatives from the Springfield Federation of Paraprofessionals show where they stand at a rally on September 21.



MAKING A "DAY" OF IT

JALSA members get the word out about Question 2 as part of Brookline Day.

GET INVOLVED

SaveOurPublicSchoolsMA.com @SOPublicSchools #KeepTheCap FB.com/SaveOurPublicSchools