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*How this
election could ruin
public education
(if we let it)*

The Time is Now

SUPPORTERS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION WON'T SOON SEE ANOTHER CHANCE LIKE THIS.

Next month, we can go all in. We can let our votes speak for our hearts. We can unite in a single action to save our schools by electing leaders who understand and value the transformative power of public education.

Inside this issue of the magazine, you will find the MEA voting guide with our recommendations for candidates up and down the November ballot who understand the urgent need to right the ship of public education. Now it's up to you.

Education does not often rise to the top of election-year issues in the media. At the same time, anti-public education forces speak in euphemisms to disguise their true intentions. We have to reject these cynical ploys and urge our friends and family to see through the veneer as well:

- **Choice** means draining public funds from community schools to private and for-profit vendors.
- **Hiring flexibility** means de-professionalizing educators by favoring uncertified, unqualified replacements.
- **School reform** means closing buildings that serve vulnerable populations rather than fully funding and supporting them.

- **Best financial practices** means defunding schools to force districts into cutting salaries and pushing huge annual health care cost increases onto the shoulders of school employees.
- **Accountability** means burdensome over-testing of students and judging schools and teachers on a single test score instead of encouraging a rich curriculum and broad array of programs and services.

The disinformation campaign began 20 years ago with the rebranding of public education as “failing,” No Child Left Behind, and the scapegoating of all the committed individuals in our schools who’ve dedicated their lives to improving the lives and futures of young people.

Our choice for president, Hillary Clinton, has been fighting for children and families all her life, and she’s vowed to support strong unions and give educators a seat at the table. In contrast, Republican candidate Donald Trump falls firmly in the corporate “reform” camp.

Trump revealed his position during a visit to a low-performing Ohio charter school, where he said he would

divert \$20 billion of public funds to private schools and for-profit charters. He labeled the entire American system of public education a “failed government-run monopoly.”

You have witnessed the damage wrought by the corporate movement to take over our schools. Thousands of you made that clear in a recent open survey of our membership we jointly conducted with AFT Michigan.

The level of response to the survey was unprecedented. The results were clear. Our membership in both K-12 and higher education is stressed to the breaking point by hostile state and federal policies that are destroying public education in Michigan.

“Having Kindergarten students take part in multiple standardized tests throughout the year and pushing them to read before they are ready, is not what is best for the students.”

—Anonymous survey response

Look for our full report on the survey results beginning on page 23 of this issue, and take some time to read our coverage of what’s at stake in this election throughout the magazine. Enjoy the stories of our members’ successes and dedication. Dog-ear the voting guide.

Then mark your calendars for Nov. 8. ■



Steven B. Cook
President



Nancy L. Strachan
Vice President



Richard S. Trainor
Secretary-Treasurer

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Cover art concept by Rachel Beyer.

MEA • Voice

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6—MEMBERS AT WORK: Kalamazoo teacher Shannon Houtrouw was coding before it was cool—and now he's bringing both girls and boys on board.



4—NEWS & NOTES: Two Holly teachers spent two years building a bike trail on school property.



8—COVER STORY: Imagine what the world would look like if MEA disappeared tomorrow.



10—COVER STORY: Learn about the forces aligned against us in the struggle to shape education policy.



32—MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: How this professor reaches struggling readers and underserved students.

Editor's Notebook

Welcome to the new *MEA Voice*. Our redesign of MEA's flagship publication brings you the best stories you've come to expect—in an updated format on more attractive, cost-effective paper that maintains a makeup of 10 percent post-consumer recycled material. Look for more news that matters, more stories that resonate, and more member voices that deserve to be heard. On that note, I'd like to ask a favor: Add your voice! Send me ideas for stories about issues, or features about members at work, or opinion pieces you'd like to write, by emailing me at BOrtega@mea.org.

—Brenda Ortega, Editor

30%

Percentage decline in Michigan's higher education funding since 2002, leading to a more than doubling of tuition at state public universities since then—and average student debt loads now among the worst in the nation.

Above and Beyond

Holly Education Association members Josh McCreedy and Michael Rapin have spent more than 1,000 hours over the past two years clearing trees with axes and building small wooden bridges to create a community bike trail in wooded district-owned property behind Holly High School. The two teachers wanted to provide outdoor learning opportunities for students, as well as an accessible place for the entire community to participate in physical activities and enjoy the outdoors. Student groups helped with construction of the 3.12-mile trail, which contains multiple loops for various biking skill levels. A dedication ceremony was slated for Oct. 7.



“There is no data that shows that moving a child from one school to another school against their choice has any positive impact on student achievement. Quite frankly, it has a negative impact on the children.”

Chris Wigent, executive director of the Michigan Association of School Administrators, on the ongoing battle over threats by Gov. Rick Snyder's administration to close some schools by next June, based on test scores that districts were promised would not be used for accountability purposes until 2018 at the earliest.

“SCHOOLS SHOULD BE A PLACE WHERE YOU WANT TO GO AND LEARN, NOT A PLACE TO FEAR.”

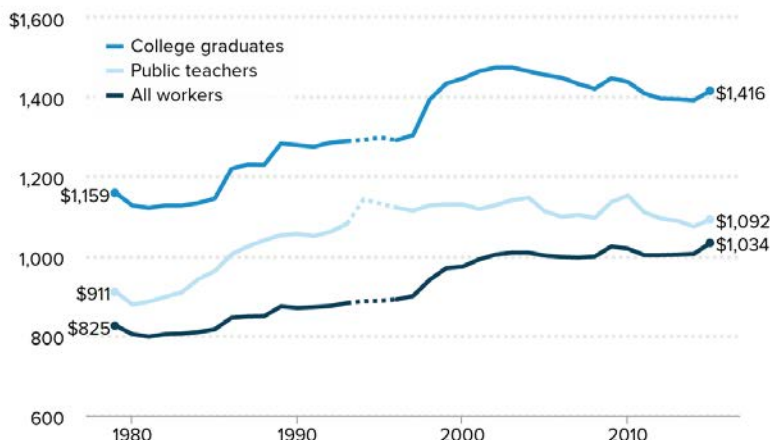
Corey Maison, a New Baltimore transgender 15-year-old, quoted in the Detroit Free Press following the State Board of Education's recent 6-2 adoption of a set of optional guidelines Michigan schools can use to protect the safety of LGBTQ students. The guidelines suggest allowing students to use restrooms based on their gender identity and ensuring staff are trained to address issues facing such students. Studies show LGBTQ youth are more likely to be bullied and to commit self-harm.

ICYMI

The Economic Policy Institute recently analyzed the wages of educators relative to other workers and found that the penalty teachers endure for their career choice has become more severe over the past 20 years. "In order to recruit and retain talented teachers, school districts should be paying them more than their peers," said Lawrence Mishel, co-author of *'The Teacher Pay Gap is Wider Than Ever.'*"

Teachers' weekly wages are 23 percent lower than those of other college graduates

Average weekly wages of public school teachers, other college graduates, and all workers, 1979–2015 (2015 dollars)



Note: "College graduates" excludes public school teachers, and "all workers" includes everyone (including public school teachers and college graduates). Wages are adjusted to 2015 dollars using the CPI-U-RS. Data are for workers age 18–64 with positive wages (excluding self-employed workers). Non-imputed data are not available for 1994 and 1995; data points for these years have been extrapolated and are represented by dotted lines (see Appendix A for more detail).

Source: Authors' analysis of Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group data

Economic Policy Institute



mcfn.org

Follow the Money

Learn who's funding elected officials with a new donor tracking tool from Michigan Campaign Finance Network. Go to mcfn.org and click on **following the money**.

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 8—MEA Fall Representative Assembly

Lansing Center, Lansing

The Representative Assembly (RA) is the legislative body that conducts the business of MEA. The group meets twice a year, in the fall and spring. Delegates to the RA are elected by local associations.

October 8—Commissions/Committees/Task Forces (CCTF)

Lansing Center, Lansing

The MEA CCTFs advise the MEA Board of Directors on assigned topics. Membership on a commission is by election at the RA or by appointment of the MEA vice president with consent from the board.

October 21—Higher Education Bargaining Conference

MEA Headquarters, East Lansing

Sessions include such topics as the trends in online learning, intellectual property, higher education funding, member engagement, and bargaining—to help higher education leaders strengthen their local associations.

February 2-3—Bargaining, Public Affairs & Professional Development Conference

Cobo Center, Detroit

MEA's biggest conference of the year provides updated information and sharpens members' skills in advocacy, communications, member engagement, negotiations, political action, and professional development. ■

Kalamazoo Teacher Creates Student ‘Code Warriors’

By Brenda Ortega
MEA Voice Editor

MEA MEMBER SHANNON HOUTROUW WAS CODING BEFORE IT WAS COOL.

Last January, when President Barack Obama unveiled a \$4 billion “Computer Science (CS) for All” initiative in his final State of the Union address, Houtrouw was already way ahead of the game.

A former professor and software systems engineer, the Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center (KAMSC) instructor began transforming computer courses into hands-on coding and computer science opportunities nearly 20 years ago.

Since then he’s built a groundbreaking program of introductory classes and AP electives at KAMSC always half-filled—or more—with female students, who are typically under-represented in CS classes and careers.

“They come in scared to death, certain they’ll be the one who won’t be able to do it, and I try to convince them otherwise,” Houtrouw said.

Convince he does.

His alumni, male and female, go

on to study at some of the most prestigious universities in the country, including MIT, Stanford, Harvard, Yale, Brown, and Caltech. They pursue CS and engineering degrees at Michigan, Michigan State, Western, Hope, and Kalamazoo College.

