

It's all about what really matters—ensuring the very best possible working and learning conditions for you and your students.

The challenges today are as great as any we have ever faced:

- State budget cuts threaten public school programs, your salary, and your health and retirement benefits. MEA is working with the Legislature and the governor to keep the working and learning conditions in our public schools among the best in the country.
- Efforts to privatize school support services are increasing. MEA is working in your association and in your community telling the truth about these costly scams and rallying public support behind you.
- The Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System (MPSERS) consistently tries to erode pension and health care benefits for our retirees. MEA is working hard to protect your retirement.

That is why now, more than ever, you need

**The MEA Advantage.
Membership matters.**



MEA

Michigan Education Association

www.mea.org

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Iris K. Salters, President • Steven B. Cook, Vice President
Peggy McLellan, Secretary-Treasurer • Lu Battaglieri, Executive Director

The mission of the MEA is to ensure that the education of our students and the working environments of our members are of the highest quality.



The MEA Advantage

MEA
Michigan Education Association

When it really matters

**In their own words,
members describe the
MEA Advantage**

MEA: Impacting the Future

In their own words... why MEA is the most effective public employee union in Michigan

▶ Negotiating salaries and benefits, contractual rights

“The way I see it, our UniServ director bargains our contract like it was his own and he was going to have to live under it.”

—Don Wertz, maintenance staff, Van Buren Public Schools

“I cannot envision work life without the professionalism and support of the MEA. The MEA is always there and it knows what it is doing in the education arena. Our dues dollars are returned many times over in the service we receive.”

—Susan M. Russell, office assistant III, Oakland University



“If it weren't for the union, I wouldn't earn the competitive wages that I receive. If it weren't for MEA, I wouldn't have a contract. MEA helps to keep the teaching profession above water.”

—Alfonso Salais, teacher, Lansing Public Schools

▶ Lobbying/school funding

“I could not believe that somehow MEA helped keep the state education budget intact last year in the face of almost insurmountable odds, especially considering the Legislature's threatened reduction in school funding late in the year. Our staff felt as if a huge weight was lifted off our shoulders. Now the financial outlook for public schools is more desperate than ever, so it's good to have MEA still in there fighting for us.”

—Lew Behning, teacher, Munising Public Schools

▶ Pension and retirement benefits

“I've been a member of MEA, now MEA-Retired, for many years. I was there for the battles to secure decent retirement. I retired a couple of years ago knowing that my pension and health benefits are protected. We accomplished that through the lobbying and political action efforts of MEA. I'm proud I was, and continue to be, an active member of the association.”

—Jean Eckloff, retired teacher, Ontonagon Area Schools

▶ Privatization crisis

“I was very pleased with the support MEA gave us because we couldn't have done it on our own. Our UniServ director went above and beyond what I expected by working with our group, anytime, anywhere. We had lots of support from the teachers, other departments in the school and the community, but I believe that if it wasn't for MEA's assistance, we would have lost our jobs.”

—Judeen Huston, food service, Manton Public Schools



▶ Quality health insurance

“One of the key components provided by MEA is in the area of bargaining good health insurance. It is so important in this day and age to have health insurance that puts the patient first. I know my MESSA insurance places no obstacles or limits to needed treatment.”

—Michael McIntosh, teacher, Ann Arbor Public Schools



▶ Legal help

“We wouldn't be anywhere without MEA's legal assistance. We'd see no light at the end of the tunnel. We have \$600,000 that we would not have seen without MEA. We've seen many legal victories and we hope to see even more. As we've said from the very beginning, 'It ain't over 'til we say it's over.' MEA gives us hope.”

—Donna Mitchner, bus driver, Grand Rapids Public Schools

▶ Professional development

“Everything I have learned outside of my professional organization, I owe to MEA and my affiliation with NEA. I truly have learned invaluable information from them – from legal issues to NCLB to Education YES! I really would know nothing of this in detail if it weren't for MEA and NEA. It's been a wealth of information for me as a classroom teacher that I don't feel I could've gotten from any professional development provided by my district.”

—Rosa Johnson, teacher, Mount Pleasant Public Schools

