

Hi Bristol members,

Hope you all are well and that your semesters are off to a good start.

I am emailing about the continuing MTA-wide campaign to #DefendPublicHigherEd that is ramping up this week and over the course of the month. As you all probably know the legislature has level funded our colleges and universities through October, but there is real uncertainty after that. Now is the time to speak up and out about the importance of investing in public higher education and avoiding any further cuts or layoffs.

Two asks for this group—could you all circulate the below and attached update to the broader membership? There are three different ways for members to get involved this week. Second, I hope some of you can join the Southeast region planning call that is happening shortly.

Topic: Southeast Massachusetts Higher Ed Campaign Planning Meeting

Time: Oct 5, 2020 05:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89835399629?pwd=ZEVzQ2tsalZEBGYvM2pZOEJMeXIkUT09>

Three ways to take Action to #DefendPublicHigherEd—Starting today!!!

Since the beginning of the pandemic, when higher ed faculty and staff made heroic efforts to move to remote learning and to keep our campuses and students safe, public higher ed executives have responded to the crisis with unnecessary and cruel austerity measures. Massachusetts colleges and universities have suffered deep cuts. Layoffs, furloughs, and elimination of entire academic programs have been inflicted on community colleges and state universities, and UMass. Already this fall, UMass workers have suffered nearly a thousand furloughs and other personnel reductions. Class sizes and workloads have grown, as teaching faculty and teaching assistants are reduced. **These cuts are being imposed despite millions of dollars available in foundation and rainy day funds.** This is a dereliction of the duty of higher ed execs to advocate for our colleges and universities.

These cuts are unnecessary, undermine student success, and harm our communities. Research shows that public higher education is one of the very best investments we can make during an economic crisis. Cutting jobs and funding from public higher education threatens the stability of our local economy. This damage is also exacerbating racial and economic inequalities. **As legislators meet to finalize the budget**, we must let our elected officials know what is happening to our colleges, universities, and communities.

Take action this week:

1. **Contact your legislators this week!** [Click here](#) for an email and phone talking points! The Joint Higher Ed Committee meets tomorrow morning at 11 am—get your thoughts to Legislators today or any time this week about cuts and the need for level funding+!
2. **Join the Joint Committee on Higher Education tomorrow, Tuesday morning, October 6, at 11 am!** The committee will be hearing from higher ed executives. MTA will present testimony that the cuts must be

reversed, and we will call on the legislature to provide, at a minimum, level- funding for all of public higher ed through the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 2021. There is limited testimony, so get your thoughts in today!

3. **Join the All Higher Ed Strategy Meeting on [Tuesday Oct 13 at 5 pm](#)** All higher ed union members and union coalition partners are invited to an all-member zoom. The meeting will discuss our strategy to stop the cuts, secure legislative funding, and #DefendPublicHigherEd. Union members from prek-12 locals are welcome to join in discussion of our strategy and upcoming actions. Please [register here](#).

Colleen Fitzpatrick
Organizer/Field Representative
Division of Higher Education
Massachusetts Teachers Association
cfitzpatrick@massteacher.org
cell: 413.446.8971 fax: 617.570.4955

HIGHER ED LETTER 10.5.20

Take Action to #DefendPublicHigherEd- and join an all-higher ed zoom on October 13.

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Take action this week: [click here](#) for an email and phone talking points!

Make the call to your legislators this week, when the [Joint Committee on Higher Education will be hearing](#) from higher ed executives on October 6, at 11 am. Follow the link to listen in! MTA will present testimony that the cuts must be reversed, and we will call on the legislature to provide, at a minimum, level- funding for all of public higher ed through the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 2021.

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