



The Advocate

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AFT Massachusetts
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Partnership and Promise Staff- and student-centered school shows way forward

Just when many were ready to give up on the troubled community and beleaguered school district of Lawrence, a new idea has emerged that may not just save the city but also public schools and school systems across the country.

Designated the Commonwealth's only low-performing Level V district in 2011, Lawrence was handed over to state-appointed receiver Jeff Riley, who has had great leeway with his plans and programming for most of the schools in the city. While many of Lawrence's schools are troubled and

facing great obstacles, the Oliver has gone through a special series of upheavals, including having the entire student body moved to another building! Despite the challenges and calls to turn at least some parts of the school over to an Educational Management Organization (EMO), the teachers and staff (with support from the local, state and national union) refused to give up. After months of negotiations that continue today

regarding everything from classroom hours to professional development, the administrators of the Lawrence Public School system and the Union came to an agreement by which the Oliver would operate as a labor-management partnership school.

"This is first school of its kind in Massachusetts," said AFT MAPresident Tom Gosnell, "because the local, state and national teachers unions are sharing school management with the school administration."

By bringing together administrators, educators, the union, and community members, the Oliver Partnership School hopes to not only turn the lives of its students around but to change the future of the historic city and maybe even that of public education.

"There is unequivocal evidence that low-performing schools can be turned around when there is trust and shared responsibility among all stakeholders and active parental and community involvement," said Lawrence Teachers Union (LTU) President Frank McLaughlin.

From the moment the school opened, it was evident that something different was happening. From the AFT "Reclaiming the Promise" flag fluttering next to Old Glory outside the historic building to the "I am the Promise" t-shirts students wore at the August 21 opening ceremonies (ceremonies that featured such honored guests as State Secretary of Labor Joanne Goldstein, Congressman John Tierney, and AFT President Randi Weingarten), the school was making a statement not just for itself and its community but for students

and teachers around the country.

"The AFT is very excited to be part of the collaboration on the Oliver Partnership School," said AFT's Northeast Regional Deputy Director Barbara Pallazzo, emphasizing the partnership elements that are inherent in the pioneering project. "The LTU, AFT MA, and AFT have joined with Lawrence Public Schools to create a model that we hope will be replicated. It is solution-driven unionism at its best!"

In her opening comments, AFT President Weingarten addressed the

the table," he recalled. "Now, we're going to challenge them to make a great school."

As the Oliver had been moved to another building for some time while its historic and now greatly revived home (and much of the district) was in disrepair, many felt that the school had not only lost its home but also its way and its sense of being part of the community. The hope is that now, with the Oliver community back in its rightful place and programs installed to ensure and enhance community involvement, the Partnership School will be able to revive old partnerships and

forge new ones, all in the name of supporting the students and their city.

"As a Lawrentian," said Lawrence state representative and Oliver graduate Frank Moran, "I want to say that you can take what you get here and go a long way!"

"As an individual who was born, schooled, and raised in Lawrence," echoed Sarah Lynch, one of the Oliver's co-leaders for

curriculum and instruction, "there is no other district that I would rather dedicate all of my time to."

As is the case with so many of her colleagues, Lynch has spent almost her entire teaching career in Lawrence. Starting as a third grade teacher at the Oliver in 2002, she has seen and survived the hiring and dismissal of six principals in 10 years and has a solid sense for what has and has not worked for her school and her students. Lynch is therefore pleased, honored, and prepared to help lead the school into a brighter future with the help of colleagues and teacher union leaders.

"The Oliver teachers deserve to have a voice in how they can effectively make changes to their school," Lynch asserts. "I want nothing more than to be a positive leader, teacher, mentor and member of The Oliver Partnership School Community, as I know it is going to be a success."



DELIVERING THE PROMISE AFT President Randi Weingarten high-fives a student at the Oliver Partnership School in Lawrence

assembled, but paid particular attention to the students, who she sees as the most vital partners in the program. "There's a lot of people rooting for us to fail," she observed. "That is why we all got involved."

Now that she and her colleagues at AFT are involved, Weingarten said, they will do all they can and all it takes to support the students and the school.

"We will work to make sure that, every single day, you feel that your life is ahead of you," she pledged to the students, citing the desire to make their educations "the best experience" in the students' lives as the reason why teachers teach. "We...will walk the walk; not just talk the talk."

Looking at the partnership as a new promise not just for Lawrence's students and teachers but for the entire city itself, Riley compared the Oliver to the historic city it serves, citing the building's painstaking and impressive refurbishment and renewal as a "metaphor" for the city itself.

"Every teacher in the building is going to have a say on how the school runs and what the curriculum choices are going to be," Riley pledged, noting that the Oliver will be shielded as much as possible from any external conflicts that arise.

"I don't always agree with the [LTU]," Riley admitted, "but I never doubted their dedication to the children [of Lawrence]."

Though he may have had conversion to a charter school or EMO in mind (as in fact will be the case for the middle school grades of the Oliver), Riley was willing to hear the partnership proposal and to allow it to go forward.

"They challenged me to bring them to

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In addition to promising to work longer hours, the staff at the Oliver (80% of whom are teachers who had been with the school previously and decided to stay on to help the new project succeed) are also making many other sacrifices in order to support their students. As many of the students at the school are from low-income families and situations, all

Continued on page 3



THE ANSWER IS "YES" Members of Lynn Teachers Union rally in support of a ballot question that will help rebuild an historic school in Lynn (see page 7)



THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Thomas J. Gosnell
President, AFT Massachusetts

Thoughts About the Upcoming Year

Every school year promises to pose new challenges and new opportunities. This one will be no different.

Elections

Massachusetts has become the state which holds elections on a non-stop basis.

The Democratic primary to select the nominee to run for Senator Edward Markey's former House seat will occur on October 15. The American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts has endorsed no candidate because more than one have very fine positions. We shall revisit the race after the primary has winnowed the field.

Many cities and towns will also have local elections in November. Who gets elected to local office is most important for our schools. Those who control the finances make decisions about our schools, and collectively bargain with our local unions are important people. Our recommendation is that you vote for those committed to the values that we share.

Health Coverage for Retirees

The legislature has scheduled a hearing for October 31. Whether

any action is taken before the next gubernatorial election in November of 2014 remains to be seen.

However, many issues will be discussed. Attempts to have the state reduce benefits for current retirees appear to have little support. For current active employees various ideas have surfaced.

Some argue that employees who have worked for a shorter period of time in local governments should not have the same health benefits upon retirement as those who have worked longer periods of time. Others say that, like Medicare coverage, employees who retire need to be at some minimum age to have health insurance coverage.

Of course, beginning in 1986, employees hired then and thereafter can be covered by Medicare. Many communities have already implemented such coverage.

