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## REPORT

### MTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

**FRIDAY/SATURDAY DECEMBER 5, 6, 2008**

The MTA Board met recently in Natick Friday evening and all day Saturday. The following is a report from your Region 44H directors.

Lots of **follow-up discussion** took place **on the Question 1 campaign**. Every single Massachusetts community voted against Q1. But it was noted that this vote was a vote against a dumb irresponsible idea, not an endorsement of current taxation or a belief there is no waste in government. In fact, 85% of voters believe there is significant waste in government (which includes your pension by the way), and 65% would support rolling back the income tax from 5.3% to 5%.

**Donnie presented a motion** passed at the November MCCC Board meeting thanking President Wass, Vice President Toner, the MTA and staff for their support and leadership on the Question 1 campaign. Further discussion focused on what the next campaign would be. Several Directors asked: "What about fair taxes and enhanced revenue?" It was also noted that we have had 40 years of bashing government by certain government leaders, and the resulting misperceptions need to be changed.

It was announced that **proposals for MTA's Summer Conference must be received by January 9**. Go to <http://www.massteacher.org/rfps>.

The Board received a positive report from Kathy Conway on MTA finances.

MTA Director of Affiliate Services Richard Sanders asked that the members continue to work with **Jobs With Justice**, one of the Q1 state coalitions we recently partnered with. They have asked us to participate in a **campaign for the Employee Free Choice Act**. This can be done at <http://www.jwj.org/efca>. This is important! See the attachment.

The Board received a report on an MTA-sponsored survey of **attitudes among MTA K-12 members**. Although this is kept "in house" there were few real surprises if you read the papers. One surprise, however, is that nearly half of the surveyed teachers did not start in education, but in fact had at least 5 or more years of full time employment in other fields.

The Board heard a report by Bob Brousseau, Teacher Representative on the **Pension Reserve Investment Management Board** (PRIM). He noted that the state retirement fund has gone down in value from \$53.7 billion in 2007 to \$39.3 billion in 2008. It might add a bit of perspective and hope to note that it was worth \$40.2 billion in 2005, so relative to long term performance and value the loss is less than it might seem. Bob stated in strong terms that the pension fund is secure.



Jo Blum, Director of Government Services, presented an update on the recent election, which was positive, as well as the **bad news on the state's economy**. As you would know from the popular press, this coming year's budget will be a disaster for state services.

The issue of organizing **charter schools** was discussed. As you may have read, a charter school in Brighton recently unionized and affiliated with the AFT. Related to that, the Board received a draft of a position paper on the Governor's proposed "Readiness Schools". To put this kind of thing in terms of a higher ed perspective for community colleges, these and charter schools are like the Commonwealth paying the University of Phoenix to open two-year-program campuses, and then siphoning off state funding from our community colleges to help support them. Needless to say our K-12 colleagues take these issues very seriously, and of course they have our full support.



It was reported that some cities and towns are **laying off teachers**. We also heard about **drug sniffing dogs** doing regular searches in our K-12 schools' hallways and classrooms and parking lots (including, illegally, teachers parking lots).

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Vice President Paul Toner sits on the GIC Board (**our health insurance**). As he noted at the last meeting, and as we reported, the Governor cut \$32 million from the GIC budget. The director feels she can find \$3 million in operational savings, but, unless that funding were restored, either we will pay more in our contributions, or we will pay more in co-pays and fees. The first scenario would occur if the legislature were to pass, in January probably, something like the governor's 3-tiered contribution schedule - which could cost us hundreds of dollars. The second scenario would come from the GIC restructuring our health programs with higher co-pays and fees.

We wish you a wonderful, safe, holiday season.

Respectfully Submitted

Phil Mahler  
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MTA Directors for the MCCC