

MTA Higher Education Blueprint Working Group  
DRAFT – September 3, 2020

**Goal:** In addition to the plans laid out in the MTA Blueprint, higher ed locals within the MTA need support to challenge attacks on higher ed, from the local campus level to statewide challenges. Higher ed needs a specific blueprint to accomplish our goals:

- Plans to combat attacks that are attempting to reshape higher ed (austerity, budget cuts, privatization, revenue-based planning, high-debt models, etc.)
- Pro-active vision – promote our idea of public higher ed and what it should be
- Message around keeping higher education affordable, accessible, equitable
- Plans to connect with existing members, new members, and adjuncts/part-time members on a consistent basis; educate members to engage with the union
- Represent and support members with legal and contractual issues
- Alliances with student organizations fighting for our vision of higher ed
- Focus on specific issues of adjuncts and part-time faculty
- Short-term winnable as well as long-term aspirational statewide goals
- We desperately need some wins – higher ed members need to see MTA as powerful force for change at public colleges and universities

**Plan:** The MTA Blueprint provides an excellent plan for organizing members. In addition, the MTA should hire staff dedicated to higher ed in the following areas:

1. Legal staff member – instead of contracting with outside attorneys
  - a. Dedicated attorney(s) with experience in higher ed
  - b. Expertise in contract negotiations that involve systems (BHE, UMass) as well as campuses
  - c. Expertise in Chapter 150E as it relates to higher ed; legislative campaign to reform state labor law
  - d. Expertise in privatization on public campuses and tools to fight back
  - e. Expertise in Title IX policies and processes related to sexual harassment, sexual and racial discrimination at the college/university level
  - f. Expertise in issues around adjuncts, NTT, and part-time faculty and staff
  - g. Expertise in online education and the legal issues surrounding intellectual property, work-for-hire, copyright, royalties, etc.
  - h. Expertise in academic freedom including protecting faculty from organized right-wing attacks
  - i. Expertise in immigration and visa issues for faculty and staff
  - j. Expertise in unemployment law, especially for adjuncts and seasonal staff
2. Research staff member

- a. Research support for contract negotiations, including:
    - i. Comparisons with peer institutions
    - ii. Challenging the rise of contingent faculty/staff
    - iii. Salary compression
    - iv. Gender and race gaps – pay equity, diversity, inclusion
    - v. Faculty-student and staff-student ratios over time – demonstrate need for more faculty/staff/librarians
    - vi. Non-state funded faculty and staff
    - vii. Model contract language from public universities around online ed, stopping the growth of contingent labor, online education, etc.
  - b. Research on campus budgets, reserves, debt, overall financial situation
  - c. Research on the state budget for public higher ed, including student support/financial aid/Mass Grant,
  - d. Research on campus executives and boards of trustees – points of leverage for organizing and public campaigns
  - e. Research on state labor law to inform campaign to change 150E
  - f. Researchers available for fact-checking administration positions during bargaining and impact bargaining
3. Governmental relations staff member
- a. We need a dedicated legislative/lobbyist focused only on higher ed
  - b. Legislators see the MTA as the voice of K-12 educators, not higher ed
  - c. MTA must have at least one staff member who is the face of public higher ed in the State House
  - d. Coordinate with local leaders and with communications/media team
  - e. Coordinate with PHENOM, student groups, etc.
  - f. Coordinate with lobbyists from UMass and BHE around higher ed policy
  - g. Coordinate campaign to reform Mass. labor law
  - h. Plan long-term legislative strategy for public higher ed
4. Communications and media staff member
- a. Messaging and outreach for public higher ed
  - b. Coordinate with governmental staff for higher ed to combat attacks
  - c. Organize regular communications strategy among all 29 campuses
  - d. Lead rapid-response team that can coordinate messages when crises arise
    - i. Messages to the press
    - ii. Messages to politicians
    - iii. Messages to our own members
  - e. Coordinate media events, social media, and public campaigns in higher ed

5. Education, training, and professional development for higher ed
  - a. More specific offerings for higher ed at summer conference and other MTA conferences
  - b. Workshops and trainings on higher ed issues, statewide and campus
  - c. Workshops and trainings on unionism and union leadership for activists and new local/chapter leaders
  - d. Peer-led professional development for/by faculty and staff