AFT MA will keep you completely informed as the debate ensues over these issues.

Common Core Standards

Massachusetts is participating in the implementation of the Common Core standards. The great majority of the states has chose to do so. Nonetheless opposition remains

strong.

Some are opposed to common standards because they believe that they could lead to a federal curriculum in defiance of the long tradition of state and local control in this area. Others believe that the standards many are advocating are distinctly inferior to the standards we have already established in Massachusetts.

There is also a view that the adoption of the Common Core might lead to premature assessments of students that will have no educational value and may lead to the false conclusion that students are not learning.

The debate is national and has a long way to go.

I appreciate the fine work that all of you do in the schools and the libraries. So many assault public services that it is early to forget that without public services the quality of life we so cherish in America would be greatly diminished.

If you have any questions or comments, you can email me at tgosnell@aftma.net. ■

BOLD PRINT

Congratulations to Dan Cullinane on winning the State Representative seat in Boston. The son of a labor president, Dan thanked labor for its support and said that he was "proud to identify" with labor.

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

TAKE ACTION

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Francis McLaughlin
Bruce Nelson
James Philip
Bruce Sparfven
Richard Stutman
Gale Thomas
Robert Wood

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

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An AVID Pursuit

Course offers more than just study skills

With so much focus put on testing these days, students can easily lose sight of the reason they go to school in the first place- to learn.

Fortunately, many students in Massachusetts and across the country are being given a new kind of support that permeates their education and serves them throughout their lives, especially as they prepare for college.

Founded in 1980 in San Diego, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is a research-based program that helps students develop the skills they need to pass state and college entrance exams and to succeed in school and in life. Instead of high stakes, AVID sets high standards and provides the tools to achieve them.

“AVID’s teaching strategies are...really good teaching practices...to support all students to become college and career ready,” observes Lee Franty, a sixth grade teacher and AVID coordinator at Boston’s Richard J. Murphy School.

Among the skills that AVID develops are organization, collaboration, note taking, and higher-level thinking. As these skills are so useful in so many applications, many schools encourage teachers to use AVID in every class.

“The school implements AVID strategies in all of the core content classes,” Franty explains. “In order to ensure that the...system is implemented with fidelity, we use AVID’s rubric to monitor our progress.”

The program has proven so popular that Franty and his colleagues are working to become AVID certified and to have the Murphy be named an AVID demonstration school.

AVID was originally implemented in one school to 32 students. As of 2012, AVID was being used in nearly 5,000 sites with over 700,000 students nationwide. Of the over 33,000 high school seniors who participated in AVID in 2012, over 98 percent indicated they would be graduating

and a full 90 percent planned to attend postsecondary institutions. Over 70 percent were also enrolled in AP and other rigorous courses. Latino and African American AVID students actually took more AP tests than peers who did not take the course.

“Students start learning about going to college in elementary schools,” says Boston’s AVID District Director Ailis Kiernan. “They also learn strategies that teach them to ‘do’ school.”

According to Kiernan, “college going culture” exists in all schools in which AVID is offered. Many of the teachers at the 40 AVID schools in Boston also encourage thinking about college by talking about it and by displaying items from colleges in their classrooms.

Eighth grade ELA teacher Chris Tsang has also organized a number of college visits with help from AVID supporters in his district and at Boston University.

“Thanks to support from my Assistant Principal...and Dr. Ruth Shane, the BPS-BU Partnership Coordinator, we have visited Harvard, Bridgewater State and Boston University,” recalls Tsang, who teaches at The Harbor School in Dorchester where the school motto - “Expect excellence” - is very much in keeping with AVID ideals.

As BPS and BU have such a strong relationship, Tsang recalls how the home of the Terriers “rolled out the red carpet,” arranging for his students to meet with BU’s Innovation Scholars. After meeting the BU engineering students, Tsang says that one of his students began to inquire about

engineering. “That, in it of itself, was a win,” he says, noting that his students have also had opportunities to meet with first-generation college students and also with diversity representatives from admissions offices. “Seeing people who looked like them going to college made an impression on them,” Tsang suggests.

As so many students have benefited from the college visits, Tsang has also made efforts to invite people to visit his class. “Based on career interest surveys,” he explains, “we’ve had weekly guest speakers come to discuss their careers and successful habits for college.” Among these have been representatives from the Dana Farber Cancer Institute, a marketing firm and a music studio.



COLLEGE CONSCIOUS AVID students at Harvard

By involving outside sources and supplemental systems along with its own core curriculum, AVID repositions the teacher from what Franty calls the “sage on the stage” role to one of a “guide on the

side.”

“It has been an adjustment for teachers,” Franty admits, citing AVID’s model of “gradual release of responsibility” that allows and encourages students to “take ownership” of their learning. “They are more metacognitive learners and advocate for themselves so that they will get the most out of their learning experience.”

Polling AVID students reveals near universal approval of and appreciation for the program.

“AVID has helped me to be more productive,” says a special education eighth grade student from Boston. “Last year, [my teacher] would rework my worksheets to help me. This year with the AVID way of doing things my teachers do not have to rework or rebuild my work, I feel like

Congressman Tierney also expressed optimism in his comments and pledged to follow the Oliver’s trajectory and to bring its story to his colleagues.

“I am going to continue to follow this,” Tierney said, “and I think it will be a model.”

Though opening day ceremonies are nice for the media and the visiting dignitaries, lifelong Lawrentian and Lawrence Public Schools graduate McLaughlin knows full well that the real proof will not come at the end of the first day, or the second, but years down the road, when it is proven that such a partnership can work and can succeed.

“I think the impact for Lawrence is that we are being given the opportunity to demonstrate that labor/management partnerships may be as effective, if not more effective, than simply turning over the management of public schools to charter operators,” says LTU VP Doug Sullivan. “There is growing support to see this school succeed. If we are successful, we can certainly become a model for the state.”

Noting that LTU consulted with educators in other states, including RI and CA, Sullivan goes so far as to suggest that the Oliver could also become a model for national reform. “Through consultation and collaboration among locals across the country, I certainly believe that Lawrence could become part of a national consortium of public school districts exploring a variety of labor/management

I am like the rest of my friends. I am also doing better and retaining more.”

“In the past, my teachers encouraged us but I felt never really gave us the tools,” says another eighth grader. “This year has encouraged me to do more [and] expect more from myself.”

“What I like about AVID is it gives you a chance to do the work,” a seventh grader suggests, “in *your* way.”

“This year has been an amazing journey focused on improving student growth and success using the skill and strategies within the AVID curriculum,” says Corinne Parris, a learning coach at the Lila G Frederick Pilot Middle School in Boston.