And they chase other dreams in medicine, or art, or biology—transformed by the critical thinking and problem-solving skills they master when they learn how to tell computers what to do.

“The task is not just to get them to code but to get them to think,” Houtrouw said. “They can use these tools in whatever field they decide to pursue in their lives. It’s a big door opener.”

Houtrouw hooks students when they’re required to take his sophomore CS class at KAMSC, a 30-year-old math and science half-day magnet serving 300 qualifying students from all over Kalamazoo County. The four-year school is administered by Kalamazoo Public Schools and receives resources and counsel from

private industry.

“I didn’t know anything about computers, except for a typing class I took once,” said senior Ava Wood, a student in Houtrouw’s third-year AP CS class who is considering majoring in the field in college. “I basically was forced to take his class, and that’s when I found out I liked it.”

Houtrouw motivates the majority of young women at KAMSC to apply to take his upper-level classes, though he can only accept half of students—male or female—who want a seat. Nearly 100 percent of Houtrouw’s students take the AP CS exam, and all but a handful have passed it.

A secret to his success with all students is turning the work of problem solving into competition—in his classroom and in formal tournaments at the regional, national, and international levels. The hardest working students win “Code Warrior” status with a t-shirt to match.

“Competition gives them more motivation to study harder and work together better, and it’s just fun,” he said, likening it to Tom Sawyer convincing all those boys to whitewash the fence.

Hanging from the ceiling in his fourth-floor classroom are different-colored t-shirts with CS puns printed across the front (“Straight Outta CompSci” and “Every Bit Counts”). Plaques and awards cover the walls,

Kalamazoo’s Shannon Houtrouw has twice taken all-girl teams to the MSU High School Programming Contest that is typically dominated by boys. In 2014 his ladies-only team won the championship, and in 2016 his all-girls teams took second and third place spots.





Houtrouw discusses problem-solving approaches with his AP Computer Science class, while junior Siddhant Pagariya checks his work. Houtrouw uses competition to turn hard work into fun.

interspersed with team photos of smiling, confident students wearing the shirts.

One of those students is Vaughn Taylor, a senior who won a Google Chromebook for his tournament-high individual math score at an international American Computer Science League (ACSL) competition last spring in New Hampshire.

"I don't think there's enough exposure to computer science," Taylor said. "It's the direction the world is going, and I'm really thankful to have this opportunity."

Houtrouw has accumulated a startlingly impressive record in tournaments, even though he has been known to bring as many as 60 kids to compete in multiple teams of three to five where it was allowed—in contrast to many schools that send only a handful of top students to compete.

The awards are too many to list, but highlights include a first-place win in the toughest category of the ACSL International All-Star Invitational in Denver two years ago, and sweeps of a state contest at Saginaw Valley State University in five of the last six years.

Perhaps most dramatic has been his track record of mentoring girls to

achieve at the highest levels in high school and then aspire to a career in an industry where only one-third of technical employees are women.

He credits a Tapestry Workshop in Lansing, where he shared trade secrets on how to attract and retain women and minorities in CS classes, with introducing him to the National Center for Women in Technology (NCWIT). The rest is history.

In the past four years, six young women from Michigan have been among 35 girls nationwide to receive National Aspirations in Computing awards annually from NCWIT—five of whom were Houtrouw's KAMSC students. Another 23 of his female students were runners-up in that time.

"No school in the country can touch that," according to Houtrouw's colleague at KAMSC, physics and math instructor Michael Sinclair.

The 2013 national winner, Reinie Thomas, was one of only six girls who could be convinced to take Houtrouw's AP CS class in 2012. A four-sport athlete awarded 11 varsity letters during high school, Thomas said she thought CS was for nerds and boys, and she had no interest.

Now she's a pre-med senior at Hope College, double-majoring

in Computer Science and Spanish. "Because he believed I could, I did it, and it has changed my life," she said.

One strategy he's discovered is to directly attack the barriers standing between girls and CS, which include the stereotypes they believe and the intimidation they feel. Houtrouw enlists junior and senior girls to talk with the younger ones.

Junior Isabel Hernandez said talking with older girls who were competing and winning made the difference. "I was extremely intimidated," said Hernandez, a student in Houtrouw's AP class this year. "But once you get to know them, you realize, 'I can be them.'"

Houtrouw works tirelessly to bust the myth that girls can't code as well as boys, an effort that led him two years ago to deliberately take a girls-only team of 17 students to a co-ed high school programming contest at MSU typically dominated by boys.

His all-female team not only won the championship but they "destroyed" the competition, he said—solving the first of five challenge problems just 13 minutes into the three-hour time limit. They completed four of the problems before the other teams had finished one or two.

"That was fun," he said.

For his work promoting the value and talents of women, Houtrouw was honored with the 2016 MEA Gender Equity Award, adding to a lengthy list of honors he's received, including 40 Significant Educator Awards, selected by students; the NCWIT Aspirations in Computing Award; and a Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation Educator of Distinction Award.

Last year, he was one of five Michigan finalists for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

"When students graduate and write back and say 'You made a difference,' it makes you want to come back and teach again," Houtrouw said. "I love my job." ■

MEFA

FOUR YEARS AGO, SOME PUNDITS WERE WRITING OUR OBITUARY.

Anti-union, anti-public education forces had succeeded in passing so-called “right-to-work” legislation they hoped would weaken our resolve to fight, shred our bonds of unity, and silence our voices on every aspect of educational policy.

In the crystal ball they hopefully looked into, MEA was dead—and the future of education was as vulnerable to hostile takeover as the ruby slippers on Dorothy asleep in a field of poppies in *The Wizard of Oz*.

Those dreams have not come

true, but it's not for our opponents' lack of trying. They've failed because of you. You haven't fallen for the ruse. You aren't buying what our enemies are selling.

You remain an MEA member.

You know public schools have been the engine of a great nation for decades. You believe in extending opportunities to all kids. And you see the teachers and support staff who fight every day to do what's right for kids despite the political headwinds opposing their best efforts.

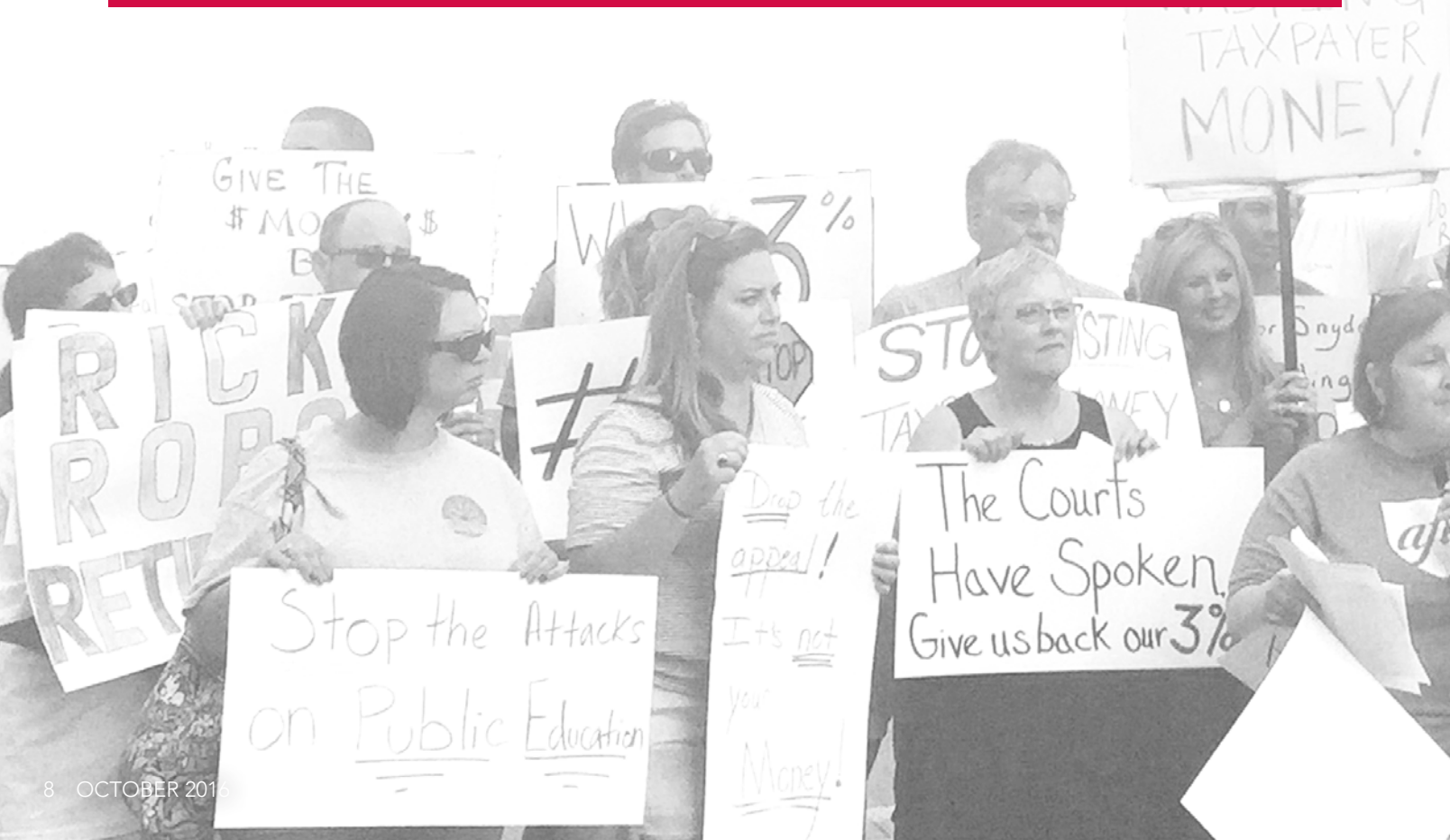
But the story isn't over, and our foes are not finished.

