



MTA Board of Directors Meeting
Friday/Saturday December 2, 3, 2005

The MTA Board met recently in Natick. Selected highlights of the meeting which may be of interest to MCCC members follow.

Kiley & Co., a professional research firm, reported to the Board on research it did about MTA member attitudes. Some of the points made, where “newer member” means less than 20 years of service.

- members tend to feel connected to their locals more than the MTA
- about 18% of the membership is highly active (union-wise), and 36% are almost completely inactive
- 33% say the MTA is not working to meet their needs
- 70% say they have no time for more union involvement. No other issue applies to more than 16%.
- of our newer members, 41% are less than 40 years old; 1/3 are “career switchers”
- newer members have a more “individualistic” approach to their job
- but
 - 72% of newer members feel that public education would be worse without the MTA
 - 83% of newer members feel that their pay would be worse without the MTA
- 81% of all members report they have worked for extended times without a contract
- 67% have participated in work to rule
- the more members know about the MTA, the more they appreciate it.
- we can’t realistically expect our newer members to be active, as they are starting a career, raising families, etc.

The Board

- adopted a policy that the purpose of the MTA Investment Committee needs to factor in the general well-being of the MTA membership and not just financial returns. i.e. social responsibility needs to be part of this committee’s focus
- adopted a position on merit pay, opposing pay which is based on a teacher’s students’ test scores
- applauded the recent court win in Springfield in which the judge noted severe mismanagement and poor judgment by the city. The court decision ruled the initial wage freeze for Springfield teachers to be illegal. It is the first glimmer of sanity and hope since the legislature empowered the Governor’s chosen committee to run Springfield
- adopted a policy on accountability of delegates to the NEA-RA; it requires that “all delegates must attend at least 75% (six sessions) of the eight sessions of the NEA/RA meeting in order to receive the MTA stipend. The stipend and a certificate of payment will be distributed on the last day of the NEA Representative Assembly”
- reviewed the evaluations of last year’s summer conference at Williamstown, and plans for next year’s conference.
- agreed to survey locals and see if they feel that “now is the time” for a statewide rally in Boston to urge the legislature to increase funding for public education.

Tim Collins, President of the Springfield Education Association (<http://www.seateachers.com/>) addressed the Board as a guest speaker. He noted that “if you are in a tight spot, you want these people on your side” – referring to MTA legal and the leadership. He noted that in the last few years 700 of Springfield’s 2100 members have left the system. There are 475 new hires this year alone, most without licenses. Tim feels we have to fight the “no new taxes” attitude of our government and many of our fellow citizens – taxes are the price we pay to live in a safe, sane, civilized society, with good roads, schools, and health care. He noted that schools simply cannot be run like a business. If a business gets inadequate raw materials, it sends them back. A public school must fight to succeed with what is delivered to its doors.

The issue of longer school days, and reconfiguring block schedules, was discussed. As one leader said about long blocks of class time “the math teachers hate them, the science teachers love them”. Nothing is simple, but we must keep trying.

Respectfully Submitted
Phil Mahler, Sara Satham
MTA Directors for the MCCC

Happy Holidays!

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