Parris also recalls going to her first AVID training. “On day two” she recalls, “I was...hooked on the skills and curriculum...and the possible academic outcomes.” Parris also recalls the connections she made with other AVID teachers and the support she has continued to receive from her colleagues through this program. “I met many wonderful educators from Arizona to Florida who were...advancing students via individual determination,” she says.

As soon as Parris implemented AVID, she noticed an increase in student accountability. “Students were now using skills acquired in AVID in the classroom with the support of teachers who also embedded AVID within their instruction,” she says.

Parris also praises the web-based support AVID provides. “One of my favorite resources is the AVID site,” she says, citing www.avid.org, where she is able to find resources that align with both AVID and Common Core. “AVID is like a backpack of tools for students to be successful in the classroom.”

With all its success and support, AVID is becoming the way for many students and teachers to expand upon and develop their learning.

“AVID gives all students an opportunity to become independent learners ready for skills of college and beyond,” Franty says. “We have seen great improvement with our students working together to solve problems and support each other’s learning.” ■

partnership options in an effort to provide quality public education in districts in crisis.” In fact, he says, it is “imperative” for the success and survival of public education that more districts explore such partnerships.

“We’re very excited to have the opportunity to demonstrate that the labor/management partnership approach can bring about positive change in underperforming schools and districts.”

While many education plans begin with a great deal of fanfare but then quickly fade, Pallazzo and her colleagues at AFT national promise to stand with and behind the talented teachers and administrators who are giving so much to make the Oliver work.

“Our mission is to serve the Oliver Partnership School community with effective and innovative educational and school governance practices rooted in research and evidence,” Pallazzo pledged, noting the great deal of involvement AFT will have with the school’s professional development and other student support programs. “We believe this model will serve as an illustration of what the Union, the District, and the Community can do together to reclaim the promise of public education.”

As the ribbon was cut and the new school year at the new school officially began, Lynch made a final observation. “The teachers are ready to teach,” she said. “The students are ready to learn and we are all ready to succeed!” ■

New Partnership

Continued from page 1
of the classroom teachers donated their classroom supply stipends to provide every student with two uniform shirts.

“The teachers wanted to do something special for the students to start the year off right,” McLaughlin observed, noting that many local and national union administrators also donated to the uniform fund.

While many had suggestions regarding what elements will be most vital to the success of the Oliver Partnership School, McLaughlin summed it up well. “The two most important elements of (the) Oliver’s transformation will be the two ‘Cs,’” he suggested, “collaboration and community.”

Among the key enhancements to collaboration within the school and with the surrounding community the partnership proposal produced are the following:

- Key education decisions on such matters as assessment, curriculum and instruction will be made by the Partnership Team, which is made up of seven members, including four non-administrative educators and one paraprofessional.
- Additional staff has been hired to support English language learners (ELLs).
- Additional paraprofessionals have also

been hired to support all academic staff and to offer extra support to ELL and special education students.

- A new behavioral specialist has been brought in to help with early interventions.

- A Director of Community Outreach has been assigned to partner with such organizations as the Lawrence YMCA, the Boys and Girls Club, and the Lawrence Historical Society, which will be involved in a new class in which Oliver students research their historic hometown.

- Additional in-school and after-school enrichment programming is being developed.

While all of these developments are positive, achieving them was challenging.

“It took a few days for the group to gel,” says Oliver Partnership School founding teacher Maureen Santiago, referring to the new labor management partnership, “but the barriers came down and the delegation...began to formulate plans.”

As these plans and programs continue to take shape and bear fruit, teachers hope that it will continue to become clearer just what a positive impact their efforts have had.

“It’s going to take a little time, but I’m feeling very optimistic,” Santiago said. “There is a sense that we are all in this together.”

Time to Play

National study emphasizes importance of “free” time

While many education consultants continue to tout the benefits of more hours spent studying and more focus on topics that are covered by high-stakes testing, more and more research continues to emerge that counters such arguments and promotes the power of play.

For nearly 20 years, Playworks (www.playworks.org) has been championing what many see as wasted time but what they and many others purport to be the most important time of the day- playtime. Arguing that recess, gym and other periods of “free” time not only diminish stress but augment learning and actually lower the cost of health care, tutoring and other common fees that many parents and students have to deal with on account of the amount of pressure they are under to perform and test well, Playworks has recently come forth with a new study that was released by Mathematica Policy Research and the John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities at Stanford University. The study suggests that there may be more to recess than just a break in the school day.

“As a commitment to our program and a testament to their belief in our model, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) contracted Mathematica and Stanford to conduct a two-year randomized control trial of our work,” explains Playworks’ Massachusetts Executive Director Max Fripp. “The result is that we now have the evidence-based results that help us do a better job of accurately describing our impact.”

By observing students in the Boston area and 21 other communities across the country, Playworks discovered that their pro-play programs had significant impacts on such vital statistics and issues as bullying, school safety (both perceived and actual), obesity and general physical and

mental health. According to the study, what happens at recess and gym class can not only affect the student at that time, but throughout the entire day.

“In short” Fripp says, “this study proved that better recess equals better learning.”

According to RWJF Senior Advisor for Program Development Nancy Barrand, the study’s findings reinforce what has been seen across the nation in schools that partner with Playworks to “make recess and play a priority.

“This study suggests that a great recess is an essential building block for healthy school environments that help kids thrive socially, emotionally, and physically,” she says.

Mathematica’s Susanne James-Burdumy, Ph.D. agrees that Playworks’ programs had a positive impact on outcomes in the school climate, conflict resolution and aggression, learning and academic performance, and physical activity domains. “These impacts suggest that Playworks was beneficial to schools, teachers, and students along multiple dimensions,” she suggests.

Among the area teachers who are working with Playworks are Jennifer Eddington, a fifth grade teacher at the James J Chittick School in Mattapan, and Meghan Fehr, a third grade teacher at Guilmette Elementary in Lawrence.

“Having Playworks changed [my school] drastically,” Eddington says, explaining how she has gained so much learning time thanks to the new recess structure Playworks has introduced.

“Typically, I would arrive to the school yard at 12:45 and spend about three minutes hearing from the recess monitors about the negative behaviors of students during recess,” she recalls, tallying about 15 minutes of “lost” time each day. “I now arrive at the schoolyard at 12:45 and simply walk my quiet line into the building and begin the next class period!”

In addition to demonstrating to students, teachers and administrators what positive results can come from a well-structured and supported recess, the Playworks team also encourages them to support each other.

“In addition to a smoothly-run recess, my students have the opportunity to be junior coaches,” Ed-

dington explains. “In this role, the students assist the Playworks coach during other recess blocks... [and] learn time management and leadership skills.”

Apparently, the benefits of recess know no bounds!