Given single-party rule for the past several years, Michigan Republican leaders have continued to erode school funding, dismantle teacher autonomy and professionalism, and strip away employee rights.

Take a look into their crystal ball, and see what they see. Think things are bad now? Imagine the educational landscape without MEA in it.

Larger class sizes. More duties. Lower pay. Reduced benefits. Arbitrary dismissals. No voice. ■

*Stories by Brenda Ortega
MEA Voice Editor*



You Don't Know What You've Got Till It's Gone

HARVEY MILLER DOESN'T HAVE TO CLOSE HIS EYES AND IMAGINE A WORLD WITH NO MEA. HE LIVED THERE ONCE UPON A TIME.

And he'll tell you it wasn't a happy place for school employees, who could be fired at any time for no reason—even simply to make room for the superintendent's wife to take a teaching job or for his nephew to supplant a custodian.

"That's the first thing the other side wants to do if they win—make sure everyone is an at-will employee," said Miller, who worked as a teacher for 30 years in Pine River, south of Cadillac, beginning in 1958—back when MEA was "a tea and crumpets society," he added.

The "other side" Miller referred to describes self-anointed "reform advo-

cates" who would like nothing better than to eliminate MEA and reshape public education in the corporate image. So what would a post-MEA world look like?

"It would be the end of duty-free lunches," said Miller, a longtime MEA activist who finished his education career serving eight years as an administrator—five as a superintendent. "You could expect to be supervising on the playground or in the lunchroom instead."

Class sizes could rise without contractual limits built in, said Judy Foster, president of MEA-Retired and a 33-year veteran teacher. Then

new job requirements would pop up, like in the decades before bargaining when a superintendent could mandate employees to do community service during off-hours and write a report on it, Foster said.

"We used to have to earn brownie points with him, and that was part of earning your salary," she said.

Studies reveal in states with weak education unions, the erosion of school employees' right to bargain reduces pay and benefits, and the loss of a professional voice to speak out on education policy suppresses educa-

The Mackinac Center for Public Policy and its allies want to get rid of MEA. This message (left) from a leaked email exchange makes that clear. In the emails between Mackinac Center staffers and then House Education Committee Chair Rep. Tom McMillin (R-Rochester Hills), the "no more MEA" comment comes amid a conversation about Public Act 152, a Mackinac Center-pushed law that has led to skyrocketing health care costs for school employees. Turn the page to **UNDERSTAND WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST.**

From: "McHugh, Jack" <McHugh@Mackinac.org>
To: TOM MCMILLIN <tom_mcmillin@shcplobal.net>
Cc: "Van Beek, Michael" <VanBeek@mackinac.org>; "Hohman, James M." <Hohman@mackinac.org>; "Braun, Kenneth M." <Braun@mackinac.org>
Sent: Wed, June 1, 2011 11:29:22 AM
Subject: RE: MESSA is state's largest VEBA! (And beware OPEB "VEBA")

I personally think 20 percent is OK, because it changes the employee incentives (and we do believe in incentives!)

But a hard cap is OK too.

Do we care who runs the operation? Maybe, for this reason: Our goal is outlaw government collective bargaining in Michigan, which in practical terms means no more MEA.

I'm reminded of our calls to eliminate ISDs (and Ruth's work to expose them): The legislature keeps giving them more things to do, making it ever more difficult to abolish them.

jm

tor leadership and autonomy, driving good people out of the profession.

Research released by Wellesley College last October found that weakening unionism and collective bargaining “reduces teacher quality, as it decreases teacher salary, diminishing districts’ incentives to dismiss low-quality teachers and encouraging high-quality teachers to leave the teaching sector.”

Other research, including a study published in *Harvard Educational Review*, found a “significantly positive” relationship between strong

unionism and SAT/ACT scores—most likely due to improvements unions achieve in working conditions; employee autonomy, security, and dignity; educator training and professionalism; and administration, the authors noted.

Ultimately? The destruction of MEA would harm students and damage school performance.

BARGAINING

Young people entering the profession don’t remember a time without the right to bargain salaries, benefits,

and working conditions—fought for and won by union activism in 1965 legislation known as the Public Employee Relations Act (PERA), said Kay Walker, a former Traverse City English teacher who now serves as vice-president of MEA-Retired.

Walker started out as a young teacher surrounded by veterans who had lived the struggle. They told her the stories of hard times and walking picket lines, building coalitions, lobbying legislators, and refusing to give up, she said.

“What’s going on in the world

Understand What We Are Up Against

THE MACKINAC CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY IS A NAME THAT MIGHT SOUND FAMILIAR. It’s the organization responsible for the annual advertising and email blitz encouraging MEA members to opt out of the union.

The motives of this supposed “independent think tank” are not altruistic. Its stated goal is to get rid of MEA and clear a path for the corporations and billionaires who fund the center to achieve another stated goal: eliminating public education in favor of vouchers and privately managed schools.

To understand what public school employees are up against in the battle to shape education policy, it’s important to recognize the forces aligned on the other side, in particular the Mackinac Center, the State Policy Network (SPN) it belongs to, and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) supported by the SPN.

“They have a lot to gain by getting us to have fewer and fewer members,” said MEA Lobbyist Christina Canfield, who has joined forces with

MEA Researcher Greg Steimel to educate school employees about the money and ideology behind seismic rightward shifts in Michigan politics over the past several years.

At a recent presentation in Gibraltar, she told the crowd of MEA members: “Your ability to bargain collectively is a creature of statute, and the Mackinac Center has clearly laid out an agenda to eliminate that right. That is what we’re up against.”

The Mackinac Center is the largest of a web of right-wing organizations nationwide that comprise the SPN. Funded through tax-deductible contributions from billionaires and corporations—such as the DeVos family, the Koch brothers, the Walton family, and ExxonMobil—the Mackinac Center writes anti-worker legislation promoted nationwide by ALEC.

Education historian Diane Ravitch, a former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education under President George H.W. Bush, describes ALEC as “an extremist organization that is funded by major corporations and has 2,000 members who are mostly state

legislators. It develops model legislation showing how to replace public schools with charters and vouchers, how to get rid of unions, how to get rid of teacher certification, how to get rid of teacher tenure.”

The Mackinac Center has enjoyed success under Gov. Rick Snyder and the current legislative leadership, accomplishing its goals to pass so-called “right to work” legislation, in addition to the law granting emergency managers greater power in the takeover of local cities and school boards, and Public Act 152 of 2011—forcing school employees to shoulder the burden of health care cost increases.

The center has also become more direct about its ultimate goal: privatizing public education.

Former board member and founder D. Joseph Olson told the *Livingston Daily* in 2011 he doesn’t believe government should be involved in education. And Mackinac Center adjunct scholar Gary Wolfram told the independent news service MIRS in 2013, “Public schools should be privatized.”

shapes who you are,” Walker said, pointing out that younger members are no longer routinely exposed to the generation of teachers who paved the path for those who followed.

When everyone negotiated salaries individually rather than collectively, men often made more money than women doing the same work. Benefits such as retirement, health care, and sick/personal/maternity leave didn’t exist.

Penny Letts remembers. The former middle school math teacher from Huron County’s Harbor Beach

started her career 49 years ago making \$6,000 a year, “and my friends were graduating from college with engineering degrees, making \$22,000. They thought I was pretty stupid.”

Collective bargaining not only increases pay and benefits, it defines school employees’ responsibilities and guarantees prep time and reasonable workloads—all of which would disappear without a healthy and united MEA membership to press for it.

“Those rights weren’t just handed over by the Legislature and school boards,” said MEA President Steven Cook. “They had to be fought for, they had to be won.”

PROTECTION

Get rid of MEA, and job protections go with it.

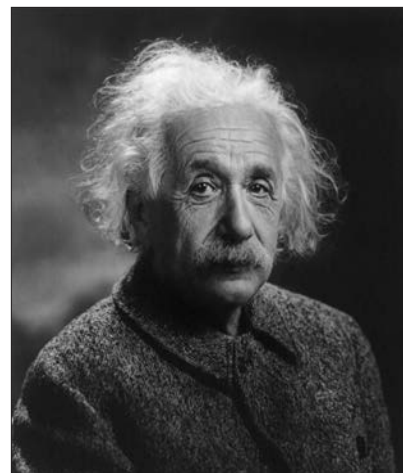
“Teachers could not get a mortgage before the Tenure Act came in, because they could so easily be fired on a whim,” Letts said.

Pregnancy. A single complaint from a parent. A personality conflict with an administrator. All could be cause for dismissal without MEA’s job protection—easily the most misunderstood aspect of the union’s work.

According to popular myth, teachers unions protect bad teachers. In reality, union representatives simply ensure that proper procedures are followed in evaluations, discipline, placements, and dismissals—and pursue remedies if they are not.

Educators think they’ll never need the union’s protection until they do, said Kalamazoo Education Association President Amanda Miller. Many times it’s the individual most powerfully advocating for students who is seen as a threat by an administrator, she said.

“I have people all the time say ‘I can’t believe this is happening to me; I’ve been working here 15 years with no problems, and I don’t know where to go for help.’ The union



I consider it important, indeed urgently necessary, for intellectual workers to get together, both to protect their own economic status and also, generally speaking, to secure their influence in the political field... Indeed, it is the proper task to defend academic freedom, without which a healthy development of democracy is impossible.

Albert Einstein
Founding member of AFT Local 552
Princeton University



We’re training people to lead, not just belong, and they’re realizing if we use a collective voice we can move toward better education for kids.

Amanda Miller
Kalamazoo Education Association
President

ainst

The Center continues to push for legislation to close the school retirement system and ban public sector collective bargaining by repealing the Public Employee Relations Act.

Kelly LaButte, vice-president of the local EA in Gibraltar, said she wants teachers and other school employees to know what’s going on, so they understand the importance of work the MEA is doing to fight back.

“I know the members are frustrated that now we can’t bargain for things we’ve always bargained, and I think a lot of the time we point our fingers at the wrong people,” LaButte said. “If we get together, we can fight. If we keep the union strong, we can get our rights back.”

MEA Researcher Steimel said voting for candidates who don’t support public education strengthens the hand of the center and its allies.

“Quitting the union helps them even more,” Steimel said. “So vote like your future depends on it, because it does.” ■



What keeps me going is the underlying belief that we're doing some of the most vital work for American democracy.

Gretchen Dziadosz
MEA Executive Director



Privatization hurts the economy. Eighty percent of people whose jobs are being privatized live in the communities where they work. And we've got all the local mom and pop businesses saying, 'We don't want a middleman taking money out of the community.' Most of these companies are from overseas, taking money out of the country. We have to wake up and face facts and vote for MEA-recommended candidates.

Drew Campbell
ESP Caucus President

What Goes Up and What Comes Down In States with Weak Teacher Unions?

▲ **Class sizes**

▲ **Job requirements**

▲ **Teacher attrition**

▲ **Drop-out rates**

▼ **Salaries and benefits**

▼ **Teacher quality**

▼ **Student test scores**

▼ **State K-12 funding**

is where you go. We have your best interests at heart.”

Support staff are not immune to arbitrary firings either, but they would be left to battle alone if MEA went away.

If a supervisor were to issue a command that crossed the bounds of safe practices, “Without the union to protect us, the minute we say ‘No,’ we’re gone—out the door,” said Drew Campbell, a custodian in Waterford and president of the ESP Caucus.

Support staff have faced privatization threats for some time, but that would be the norm for all school employees without MEA, added Campbell, who serves on a member-led team that helps locals beat back efforts to replace loyal employees with lower-paid, more transient workers contracted through for-profit companies.

“Public education would disappear,” he said. “Corporate America would have a field day cashing in. Educational unions are the only thing standing in the way.”

LEGAL

Just in the past several weeks, MEA filed an amicus brief against the state’s plan to funnel \$2.5 million to private schools in violation of the state constitution and to uphold lower court rulings in the ongoing

battle to force the return of \$550 million taken from school employees’ paychecks.

No MEA? No justice.

“You’ve got rights, but they’re no good if you can’t enforce them, and that takes money, that takes lawyers, that takes legal action,” President Cook said.

With no MEA, the so-called 3 percent case would never have been filed in 2010. The courts would not have ruled three times in favor of school employees who had money unilaterally taken from their paychecks to fund retiree health care—a benefit they were not guaranteed to receive.

No one would be left to wage the legal battle before the state Supreme Court six years later.

“An individual teacher could not afford a six-year legal battle, but because we’re unified in an association, we have the resources to file a statewide lawsuit,” said MEA Executive Director Gretchen Dziadosz.

“And it’s not only MEA, but the NEA nationally, that helps us out,” Cook added. “It’s a coalition with the American Federation of Teachers, too. It’s a team effort.”

ADVOCACY

MEA’s “Ask Me” ads on television and social media, promoting school employees as education experts

who need to be part of policymaking, have been a highly visible and successful campaign to influence public attitudes.

Often, however, the work that's done to claim a seat at the table for school employees is behind-the-scenes action fighting for the dignity and professionalism of members to be able to do what's best for students.

It's lobbying a Republican legislator who doesn't want publicity around his decision to cast a swing vote on MEA's side. It's organizing members to use their expertise to weigh in on important decisions, or protest if necessary. It's issuing communications to advance the position of school employees in the public arena.

"This is the one people don't see a lot, because we're working to influence educational policy in a way that's often invisible and has to be invisible by its nature," Dziadosz said.

MEA lobbyists solicit member expertise on proposed new laws or regulations and then quietly, persistently work at persuading lawmakers to kill bad legislation, if possible, or at least make changes that will reduce the harm inflicted by ill-informed policies.

What people see, however, are the setbacks suffered by public education

in recent years. State K-12 funding cuts, right to work, unlimited for-profit charter schools, hard caps on health care premiums, over-testing, and weakened tenure rights for senior employees.

"They see those bad things that have happened, but they don't see the 10 terrible things we were able to stop," Dziadosz said.

The current Republican leadership has shown its hand since taking control of all three branches of government in Michigan six years ago, says Al Beamish, a retired teacher and MEA board member for 34 years. They do not support public education or school employees, he said.

"I'm hopeful there will be a renaissance soon, but we need to change the political scene quickly," Beamish added.

Meanwhile, Kalamazoo's Amanda Miller believes the struggles of the last few years have only made MEA stronger.

"When things got bad, people realized they had to start organizing," she said. "They realized to get what we want, we have to stick together. I think it's actually making us better."

In other words, to borrow from Mark Twain, reports of MEA's death have been greatly exaggerated. ■



What is lost can be regained. The fight is never over. That is why we have to vote, and we have to vote in the best interest of public education as our single issue.

Steven Cook
MEA President



Our strength comes from as many people being united as possible and getting involved in political action in their local communities.

Harvey Miller
MEA-Retired past president

DID YOU KNOW?

A 2015 study showed—contrary to popular myth—teachers unions do not protect “bad” teachers from being fired and thereby reduce the quality of the teacher workforce. In reality, school districts in states with strong education unions are more likely to fire low-quality teachers, motivated by tenure and higher wages to weed out ineffective educators early—and in the process union strength improves overall teacher quality in a state, according to the study by Wellesley College Economics Professor Eunice S. Han.

Just Hear Me Out—and Try to Believe



*By Rhonda Sturgeon
ESP president
Meridian Public Schools*

I'M WRITING THIS COLUMN TO ASK SOMETHING OF YOU THAT MIGHT SEEM DIFFICULT. I'm going to ask you to believe. So before I start, let me share some of my beliefs with you.

I believe my job as a paraeducator in Meridian Public Schools can change the world. I work with at-risk students in the morning and cognitively impaired children in the afternoon. I live to see the smiles on their faces when they learn something new and realize they can do more than they thought they could.

I believe in MEA. I work hard and deserve a fair wage. And I greatly value the fact that as union members we can advocate for the training and work conditions we need to do our jobs as paraeducators, food service workers, bus drivers, custodians, and grounds and maintenance employees.

I believe in democracy. I want to have a voice in what's happening in the world, to be involved in something greater than myself and ulti-

mately get heard in Washington and Lansing. I joined the picket lines last summer to protest the unfair 3 percent court challenges by the state.

And I believe in voting.

That's what I'm asking of you, too. I know it's difficult.

I hear it all the time. "My vote doesn't matter. I'm just the little guy. Nothing I do can make a difference."

But you have to believe in the power of casting a ballot, because if you don't then your vote truly won't matter.

I have three kids of my own. One of them, my daughter, recently volunteered in a challenge softball league for special education kids. She knows serving as a buddy fielding grounders or running the bases can make a difference in the world—one child at a time.

It's the same with elections. It's a chance to make a difference. Two of my kids are old enough to vote, and they know from me telling them all these years that if you don't vote, you

can't complain about the outcome.

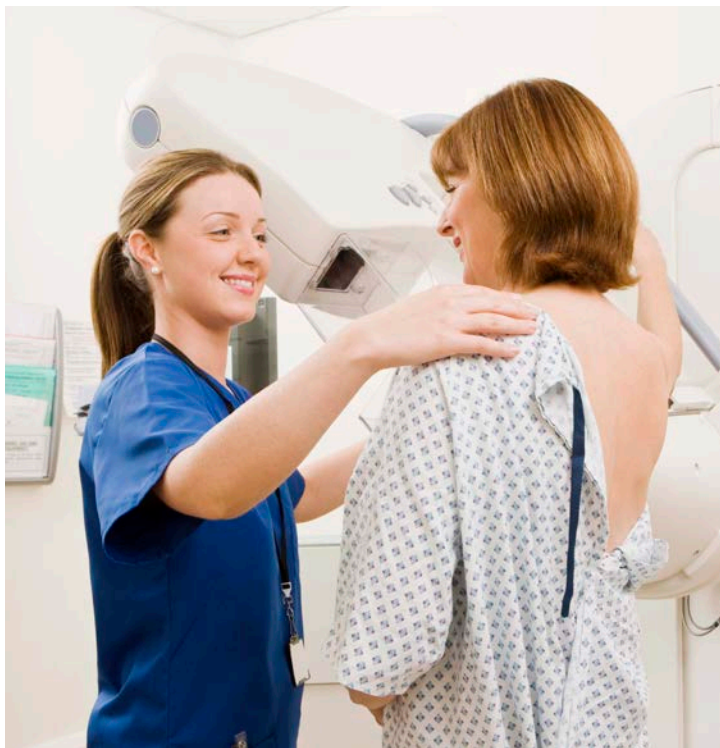
You've seen the outcome of Republicans running the show in Lansing, so I'm asking you to believe in something else. Believe the MEA voting recommendations are a road map to electing the people who will support public education—from the state House up to the White House.