“To say Playworks has been a positive addition to our school is putting it lightly,” Eddington suggests, citing Playworks as “an integral part” of her school that offers skill-building and team-building options to sitting around until the next class begins and that allows teachers to do what they do best while their students continue to improve. “The Playworks’ staff [has] allowed me to focus on teaching and learning, find new and creative ways to solve conflicts, and create stronger relationships with my students through class game time,” Eddington says. “I cannot imagine ever again being with this program!”

Though all Lawrence schools have been charged with adding 200 hours

to the school year this year, Fehr’s school has been asked to add 300. “Various community partners will work with our students, administration and staff members next year to help us implement, what we think, is one of the strongest extended learning time plans in the city,” says Fehr, who is part of the team in charge of arranging for the extended time. One of these partners will be Playworks.

“We are very excited about this partnership and welcoming a Playworks staff member to our day-to-day school community,” Fehr says, noting that the Playworks partners will help Fehr and her fellow teachers and administrators teach their students new games that involve team-building, cooperation and conflict management strategies and work with “at-risk” students to support their efforts around such elements as conflict resolution and response management. “We anticipate that this social-skill instruction will not only augment the personal connections students make with their classmates,” Fehr says, “but the academic work we engage in as well.”

As she looks forward to the new year, Fehr also looks forward to the new partnership with Playworks and the benefits it is sure to bring. “I know that Playworks will play a significant role in our growth as a school,” she says. “Recess will never be the same!”

Such dramatic change is exactly what Playworks is hoping to engender and encourage through their efforts and through the dissemination of the results of their latest study.

“We hope that it changes the conversation about what it takes to build a great school...[and] that anyone who cares about education sees this study and understands the impact that a positive recess can have on education,” Fripp says. “If we are serious about improving schools, it is time that we take recess seriously!” ■



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Summa Cum Laude: Paul and Peter Reynolds

Some say that twins have a way of communicating all their own. With just a look, they can share ideas, understand what the other is thinking and plot against their parents.

For Paul and Peter Reynolds, that alleged ability has allowed them not only to share stories with each other but with people all over the world.

Born in Toronto, the Reynolds boys moved to Chelmsford at an early age and soon began writing and publishing their first books on their father's office copy machine. In school, they continued to create and communicate, eventually winning a number of awards for their efforts. Though they went their separate ways for about a decade, both were involved in some sort of creative pursuit- Peter at Tom Snyder's award-winning learning application shop and Paul at his own innovative eLearning media firm Cosmic Blender.

These days, the reunited Reynolds boys serve as the co-creators and corporate commanders of FableVision (www.fablevision.com), an Emmy Award-winning "social change agency" that develops creative materials that educate and inspire and that also help all learners achieve their full potential.

Though they are a fabled force to be reckoned with as a unit, Peter and Paul have a number of individual accolades as well. In addition to being named Fitchburg State College's Communications Student of The Year in 1983 and winning their Distinguished Alumni Award in 1999, Peter is also a best-selling writer, storyteller and illustrator. His books, such as the internationally-beloved and award-winning children's books *The Dot* and *Ish*, celebrate and encourage the creative spirit that helped bring them to life.

In addition to his work with Fablevision, Paul is an ardent supporter of Scouting program, a minister, and the co-founder of the Research Centre for Media Psychology. In this last guise, he looks at ways that media,

storytelling and technology can foster human potential and well-being. A "life-long student," the member of Chelmsford High School's Alumni Hall of Fame also teaches at Boston College and around the country, promoting the learner-centric approach that helped him and his brother achieve all they have.

"I think our most important mission is to make sure learners don't give up on their own potential," Paul suggests, "and that demands some fundamental changes our current educational system.

When asked where his own creative spirit came from, Peter recalls a "remarkable" event in seventh grade that "changed my life in a wonderful way."

"An amazing teacher, Jim Matson, pulled me aside for drawing in class, instead of paying attention," Reynolds recalls, citing his seventh grade math teacher. "Rather than scolding me, Mr. Matson asked me to try a project, tapping into art and storytelling to help other students understand a math concept."

With this new creative outlook, Peter began to see numbers not as academic obstacles and things to be ignored in favor of doodling, but as a means of quantifying his creations. With this in mind, Peter began to create a comic book that eventually became a storyboard for his first animated film. It is this same process that he tries to bring to others through FableVision and through the many supportive materials he

has designed for artists, writers and students around the world.

Peter's teachers had such a profound impact on him that, when asked what his favorite subjects were in school, he admits that "nothing stands out in my mind besides great teachers doing their thing."

"I remember most the teachers who cared about me," Peter says. "I remember the teachers who made me laugh, who challenged me, who seemed to be learning alongside me.... Not every student is lucky enough to have a teacher, or adult, see his or her potential."

In addition to Mr. Matson, Peter



A FABLE-D DUO Paul and Peter Reynolds

says that he experienced a number of other inspiring educators throughout his lifetime. "In Mrs, Arrant's 4th grade classroom, we formed a greeting card company and sold our

cards to the classroom next door," he recalls, adding a memory of a trunk of travel memorabilia that Mrs. Arrant allowed her students to explore. "The experiences defied being assessed by a bubble test," he suggests. "Its true test was the test of time. Here I am 40 years later recalling the amazing treasures of Mrs. Arrant's voyage!"

Peter also tells of his 11th grade social studies teacher, Mr. LeClerc, who gave "amazing, passionate lectures" and challenged his students by literally daring them to have what he called "an original life."

"That threat of having an ordinary life really fired me up," says one of the multi-talented, multi-

accomplished Reynolds brothers, admitting that he is still "tumbling those thoughts around in my head... and I am sure I will be tumbling them around for as long as I live."

Despite all these advantages during his "formal" education, Peter also suggests that he "learned as much in my back yard, in museums, while traveling, at home, in church, and at the family dinner table." And even though these lessons may not have been part of "the official curriculum," Peter points out how "lessons in friendship, love, and loss are important lessons on life's journey."

"That's not a knock on formal school," he explains. "With a great teacher, it's a marvelous place to be!"

No matter who is doing the teaching, Peter suggests that the most important lesson he learned was to "think outside the box" in an effort to achieve Mr. LeClerc's "original life."

"Don't be afraid to be original," Peter encourages. "Try something new. Be mesmerized by life's treasure chest. See the world for yourself!"

Such are among the many inspirational lessons that Peter and his brother try to impart through their work at FableVision and at the book store.

"While I hope my work inspires people to be original and brave themselves," Peter says, "I also hope that they are inspired to pass the torch along in creative ways - through story, song, theatre, inventions, and conversations."