Believe Donald Trump when he says he's going to take our tax money and give it over to private schools and corporations. And believe it when Hillary Clinton promises to give us the funding to make our community schools the best they can be.

The fact is, at this point in time, if you vote against your own interests as a public school employee, it's a vote for getting rid of the union, privatizing staff, and replacing public schools with charters. Period.

We're in this together, now let's stand together. That's what a union is all about. ■

Early detection is key for surviving breast cancer



OCTOBER IS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH, and it's a good time for women over 40 to schedule a mammogram.

About 7,660 Michigan women are diagnosed with breast cancer each year, according to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Breast cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer death among Michigan women, according to state officials, who estimate that 1,410 female Michiganders will die of the disease this year.

Early detection is critical to surviving breast cancer. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that women 50 and older get a mammogram every two years. Women between ages 40-50 should talk to their doctor about the need for an early screening mammogram, according to the CDC.

In addition, state health officials recommend women ages 20 and older get a clinical breast exam at least every three years. ■



MESSA members receive free annual mammograms

MESSA MEMBERS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS don't have to pay a dime out of pocket to receive a breast exam from an in-network provider as part of their free annual health maintenance exam.

Members can also receive one preventive mammogram per year with no out-of-pocket cost when seeing an in-network provider. (Please note that "experimental" mammograms are not covered; call MESSA's Member Service Center at 800.336.0013 to find out which types of mammograms are covered.) Additional mammograms are subject to your plan's deductible.

In the event of a cancer diagnosis, MESSA helps members address their challenges. In addition to excellent coverage for cancer-related treatment, prescriptions and prosthetics, MESSA's Medical Case Management program can provide personal support from a registered nurse. MESSA members can enroll in the program by calling 800.441.4626 during normal business hours. ■

State Board, other downballot statewide races critical

WHEN REPUBLICANS PASSED A LAW BANNING STRAIGHT-PARTY VOTING, their intention was clear—try to defeat pro-public education Democratic majorities on the four education boards elected at a statewide level.

While a lawsuit has blocked the straight-party ban from going into effect for this election, that's not stopping candidates like John Austin and Ismael Ahmed from fighting hard for seats on the State Board of Education.

On the State Board, Democrats hold a 6-2 advantage, which Board President Austin says has enabled them to push back against a right-wing legislative agenda that would deny climate change and evolution in the science classroom and deny equal opportunity for all students, regardless of zip code, gender, or ethnicity.

"We need to stand strong with downballot candidates, because there's a ton at stake in this election," Austin said. "The fact is, Democrats do control the State Board of Education and the three university boards, and the Republicans are trying desperately to get their

hooks into those institutions."

Austin has served 16 years on the State Board, the last six as president. Prior president Kathleen Strauss is retiring after 24 years of service, with "Ish" Ahmed earning the Democratic nomination to take her place.

Austin and Ahmed earned recommendations from MEA's Statewide Screening and Recommendation (S&R) Committee, made up of members from across the state who interviewed the candidates.

Austin would rebuild Michigan's brand as the Education State by restoring public education funding after years of cuts and changing how the state spends education money to close achievement gaps and promote postsecondary opportunities for all.

"We need to be putting more dollars behind kids who have further to travel because of poverty and other special needs," said Austin. "And we can't allow for-profit education vendors to keep opening new charters and virtual schools that don't educate kids and do nothing but syphon pub-

lic dollars away from existing schools."

Ahmed views this election as "a real fight for the heart and soul of America, and it's not just going to be decided by who we choose for president. Certainly that is important, but it depends on who we elect at the local level in education and other areas."

A former director of the Michigan Department of Human Services and son of a union auto worker, Ahmed understands the struggles educators face because his wife shares them as a teacher. She buys supplies with her own money, works late into the night, and visits families of her students—as so many dedicated educators do.

Yet those hard-working school employees don't receive the respect or the compensation they deserve, Ahmed said. Instead they face school takeovers and top-down mandates that limit their decision-making and creativity in the classroom.

"On top of the difficult work of teaching, they also have the problem of people at the top making it near-to-impossible to do their jobs," he said. ■

TWO SEATS EACH ON MSU, U-M, WAYNE STATE BOARDS ON BALLOT

Cuts to higher education and student financial aid, which have fueled tuition hikes and student debt in Michigan, must be reversed to build a healthy future. That's a belief shared by all of MEA's recommended candidates for the Michigan State University, University of Michigan and Wayne State University boards.

For the MSU Board of Trustees, incumbents Dianne Byrum and Diann Woodard received continuing recommendations from MEA, as did U-M Board of Regents incumbents Larry Deitch and Denise Ilitch. For Wayne State's Board of Governors, Mark Gaffney and Yvette McElroy Anderson got the nod in their open seats from MEA's Statewide S&R Committee. ■

VOTE ALL THE WAY DOWN BALLOT FOR NON-PARTISAN RACES

Whether you're voting for individual candidates or straight party, every voter needs to remember to go to the non-partisan section of the ballot to complete voting in judicial and other important races. These races are critical—just ask any school employee waiting for their 3 percent—and straight party votes at the top of the ballot don't count in these non-partisan races.

That's a message being carried statewide by MEA's recommended candidates for the Michigan Supreme Court—Judge Deborah Thomas and Judge Frank Szymanski. Both are judges in Wayne County Third Circuit Court, with long track records of putting the law ahead of partisan politics. ■



VOTE

November 8

ELECTION

2016

MEA Voice 2016 Election Pull-Out Guide

Keep this handy!

Your Election Checklist

☒ *Know Where & When To Vote*

Need to check your voter registration, find your polling place or request an absentee ballot? You can do all that and more at www.michigan.gov/vote. If you don't think you'll be around on election day to vote in-person, make sure to request your absentee ballot right away!

☒ *Get Involved*

To win in November, friends of public education need your support talking to voters about why they're the right choice for our students and our communities. As school employees, you're a trusted messenger with voters—use that power to volunteer with a campaign and help to Get Out the Vote! Find out how you can help by emailing us at pac@mea.org or contacting your local UniServ office.

☒ *Contribute to PAC*

At www.MEAVotes.org, you can contribute to MEA-PAC and the NEA Fund for Children & Public Education. These political action committees make contributions to candidates who are pro-public education at the federal, state and local levels. Dues money cannot be given to political candidates—only your voluntary PAC contributions can help these friends of public education be successful this fall!

☒ *Vote for Friends of Public Education*

At every level of government, MEA members like you have screened and recommended candidates who—based on their stances on education and labor issues—have earned school employees' votes. This guide includes many of those recommended candidates for federal and state-level races.

Go online to [MEA.YourVoter.Guide](#) to find all the recommended candidates for your area, including important school board races and local millage elections.

Election Guide

MEA Election 2016 R

MEA'S SCREENING & RECOMMENDATION (S&R) PROCESS places control of MEA political recommendations in the hands of MEA members from across the state from diverse backgrounds and roles within the public education community. The process is governed by the MEA Political Action Committee (MEA-PAC) Council, made up of local delegates from MEA's 62 coordinating councils.

Recommendation decisions are based on candidate responses to questionnaires and interviews regarding education and labor issues only.

Recommendations at the state level are made by the Statewide S&R Committee, which is composed of elected members from various parts of the state and job classifications.

The S&R process for legislative districts is controlled at the local level, where interviews and recommendation votes are taken by MEA members from those jurisdictions serving on local S&R Committees.

STATEWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

President and Vice President of the United States:

Hillary Clinton and Tim Kaine

State Board of Education:

John Austin and Ish Ahmed

University of Michigan Board of Regents:

Laurence Deitch and Denise Ilitch

Michigan State University Board of Trustees:

Dianne Byrum and Diann Woodard

Wayne State Board of Governors:

Mark Gaffney and
Yvette McElroy Anderson

Michigan Supreme Court (full term):

Judge Frank Szymanski

Michigan Supreme Court (partial term):

Judge Deborah Thomas

Michigan Court of Appeals (1st District – two seats):

Judge Cynthia Stephens and
Nicole James

U.S. CONGRESS

1st District: Lon Johnson
2nd District: Dennis Murphy
5th District: U.S. Rep. Dan Kildee
7th District: Gretchen Driskell
8th District: Suzanna Shkreli
9th District: U.S. Rep. Sander Levin
11th District: Anil Kumar
12th District: U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell
13th District: U.S. Rep. John Conyers
14th District: U.S. Rep. Brenda Lawrence

U.S. Congress districts with no recommendation:

3rd, 4th, 6th, 10th

MICHIGAN STATE SENATE (Special Election)

4th District: Ian Conyers

Elect a pro-public education majority in the State House

COLLENE LAMONTE KNOWS FIRSTHAND HOW IMPORTANT EVERY SINGLE VOTE IS IN AN ELECTION.

In 2014, the former MEA member and sitting state representative lost her re-election bid by a mere 53 votes in Muskegon County's 91st House District. Low voter turnout was a major driver in her loss.

"It was crushing to lose by such a close margin. But it motivated me to come back and work even harder this

time," Lamonte said. "Public education is too important to me and my constituents to let a loss stand in the way of supporting what's right."

That's why Lamonte is running for the State House again in 2016, along with many others who seek to serve in a pro-public education majority in Lansing.

"Our school funding system is broken," said Lamonte, referencing this year's study commissioned by the Legislature that shows a huge gap in funding between high-performing districts and struggling ones. "Michigan school employees need to be heard by our lawmakers about the resources and tools they need to help all our students succeed."

Listening and respect for education. Those are drivers for many State

Recommended Candidates

MICHIGAN STATE HOUSE

1st District: Rep. Brian Banks
2nd District: Bettie Cook Scott
5th District: Rep. Fred Durhal III
6th District: Rep. Stephanie Chang
8th District: Rep. Sherry Gay-Dagnogo
9th District: Sylvia Santana
10th District: Rep. Leslie Love
11th District (partial term):
Lauren Plawecki
11th District (full term):
Jewell Jones
12th District: Rep. Erika Geiss
13th District: Rep. Frank Liberati
15th District: Abdullah Hammoud
16th District: Rep. Robert Kosowski
17th District: Rep. Bill LaVoy
18th District: Kevin Hertel
20th District: Colleen Pobur
21st District: Rep. Kristy Pagan
22nd District: Rep. John Chirkun
23rd District: Darrin Camilleri
24th District: Dana Camphous-Peterson
25th District: Rep. Henry Yanez
26th District: Jim Ellison
27th District: Rep. Robert Wittenberg
28th District: Patrick Green
29th District: Rep. Tim Greimel
30th District: Michael Notte

31st District: William Sowerby
33rd District: Jeff Yaroch
34th District: Rep. Sheldon Neeley
35th District: Rep. Jeremy Moss
36th District: Rep. Peter Lucido
37th District: Rep. Christine Greig
38th District: Amy McCusker
39th District: Michael Stack
40th District: Nicole Bedi
47th District: Rep. Henry Vaupel
48th District: Rep. Pam Faris
49th District: Rep. Phil Phelps
50th District: Tim Sneller
51st District: Ryan Bladzick
52nd District: Donna Lasinski
53rd District: Yousef Rabhi
54th District: Ronnie Peterson
55th District: Rep. Adam Zemke
56th District: Tom Redmond
57th District: Harvey Schmidt
60th District: Rep. Jon Hoadley
61st District: John Fisher
62nd District: Jim Haadsma
64th District: Ron Brooks
66th District: (S&R scheduled Oct. 6—
call 269-471-7705 for result)
67th District: Rep. Tom Cochran
68th District: Rep. Andy Schor
69th District: Rep. Sam Singh
71st District: Theresa Abed

75th District: Rep. David LaGrand
76th District: Rep. Winnie Brinks
83rd District: Jim Frank
84th District: James Wencel
85th District: Anthony Karhoff
86th District: Lynn Mason
87th District: Eric Anderson
88th District: Kim Nagy
91st District: Collene Lamonte
92nd District: Terry Sabo
95th District: Rep. Vanessa Guerra
96th District: Brian Elder
98th District: Geoff Malicoat
99th District: Bryan Mielke
100th District: Sandy Clarke
101st District: Dan Scripps
104th District: Betsy Coffia
106th District: Robert Kennedy
108th District: Scott Celello
109th District: Rep. John Kivela
110th District: Rep. Scott Dianda

Michigan State House districts with no recommendation:

3rd, 4th, 7th, 14th, 19th, 32nd, 41st, 42nd, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, 58th, 59th, 63rd, 65th, 70th, 72nd, 73rd, 74th, 77th, 78th, 79th, 80th, 81st, 82nd, 89th, 90th, 93rd, 94th, 97th, 102nd, 103rd, 105th, 107th.

House candidates who've earned MEA's recommendation through our locally driven process where candidates from both parties are interviewed by members like you.

"I hear from former colleagues all the time about how tired they are of politicians who haven't set foot in a classroom making decisions about what's best for students and educators," said Theresa Abed, an Eaton County MEA retiree and former state representative for the 71st district who also lost re-election in 2014 by only 148 votes. "I'm running again because public education needs champions in Lansing who are going to listen to what you need and deliver on it."

In Mt. Pleasant, Bryan Mielke is run-

ning again for state representative in the 99th District, after losing to current Speaker of the House Kevin Cotter by 671 votes. Cotter is term-limited out of office, which provides Mielke—and voters—the chance to replace him with a friend of public education.

"My wife is an educator, so I hear every day about the lack of state funding, the budget cuts, the pressure that places on compensation for every school employee," Mielke said. "We need to stop putting so much emphasis on standardized testing and start putting the focus on providing educators with the money and the time you need to help our students."

Darrin Camilleri, an educator from Downriver Wayne County, knows first-

hand what's needed to help students succeed, which is what drove him to run for the 23rd House District. But as a charter school teacher, he has a unique vantage point.

"Michigan's public school students, regardless of where they go to school, deserve a world class education," Camilleri said. "I want to be a voice in Lansing to ensure that our charter schools are held to the same high standards of accountability and transparency that our neighborhood schools are, so that we can make sure that every public school is doing a good job for students."

You can find out the friends of public education recommended for the State House in your area by going to MEA.YourVoter.Guide. ■

DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE

EDUCATION RECORD

CANDIDATE NAME:

HILLARY CLINTON

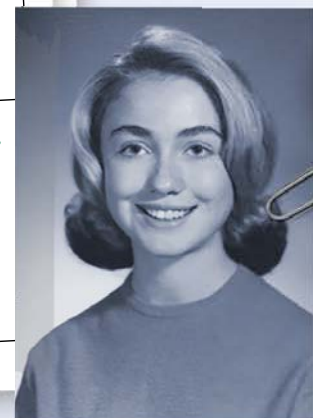
ISSUED BY:

NEA PAC

REPORTING PERIOD:

ELECTION 2016

SUBJECT	ON THE RECORD	TEACHERS' COMMENTS
EDUCATION FUNDING 	Believes in Public Education: "When we invest in education, we're investing in our country's future, and a stronger economy for all of us." —Speech to NEA Representative Assembly, 7/5/16	<i>That's right!</i> 
EDUCATORS AS EXPERTS 	Wants Us at the Table: "I will ensure that teachers always have a voice and seat at the table in making decisions that impact their work." —U.S. News & World Report, 10/3/15	<i>Absolutely True!</i> 
SUPPORT FOR THE ENTIRE SCHOOL STAFF 	Understands We All Need Support: "I will have your backs...everyone who helps our students succeed...school-related professionals, social workers, nurses and guidance counselors, speech therapists, and all educators." —Speech to New York State United Teachers, 4/8/16	<i>It truly does take a village!</i> 
RESPECT 	Pushes Back on Blaming and Shaming: We need to stop "blaming and scapegoating teachers" and put money into schools that need it. —CNN, 3/6/16	<i>Finally, someone who gets it!</i> 
EDUCATOR PAY	Will Raise the Bar on Pay: "We need to get serious about raising pay. It's an outrage that those who keep our schools running and our children learning struggle to provide for their own families." —Speech to NEA Representative Assembly, 7/5/16	<i>I'm ready to be heard!</i> 





EDUCATION RECORD

CANDIDATE NAME:

DONALD J. TRUMP

ISSUED BY:

NEA PAC

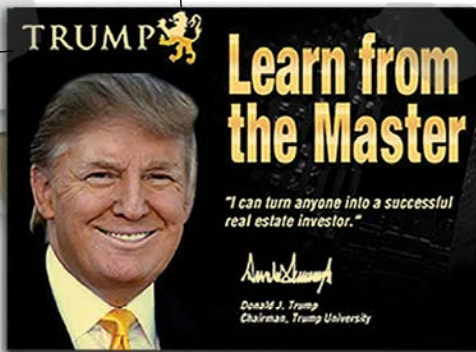
REPORTING PERIOD:

ELECTION 2016

SUBJECT	ON THE RECORD	TEACHERS' COMMENTS
EDUCATION FUNDING	Will Divert Public Education Dollars: "Trump's plan offers nothing for how he'd help all public schools. Instead he talks about sucking resources out through risky voucher schemes." <i>—The Washington Post, 8/19/16</i>	<i>Unacceptable!</i>
HIGHER EDUCATION 	Trump "University" Under Fire: Trump is being sued by the New York attorney general for allegedly defrauding thousands of students. <i>—The Washington Post, 6/4/16</i>	<i>this is not what it means to be an educator!</i>
GUNS IN SCHOOLS 	Argues for Guns in Schools: Trump will get rid of gun-free zones in schools, saying, "My first day, it gets signed." <i>—CNN, 5/24/16</i>	<i>That's the first Priority?</i>
DOWNSIZING EDUCATION 	Vows to Slash Education Department Trump promises "tremendous cutting" to the DOE, which funds Pell Grants and funds for Title 1 and special education. <i>—The Wall Street Journal, 1/11/16</i>	<i>We can't afford the cuts!</i>
EDUCATOR PAY 	Calls for Merit-Based Pay: "Unfortunately, teachers are not paid on merit. The standard for advancement is mostly the number of years—seniority." <i>—Great Again: How to Fix Our Crippled America, 2015</i>	<i>Merit pay systems come with real pitfalls. What about teachers who do not teach tested subjects?</i>



Trump, Donald J.-Republican Candidate





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Survey: Teachers, Support Staff, Faculty Demoralized

“The evaluation system has made teaching a version of the Hunger Games.”

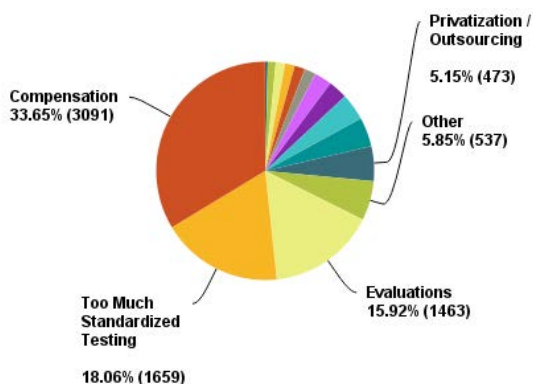
AN UNPRECEDENTED LEVEL OF RESPONSE to a joint MEA-AFT Michigan survey of our members provides a startling glimpse into the collective psyche of educators in Michigan. Forget the A-B-C's, and go straight to D: Demoralized. Demeaned. Devalued.