As these lessons were imparted to him, Peter hopes that, through his work, he will be able to share them with future generations. "I like to think that a boy or girl 300 years from now might get a little boost of courage after having *The Dot* beamed to them," he says, acknowledging the advances of technology that have both inspired and challenged him and his fellow creators, "or better yet, read to them by their parents.... If my art and stories can help inspire others," Peter muses, "I'll feel my life had meaning." ■

AFT Member Profile

Mary Numbers, President, Holliston Federation of Teachers

To be an excellent teacher takes a great deal of heart. Especially in schools where many students feel disenfranchised and abandoned, it is often the teachers who are left to pick up their broken pieces and help them put their lives back together.

Growing up with a brother who had significant health issues, Mary Numbers developed a sense of compassion early on and developed it throughout her career as an educator. Now, as the new president of the Holliston Federation of Teachers, she brings that compassion, along with dedication and creativity, to help her fellow teachers serve the community while uniting against the forces that continue to align against them.

Numbers has been a teacher since 1978. After 16 years in Pennsylvania, where she worked with many special needs students, Numbers was hired by Holliston in 1997. One of her first projects was helping to develop a mentoring program for new teachers. As she had such a strong sense of sympathy for students who were often left behind or left out and as she had so much experience working

with other teachers, especially when it came to explaining special needs to them and helping them support their own students, Numbers was asked to become a student services administrator in 2001. While serving in this capacity, Numbers also garnered her certifications as a principal and special education administrator. In 2005, family obligations required her to return to a classroom position, but she eventually made herself available for administrative positions again, being named Union VP in 2011.

"I did it because I fully understand how important family is," she explains, "and the family in our workplace are our teaching peers."

Despite all of the many lessons she has shared with students and colleagues, Numbers says that the most profound lessons she has engaged were taught to her by her brother, who was not only mentally retarded but also legally blind and

hard of hearing, "I learned through him that the more friends you make through the process the richer your experience will be," she says, thanking her brother for bonding her family

together and for helping her support other families as well. "He taught us that people will love you no matter what [and that] there are some really good people in this world."

She should know!

As President, Numbers has not only helped colleagues with finding new and effective ways

to support each other and to support their collegial "family," she has also helped them unite against the growing tide of anti-public school sentiment and organization.

"There are many more attacks on public education now than I ever remember in my teaching career," Numbers observes, "and teachers work harder than they ever had before."

As many of her beloved special education and other students are often erroneously considered "broken,"

Numbers asserts that her school system is also mislabeled this way.

"Holliston's public school system is far from broken," she says, noting her system's ranking among the top 30 in the Commonwealth. "By every measure, Holliston teachers are outperforming what we are paid in terms of achieving student outcomes at efficient per-student costs."

Even though not everyone sees things the way Numbers does, that does not mean she is one to give up. Far from it! Just as her brother outlived predictions time and again, Numbers is dedicated to helping her colleagues beat the odds and to continually improving their schools and the benefits they count on and enjoy. She also encourages others to get involved so they can help as well.

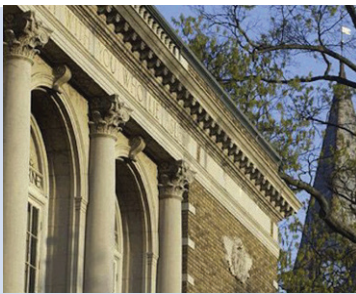
"The more involvement of every member the stronger our union presence," she asserts. "Find out what you can do for your union today and respect how hard they are working to maintain the system of public education that believes every student deserves equal opportunity!" ■

We hope to help our members get to know more of their colleagues and invite all of you to participate in this column. Please email advocate@aftma.net.



On Campus

Dan Georgianna, Political Director
UMass Faculty Federation, Local 1895



Who Has Recovered?

The economic recovery has been very good to the rich. According to economists at University of California, Berkeley, the Paris School of Economics and Oxford University, “95 percent of the income gains reported since 2009 have gone to the top 1 percent.” Almost everyone else’s income stayed the same or declined.

Many of these gains came from higher profits, higher salaries, and stock increases that were funded by workers (usually those not represented by unions) who were paid much less value than they produced. Unpaid productivity increases also drove stock prices higher.

The U.S. unemployment rate looks better, but it is still far above the full employment rate of 3%. Also, most of the mid-jobs lost in the recession were mid-range jobs paying \$14 to \$21 that were replaced by low-wage jobs paying \$7 to \$13 per hour. Most of these were in fast food and low-wage retail.

Almost no fast food restaurants and retail stores are unionized and many are anti-union.

Wal-Mart, which employs 1.3 million people in the U.S. and another million outside the U.S., routinely fires or disciplines workers who have led union drives or job actions. As a result, almost none of Wal-Mart employees are represented by unions.

During the economic boom that preceded this recession, many fast food and low-wage retail employees were teen-agers or older household members looking to add a few dollars to the household budget. Most are now the main support for themselves and often for their families. The median age of fast-food workers is now 29. When was the last time that you saw a teen-ager working at Wal-Mart?

Higher education has its own low-wage workers. Most instructors are part-time faculty or graduate students, who are often paid less than the minimum wage. According to the AFT-Higher

Education Department, part-time instructors and graduate employees make up almost 60% of college or university instructional workforce in the U.S. Payment per course averages around \$2,500, earning about \$15,000 to \$20,000 per year for a full-time course load of three courses per semester. To make a living, part-time faculty often teach at several schools.

The traditional education unions - the AFT, NEA and AAUP - as well as SEIU, UAW, and other unions have begun to organize part-time faculty, with positive results. A study by John Curtis, research director at the American Association of University Professors, reported that median pay per course was 25% higher where part-time faculty had union representation. Unionized part-time instructors also are more likely to have at least some benefits.

Some college and university administrations have started to use the same tactics that Wal-Mart and other low-wage employers use against union organizing. Northeastern University recently hired Jackson Lewis - a law

firm the AFL-CIO calls “the number one union-buster in America” - to prevent the part-time faculty organizing drive by SEIU. This past summer, the UMass Lowell administration fired Ellen Martins, Senior Adjunct and President of the Union of Adjunct Faculty at UMass Lowell, after 28 years teaching at UMass Lowell. The union had recently negotiated its first contract with raises for the next six semesters, raises retroactive to last year, job security for senior adjuncts, extra pay for large classes, office space, tuition reimbursement, and other benefits. The Union filed a grievance over President Martins’ dismissal, and filed charges of retaliation for protected activity with the Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations. The union also conducted a major letter-writing campaign to UMass President Robert Caret and UMass Lowell Chancellor Marty Meehan through its Face Book page.