That's the current state of morale among K-12 teachers and support staff, higher education faculty and support staff, and retirees from all sectors.

The anonymous online survey was open to all members of both unions, and nearly 11,000 responded, including teachers, faculty, bus drivers, secretaries, paraeducators, food service employees, custodial and maintenance, IT/tech support and safety/security employees.

Combined they had a total of 215,765 years of experience and an average of 20 years each. Yet school employees reported feeling unappreciated, frustrated by stagnant wages, and burdened by unrealistic mandates from lawmakers who possess little or no expertise in education.

“People are burning out at an alarming rate,” one survey respondent commented. “Too much has been added to our plates that has little to do



Q: What is the #1 most concerning issue in education today?

with actual teaching.”

Another put it more bluntly: “Why are legislators with no experience or understanding of how children learn making decisions regarding their education? They ignore the teachers who are the real experts; it’s tragic.”

MEA President Steve Cook and AFT Michigan President David Hecker presented the survey results to news media last month.

“Michigan school employees have been dealt blow after blow in recent years, accepting pay cuts and freezes and other attacks from Lansing most Michiganders would find unacceptable,” Cook said in the press conference.

“This survey is a damning indictment of toxic education policies and a toxic attitude toward those who educate our kids.”

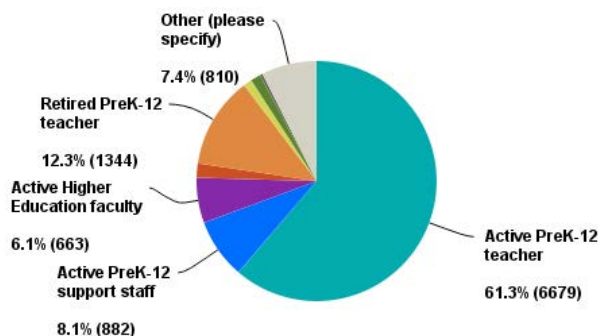
Cook and Hecker told reporters that urgent fixes are needed to repair the state’s broken school funding system—revealed in a recent state-commissioned study—and to rein in skyrocketing health care costs resulting from health care spending caps mandated in a 2011 law, PA 152.

“Ensuring adequate, equitable, stable funds for schools is essential in addressing compensation issues that threaten the ability of districts to attract and retain the best and brightest educators,” Cook said.

Indeed, survey respondents noted the conditions created by lawmakers are driving good people out of the profession, leading many to fear a crisis in education is near on the horizon.

“I would not encourage my children to go into education,” one respondent said.

Another added: “Who will teach our kids when we are gone?”



Q What is (or was) your job category?

Key Findings from the survey and MEA messages of change

WAGES, BENEFITS, COMPENSATION AND JOB SECURITY

80 percent of school employees said they are under-compensated.

Many take home several thousand dollars less per year than five years ago.

52 percent said they didn't think they could comfortably retire.

51 percent of support staff said at least one group of employees at their district/institutions have been privatized during the past five years.

43 percent of support staff said their unit accepted a concessionary contract to avoid jobs cuts in the past five years.

At districts that had recently privatized any support staff, 3 percent of school employees said it had a positive impact, while 43 percent called the impact negative or extremely negative.

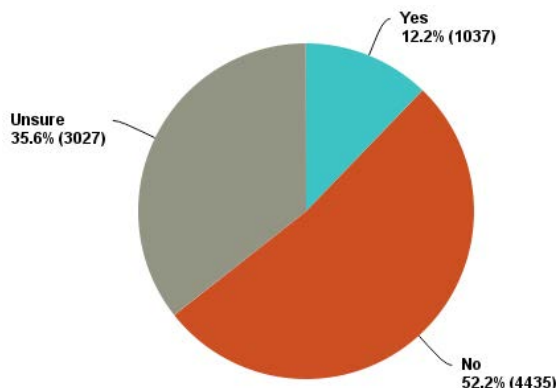
"I no longer have job security which has eliminated my ability to take risks and be creative in my classroom. I am so afraid of being fired (as are 90% of my colleagues) that I cannot risk the complications brought on by a lesson designed to teach critical thinking and putting any level of control in the hands of my students."

"I would have continued teaching for years beyond retirement time—and I am not the tired old stuck in a rut teacher the legislature seems to think seasoned teachers are—but now I am counting the days until I can retire. It is so sad to see what these legislators have done to this profession and the students we are trying to help grow and mature."

"I have never seen the morale so low among our staff. While I still love working with my students, I am dismayed by the way many of my colleagues are treated by the administration and the lack of support for teachers dealing with significant behavior disruptions."

MEA message:

- Our school funding system is broken, as noted in a recent Legislative study.
- Skyrocketing health care cost increases mandated by PA 152 of 2011 are unsustainable.
- Continued attacks on pensions, and forcing employees to pay more out-of-pocket for health care and retirement, will worsen compensation and educator retention issues.



Q: Do you feel that you'll be able to comfortably retire?

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Respondents reported their students take an average of four different standardized tests each year. Many teachers said “dozens,” and for some, the number was so high that they could only make a ballpark guess. At least 40 answered simply, “Too many.”

A dismal 16 percent said they were well-supported in implementing new state educational standards.

MEA message:

- Moving the goal posts around makes it harder for educators and students to hit them.
- Educators need quality professional development and time to adapt to changes.
- We need to bring both consistency and sanity to our standards and testing.

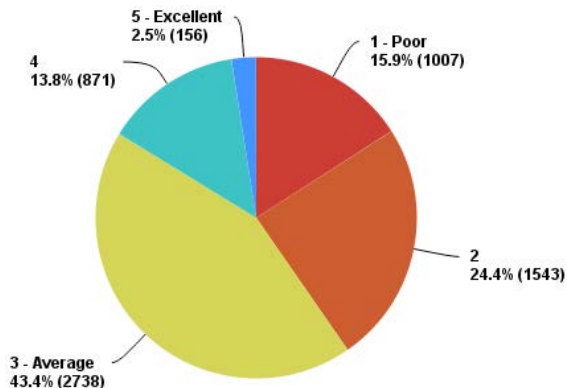
SAFETY/SCHOOL CONDITIONS

Of the poor conditions school employees reported at their buildings, the issues that were most frequently cited were:

- Unreliable heating/cooling (57 percent)
- Damaged walls/ceilings (39 percent)
- Poor air quality (34 percent)
- Rodents/insects (32 percent)

MEA message:

- Our deteriorating school infrastructure is in need of maintenance, which has been neglected because our broken school funding system does not meet basic needs.



Q: On a scale of 1 to 5, rate the quality of support teachers have in implementing new state educational standards and curriculum?

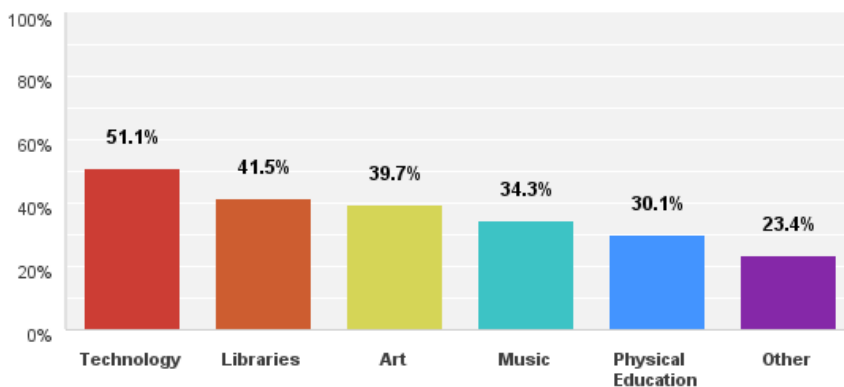
“When I began teaching, I was able to teach CONTENT. I have given up too much of my curriculum to preparation for Standardized tests. This does NOT help prepare students for their future lives.”

“Having Kindergarten students take part in multiple standardized tests throughout the year and pushing them to read before they are ready, is not what is best for the students. These practices are not developmentally appropriate and more play based learning should be what we are fighting for.”

“There is too much focus on test scores and too little focus on the love of learning.”

“I feel bad for the younger teachers. They will probably never experience the true joy of teaching. All about scores and DATA.”

“When I was a resource room teacher my students often cried over the standardized test. They had to take the NWEA test 3 times a year as well as the state assessment.”



Q: Check the following courses/facilities that your students have inadequate access to.

EVALUATIONS

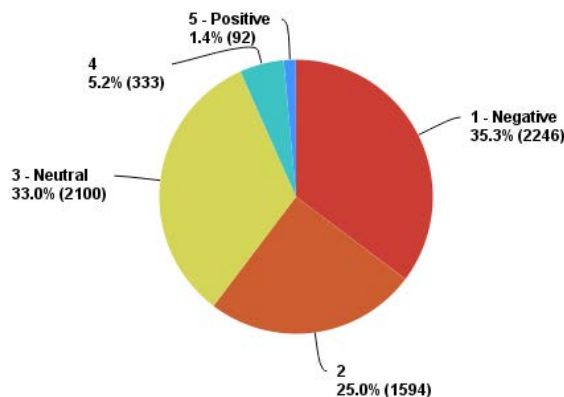
Only 7 percent of teachers thought changes to the evaluation system over the past several years have had a positive impact on their teaching. In fact, 60 percent said these changes had a negative impact on their teaching.