As of this writing, Professor Martins is teaching, and the university and her union are in talks. However, no formal agreement has been reached. ■

State of the Stacks

Libraries offer much more than just books

As the home of the first large free municipal public library and one of the first independent libraries in the country, Massachusetts serves as a beacon and bellwether for libraries across the country and even around the world.

With the explosion of online offerings and other alternatives, the world of print is being threatened. Fortunately, our creative librarians continue to find ways to make sure that their facilities do not fade into obscurity. In fact many have been able to make libraries more vital now than ever!

“We had lots of anecdotal reports of programs being eliminated or cut throughout the last decade,” admits Massachusetts School Library Association President Judi Paradis. “However, in the past year or so, there seems to be some turnaround and we’ve been hearing about some small steps toward program restoration in many communities.”

One of the communities that continues to enjoy strong library programming and participation is Milford, where the library is headed by co-founder Mary Frances Best. As Best is also the president of the Massachusetts Library Staff Association, she is keenly aware of the issues libraries face these days.

“We have a very busy library in a town of about 30,000,” Best says, noting how, even as some programs have declined, others have grown. “Our ESL program can barely keep up with the demand of new immigrants desiring to learn English,” she notes, thanking her town administrators for funding the library despite economic challenges.

One issue that remains unresolved, however, concerns the librarians’ contract. “We are unable to negotiate directly with the three Selectmen who are the deciding forces about the contract,” Best explains, citing nearly a year’s worth of stalled negotiations and proposal refusals. “We are at an impasse.”

As they continue to try to help themselves and each other, Best and her talented team also continue to do what they can to help their customers. In the process, they have made some potentially surprising discoveries.

“Many people think that with the advent of...eBooks, printed books and libraries have become less relevant to the general public,” Best observes. “We have not found that to be true.” As many titles are still not available electronically and as many people actually come to the library to learn how to use their devices, attendance and participation are actually up. Best also credits the popularity of book groups with maintaining customer loyalty. “Many libraries also have community reading programs that involve [everyone] reading the same book and then getting together...to discuss it.”

In addition to sharing books and ideas, many come to libraries to share resources they cannot afford on their own. “They use the library for email, job searching...and other forms of Internet use,” Best explains, noting that

many libraries offer free Wi-Fi .

Some libraries even include art galleries and other facilities. “In September, we will have [a] poster display by Stephen Lewis, retired Secretary Treasurer of Local 509 SEIU,” Best explains, noting that her facility also offers historical and geneological materials. “People come from all over the country to do research on their dead relations.”

In addition to offering programs for the general public, many libraries cater especially to students. Best’s library proctors exams for long-distance learners and also supports



a state-wide summer reading program for students. While many students go to their town libraries for research and other resources, however, many school libraries are enhancing and expanding upon their roles as well.

“School library programs are changing rapidly to provide their students and teachers with more information,” Paradis observes, citing the rapid increase in technology in many school facilities. “There is a movement toward morphing libraries into places where students don’t just come and get information, but also use the library space and technology to create products that demonstrate new learning using programs.”

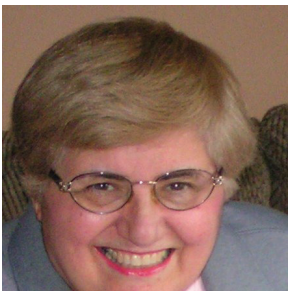
Fortunately, a new breed of librarians has arisen to support this movement and these new technologies.

Among them is Elena Schuck, a Library Media Teacher (LMT) at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional’s Marguerite E. Small Elementary/Mattacheese Middle School. Combining teacher certification with library science and computing skills, LMTs are able to support students and other teachers with learning and help them make the most out of ever-advancing technologies.

“As Library Media Teachers, we are the best of both worlds,” Schuck suggests, noting that, in most cases, the only limits to their abilities come from lack of budget and occasionally lack of vision. “[We] are constantly being asked to perform miracles with money,” she notes, observing that many administrators have difficulty seeing and monetizing the value of LMT and other library services because, she says, “the benefit of having a school library is not obvious on standardized tests [and] as we usually do not grade.” Even so, she asserts, the influence of a strong library staffed by knowledgeable librarians is “strong throughout the curriculum.” In fact, she says that recent research has proven that having a certified full-time teacher in the library does, in fact, impact scores. “I have worked in a school district that cut this program,” Schuck recalls, “and have seen the negative impact on students and faculty as well.”

Especially as science, technology, engineering and math (collectively known as STEM) are becoming such hot subjects, Schuck finds it odd that so many administrators still see her services and those of her colleagues as so expendable.

“Imagine STEM initiatives without library technology,” she suggests, concluding that, in an ideal world, “it would be great if, when assessing impact, schools realize that we can do so much more than fix the copier or unclog the laminating machine.” ■



Retiree Corner

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



Death and Double Taxes

Federal and state taxes are obligatory for all workers. Public school personnel are no exception. For employed school personnel who were working before 1988, the Federal Government eliminates from taxation that portion of their pension that has already been taxed. The portion was not taxed after 1988 because the Government intended to tax it when a retiree collected their pension.

Massachusetts taxes active public employees on earnings that are contributed to a pension while they are working. The Commonwealth does not tax any in-state pension. However, not every retiree resides in the state. In fact, one in seven Massachusetts retirees has chosen to retire out of state. Once a new state residence is adopted in another state that has a state tax, the retiree faces being taxed again on a pension contribution that was already taxed in Massachusetts. This double

taxation must be corrected in the state of residence.

MRU's Legislative Committee is becoming increasingly involved with this issue for members who are living outside Massachusetts. The group has done a mailing to retired teachers in seven different states requesting members to become involved. If you are retired out of state, it is to your advantage to get involved in the endeavor to correct this injustice. No one should be taxed twice on the same earnings.

MRU began this effort last spring, and is excited about the growing interest in this endeavor. Two states already have commitments from legislative members to file legislation to correct this situation. In Rhode Island, residents should contact MRU Legislative Committee member Fred Hartnett at fhartnett@verizon.net and ask how to become informed and

involved. Those in Maine are asked to contact their legislators to ask them to sign or co-sponsor the measure. Maine residents should also contact Patricia Callahan at callahan116@gmail.com

Involvement may involve a simple phone call or email to your local and state legislators requesting that they file, sponsor or sign on to bills supporting a change in this double taxation. You have nothing to lose, and a larger pension check to gain!

In addition to getting involved yourself, please spread the word to other retirees in your state. Remember, legislators are influenced by the number of their constituents that care about an issue. Let them know that you are aware of and against the injustice of being taxed redundantly.

As always, people who want more information or advice can contact my office at 781-365-0205 or by email at mardito@retireesunited.org. ■

We Are (the NEW) Marshall Lynn unites to rebuild school

On August 13, the Lynn City Council voted to borrow \$92 million to construct a new building for the Thurgood Marshall Middle School. The borrowing was proposed on the condition that 80 percent be reimbursed by the Mass School Building Authority (MSBA).

On September 17, Lynn residents voted by an 81 to 18 percent margin to authorize the new construction. This victory was due, in great part, to the efforts of the Lynn Teachers Union (LTU), AFT MA and the North Shore Labor Council (NSLC).

"The North Shore Labor Council sent a postcard to about 7,000 AFL-CIO members...in Lynn encouraging them to vote," explained NSLC organizer Rebecca Hornstein, noting that she and her colleagues also contributed op-ed pieces to area newspapers.

Originally built in 1923 as Eastern Junior High School, the Marshall was renamed for the great civil rights leader Thurgood Marshall in the 1990s. As little had been done to maintain the building, it is currently in a major state of disrepair. Not only is the building falling apart but, even if it were fully functioning, it is also at more than full capacity and is simply inadequate for the student, personnel and equipment loads it is being asked to bear. As a result of the structural issues, many parts of the current building are rendered unusable during any sort of wet weather, making all of the problems worse.

In January 2012, the City Council approved a feasibility study agreement with the MSBA who approved the construction plan in April of this year. Construction is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2016 and to open for the 2016-17 school year.

"I totally feel that we are in need of a new building," said 16-year Marshall teacher and current LTU Building Representative Maureen Walker. "Our

existing building is falling apart and would need extensive repairs." Among the specific problems Walker has observed in her building are windows that do not open and what she calls "huge cracks" in the walls.

In an effort to push the proposal through, Walker and many of her LTU colleagues stood on busy street corners in Lynn holding signs in support of the new building project.

"Our collective effort as a union had a significant impact on the success of the bond vote," suggests LTU President Brant Duncan.

According to seven-year Marshall teacher and lifelong Lynn resident Oliver Toomey, the movement to support the new school was spearheaded by retired AFT members Jim Ridley and Carol Brown. "They set up a meeting between them, our staff, and LTU President Duncan," Toomey recalls. "We recognized the importance of acting quickly and learned that we could best help by participating in high visibility sign holdings, building lawn signs, and finding Lynn residents willing to use them."

According to Walker, their efforts were greatly successful. "Most passerbys listened to our story and were agreeable to voting for a new school," she recalls.

"It was great to see almost every staff member participate in some way to help increase public awareness," Toomey adds.

Before becoming AFT MA's Political Organizer, Brian LaPierre taught at the Marshall and so has a special connection to the school that encouraged him to support its cause all the more fervently.

"Having taught at Marshall in the 1990's, I have a first hand account of the needs of a new building," LaPierre says. It was great to see the outpouring of support from various Lynn citizens that included, staff, alumni,

parents and community band together and overwhelmingly vote for a new Marshall."

The new site (which was chosen from a list of five that included Clark Field, Keaney and Kiley Parks and the current site) will be at 118-120 Brookline Street, about a mile away from the Marshall's current site. The design for the new Marshall School calls for an 182,000 square-foot energy-efficient facility that is intended to support up to 1,100 students in grades 6-8. This space will include plenty of room for the development of new programs including consumer sciences, audio visual, graphic design, art and music, as well as vital science and laboratory space, a gymnasium with two basketball courts, a media center and a playing field on the roof.

"That is something we do not have room for now," Walker says, noting how most students have to walk to area playgrounds for field-based games. She also notes how the new building will allow for the entire student body to attend an assembly at the same time and offer sufficient space to allow all students to eat lunch at the same time.

"The new building will allow for a more pleasant, modern environment for our students to learn in," Walker suggests, noting how some of the recently-cut enrichment programs and electives are scheduled to return when the school moves into the new facility. "It's wicked cool!"

According to proponents of the project, the building project will not only benefit the students who attend the Marshall, but also the surrounding neighborhoods, as the new facility will offer space for community events. In this way, the new school will also help enhance East Lynn and may very well raise property values throughout the city. The vote for the rebuilding also sets a precedent that will potentially

SENIOR SEMINARS

How to Protect Your Nest Egg
Saturday November 2, 2013, 10-noon.

Elder Law Attorney Mary Howie discusses wills and trusts, gifting, probate, joint tenancy, direct transfers, Aid and Attendance, and more.

To Move or to Stay Put
Saturday Nov. 16, 2013, 10-noon.

This seminar deals with the pros, cons and legal ramifications of moving, as well as various housing choices and aspects of making a decision.

Reverse Mortgage
Saturday October 26, 2013 , 10-noon.

This seminar will be presented by Mary Cretella, former Counselor for Homeowner Options for Massachusetts Elders (H.O.M.E.).

These seminars are free and are held at the MRU office at 314 Main Street, Unit 105, in Wilmington, MA.

Preparing for Retirement
Thursday, October 10, 2013, 4-6 PM
Butler Middle School, Lowell, MA

Intended for those within 10 years of retiring., this seminar provides an understanding of retirement and Medicare, a legal checklist, tips for protecting assets, and more.

To register for any seminar, email mardito@retireesunited.org or call 781-365-0205. Please give the name of the seminar, your name, phone number and the number attending.

light the way for future projects, including the rebuilding of the Pickering Middle School.

Speaking of values, while many residents expressed concerns that the project would mean increased taxes even for those in other neighborhoods who will not directly benefit from the new school building, Lynn's Acting Chief Financial Officer Peter Caron assured everyone that, as it has nothing to do with Proposition 2 1/2, the vote would have no impact on property taxes.

As there will now be significant assistance from outside sources (mainly the MSBA), the planned rebuild will actually cost less than the necessary repairs would! With the significant MSBA reimbursement, the new school will cost the City about \$38 million, as opposed to the over \$40 million that was the estimated for the total cost of repairs for the current building, for which the city would be entirely responsible.

"Funding for the Marshall Middle School is a win-win for the City of Lynn," Hornstein suggested. "We are grateful for the opportunity to work alongside the LTU on this issue and know a new Marshall Middle School will benefit our city's children."

Thanks to the efforts of the devoted school staff, the union and the larger community, the Marshall is being rebuilt so that it will be able to support area students and community members for many years to come.

"We are now able to look forward to a clean, structurally safe school," Toomey says. "Thankfully, with the entire school staff's help and the hard work of many, including the members of the Union and the Lynn School Committee, we were successful!" ■

FEATURE FOCUS: Celebrating the Arts

The Show Must Go On: 20 years of theatre at Otis Elementary

As more and more emphasis is put on testing, fewer students are able (let alone encouraged) to enjoy the benefits – both academic and personal – that come from an exploration of the arts. Fortunately, there are still places where a little bit of drama can be a good thing!

Since 1993, Colin O'Dwyer has served as an arts instructor at the James Otis Elementary School in East Boston. As a graduate of Berklee College of Music who is also an accomplished professional recording artist, O'Dwyer is familiar with the many benefits of art, music and theatre and how to make them all work well and serve the community effectively.

"I came to the James Otis Elementary School in the winter of 1993 as a substitute teacher for a resource room," O'Dwyer recalls. "By the fall of [that year], I became the school's full time music teacher and have been there ever since!"

Two years later, O'Dwyer added visual arts to his resume, working with students on short plays that incorporated music and movement. The program proved so popular that, in just one year, it was made a permanent part of the curriculum. "In 1996," O'Dwyer explains, "our principal at the time...created a full time drama/world languages position...and we decided to work on full-blown musicals including all of our fifth graders."

Every year since then, O'Dwyer observes, the productions have become more and more elaborate and enjoyable.

"Each year we set higher goals for the school play," he suggests, noting that the program has not only helped students and staff connect in new ways but has also allowed his school to partner with East Boston High School in a collaborative theatre program.

"The Otis uses the high school theater space for an entire week every June," O'Dwyer explains, going over a week's worth of rehearsals, technical setups and other pre-performance practices that the students take on while learning about how a production is put together. "We work together to make this happen for our students."

Among the productions that O'Dwyer has helped mount are such Broadway favorites as Bye Bye Birdie, Fiddler on the Roof, Grease, Oliver and West Side Story.

Though the arts program was temporarily diminished in the mid 1990s, some new hires and their new energy helped revive and enhance it once again.

"Our previous principal had created a stipend position for...the play before he left," O'Dwyer recalls, demonstrating how important the productions were to the school. Using the funds to bring Stoneham Theatre Director Caitlin Lowans on board,



THE KEY TO EDUCATION
A student at Otis Elementary works on a prop for the 2013 production of "Bye-Bye Birdie"

O'Dwyer and his star students were "back in business."

Currently, the Otis is headed by former teacher and O'Dwyer's long-time colleague Paula Goncalves. "Paula is an enormous advocate for the arts," O'Dwyer says, noting that she has helped make sure that the school and the students enjoy full-time music and visual arts courses. "In addition, we have dance and we continue to provide Caitlin a stipend to direct the musical every year."

As the "consistent thread" of the Otis arts program for the past 20 years, O'Dwyer is very grateful for all he has been able to do and hopes to be able to continue the tradition and to inspire others to continue it as well. One of his students has followed him to Berklee and others are enjoying the new keyboard lab that was provided by VH1's Save the Music program. O'Dwyer has also helped his school partner with such other area arts operations as the House of Blues and WGBH.

While many might question the logic of using so many resources to support an arts program, O'Dwyer sees a much larger value in what he does than simply teaching kids to sing and dance.

Despite the fact that more than

80% of the Otis student body is non-native English speakers," O'Dwyer says that his students continue to "defy the odds" when it comes to standardized testing. "We always test at the very top in mathematics," he notes. "I truly believe the arts culture at the Otis not only creates a deep love for school, but helps these students succeed in their other academic areas."

As the arts are so important, O'Dwyer and his talented team are dedicated to maintaining and expanding opportunities at this school and hopefully at others as well. Not only have the arts programs offered students creative outlets, they have apparently had other benefits as well.

"The Otis has only looked to strengthen arts as we believe it to be fundamental to a well rounded education," O'Dwyer says. "It is clearly a contributing factor as why families flock to attend the Otis and our test scores have only increased!"

Despite what he calls the "fire and brimstone of the MCAS" which caused many schools and districts to restrict or even cancel arts programming in favor of math and reading programs, O'Dwyer sees the pendulum swinging back toward the curtain.

"It's nice to see the arts coming back en vogue as Boston schools have been slowly adding arts teachers back into their schools," he says, noting that, through it all, "the commitment to the arts at the Otis has never wavered." ■

Tahanto's Got Talent: Regional school set to show off October 12

With the popularity of so-called talent shows on television, it seems that everyone you know is rehearsing or auditioning for something or other. As in so many instances, however, if you want to find real talent, you need look no further than our schools.



THE MUSIC MAN Rick Cain using Tahanto Regional's new soundboard

For over 15 years, Tahanto Regional Middle-High School teacher Rick Cain has been organizing events that combine town and gown in creative ways. "I have initiated a number of summer events and school functions which involved alumni and or guest artists," Cain explains, noting how many of these events involve such entities as the Tahanto Music Parents' Organization (TMPO) and the Local Cultural Councils of Berlin and Boylston.

On October 12, Cain and his creative colleagues will help dedicate a new auditorium at their school with what he calls a "talent show-type" alumni concert. In addition to celebrating the new venue, the event will also help raise funds to support scholarship programs and to maintain and strengthen Tahanto's arts and music offerings.

"Though we do plan and hope to raise funds for...important causes," Cain says, "we are planning this event as a sort of reunion weekend."

Among the notable participants, Cain notes, will be former Superintendent Brian McDermott, who oversaw the funding for the new building. "He will be on hand to play some blues with his favorite faculty band and many former students," Cain says.

Among the more notable Cain creations have been a rendition of the 1996 one-hit wonder "How Bizarre" with a full, funkily-dressed chorus and a performance of an "intense band arrangement" of Robert W. Smith's "Ireland: Of Legend and Lore" that included an authentic bodhran (Irish frame drum), and a musical anvil and metal chain. The popular performance is set to be reprised for the October show. For the music department's 40th anniversary, Cain coordinated Tahanto's take on the classic television comedy "Laugh-In," featuring his wife Jane as the popular Ruth Buzzi character Gladys Ormphby.

As he also taught his children for many years, Cain sees his department and his students as a family and is taking that sort of care in preparing this performance, as he does with every one of his musical projects.

"My brother, Matthew, our friends

and I all had daily classes with my dad from 7th to 12th grade," recalls daughter Jackie, noting how easy it was for her friends to transition to calling him "Rick" after graduation. "He is that kind of guy," she suggests.

While he is the main contact for interest parties and participants, Cain also relies upon other parents and credits his colleagues and the community for helping him continue to present such events.

"I am fortunate to have some dedicated parents who spend many hours helping with the planning," he says, noting how the TMPO recently helped purchase a piano for the new auditorium "and many former students and community members who still enjoy performing."

As so many of Tahanto's alumni are so talented and as more than a few are professional musicians, the plan is to have the weekend celebration spill into Sunday morning, when recent graduates Mark and Glenn Zaleski, will perform with jazz legend Rufus Reid at a catered jazz brunch.



THE MUSIC HALL The new Tahanto Regional auditorium that will be dedicated October 12