Subjectivity in the evaluation tools is a problem, according to the survey. Many respondents objected to being marked down for attendance even when they only took sick days that were granted for illnesses or medical emergencies.

The lack of validity in judging teachers based on test scores creates frustration and low morale.

MEA message:

- Evaluations should be about helping teachers better serve students—not pitting educators against each other.
- The ban on bargaining over evaluations should be lifted, so there is greater local control and buy-in around evaluation.
- Districts should begin taking bipartisan improvements made in the law last year and implementing them locally to refocus the conversation to improvement and excellence.



Q: On a scale of 1 to 5, have recent changes to the evaluation system had a positive or negative impact on your teaching?

“Ninety five percent of our teachers are functioning at an unbelievably high level and the evaluation system is focused on the bottom 5%. All teachers want to get rid of any and all bad teachers—but the evaluation system does a poor job of accomplishing that while at the same time DESTROYS THE PRODUCTIVITY OF THE GOOD TEACHERS!!!”

“The present evaluation system has such a negative impact on my teaching that I am physically sick each day when I report to work.”

“I feel like I am not allowed to teach and build a relationship with my students as I did in the past, now my teaching is driven by data and the fear of a bad evaluation.”

“Help us. I had tenure, and now it’s gone. I’ve seen other long-term teachers given poor evaluations and then pink slipped, even though they were excellent teachers. I live in constant fear that I’ll be next and I’m the sole support of my family.”

CONCLUSIONS

Not long after the release of our survey results last month, two separate proposals aimed at reducing financial pressures on Michigan school employees were introduced in the House.

One proposal sponsored by Rep. Peter Lucido (R-Shelby Township) would reduce health care costs for school employees, while a separate bill from Rep. Adam Zemke (D-Ann Arbor) would extend a tax credit to offset student loan debt for educa-

tors working in schools that serve at-risk populations.

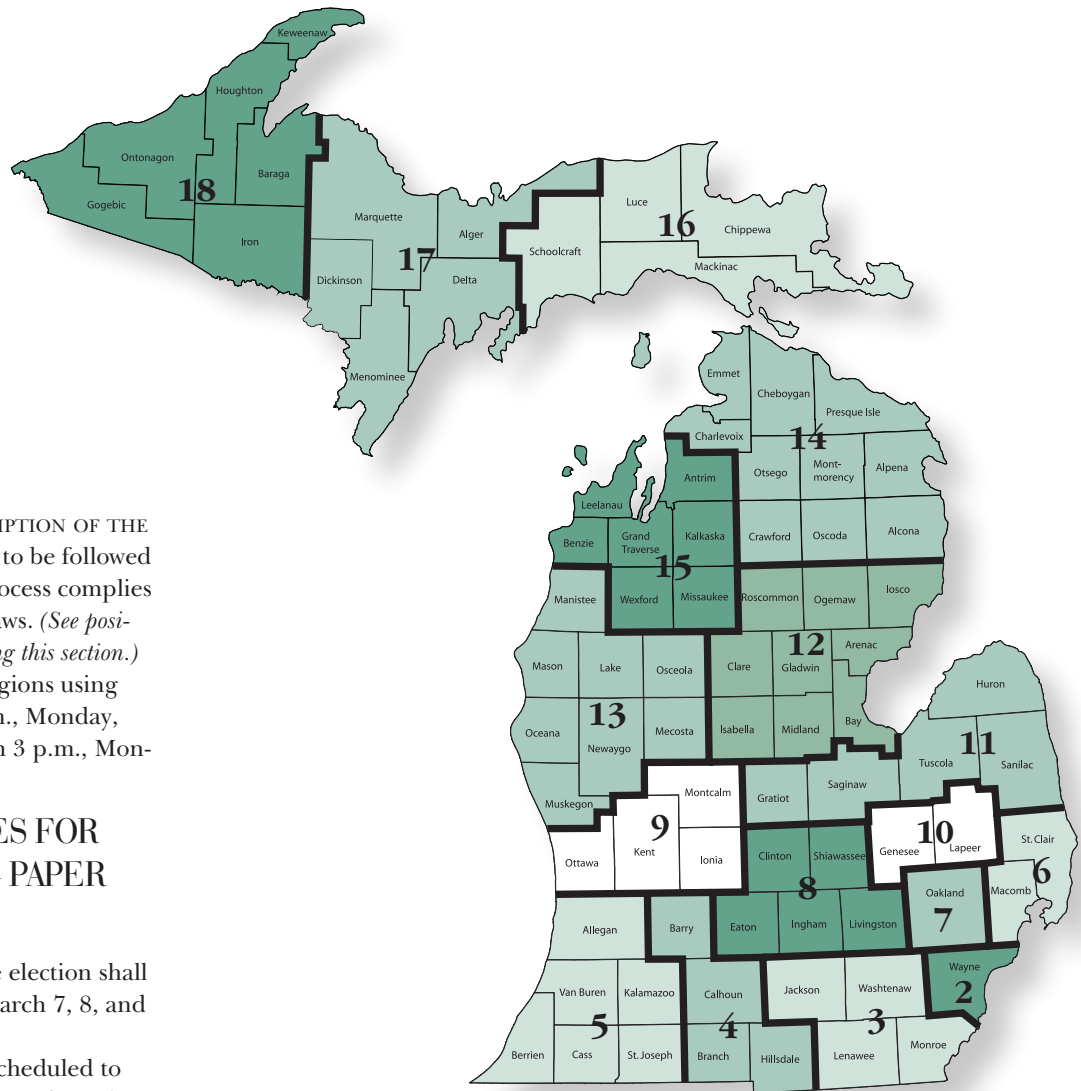
Those proposals are a step in the right direction, but we can’t stop there.

Public school employees are increasingly discontented and concerned that the education system is headed for a crisis if lawmakers don’t act quickly to address our broken school funding system and enact better education policies that focus on helping students succeed.

Nearly universally, educators feel disrespected and frustrated and ignored. By cutting budgets and issuing draconian mandates that demonize public school employees and public schools, the state is destroying the quality of our children’s education.

The warning signs are out there, but policymakers have chosen to bury their heads in the sand rather than listen to experts—Michigan’s hardworking school employees. That needs to end. ■

Region Election Information



FOLLOWING IS A DESCRIPTION OF THE ELECTION PROCEDURES to be followed in the regions. This process complies with relevant federal laws. (*See positions to be elected following this section.*)

Election dates for regions using online voting are 8 a.m., Monday, March 6, 2017 through 3 p.m., Monday, March 13, 2017.

ELECTION DATES FOR REGIONS USING PAPER BALLOTS

1. The region at-large election shall be conducted on March 7, 8, and 9, 2017.
2. If your unit is not scheduled to work during the above days, the election shall be conducted on March 14, 15 and 16, 2017.
3. If inclement weather or another emergency interrupts the election listed above, it shall be completed on the next consecutive workday(s), but no later than March 24.

The candidates for the region at-large positions shall be printed in the February edition of the *MEA Voice*.

Persons interested in running for a position should contact their region Elections Chairperson or nominations chair.

If a region does not have a December meeting they cannot use acclamation.

ABSENTEE BALLOTING

(*From the Region Council Constitution, Article VIII, Sec. 3.f.*) The region at-large election is an on-site election. However, eligible voters who are not able to vote on site during the election period may notify their local association president of their need to vote by absentee ballot. The request must be in writing, include the specific reason necessitating an absentee ballot and be received no later than Feb. 21 by the local association president. Eligible voters requesting an absentee ballot and complying with the above requirements shall be

mailed an absentee ballot by the local association election committee. An absentee ballot must be returned by U.S. mail and received by the local association no later than the last day of the election. Late absentee ballots shall be unopened and set aside as void ballots.

ELIGIBLE VOTERS

Voter eligibility listings will be created from information received by the MEA Membership Department from the local associations by Dec. 31, 2016. ■

ATTENTION ESP MEMBERS—2017 REGION 50 STATEWIDE ELECTION FOR ESP ONLY

ESP members of MEA are entitled to send delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly (RA). Next year, the NEA RA will be held in Boston, MA. Expenses to attend are reimbursed in accordance with the state delegate expense policy.

All Michigan ESP candidates for NEA statewide at-large delegate seats run as delegates for Region 50. All ESP members vote as part of Region 50. Statewide delegates and alternates must be elected by secret ballot in elections conducted at the region level, with results forwarded to MEA for final counting.

Nominated candidates may submit a biographical statement in paragraph form of no more than 150 words, due by Dec. 31, 2016, to be printed and distributed with the ballots to the regions. Photos and lists will not be printed for regions using paper ballots, but pictures can be submitted and used for regions participating in the online elections. Send statements to Mike Ostertag at mostertag@mea.org, or MEA, PO Box 2573, East Lansing, MI 48826-2573.

Any MEA ESP member in good standing can be nominated or may nominate himself/herself at the region

nominations meeting or by using the nomination form below. Additional forms may be obtained from your region president or region election chairperson. A candidate's consent must be secured before that name is placed on any ballot. The form should be mailed to Mike Ostertag no later than Dec. 31, 2016. Late nominations will not be accepted.

If you have any questions, contact your region Elections Chairperson, or call Mike Ostertag at 800-292-1934, ext. 5411, before Dec. 15, 2016. ■

REGION 50—NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY, ESP DELEGATE AT LARGE NOMINATION FORM

Supply the following information regarding the nominee. Remember, the consent of a candidate must be secured before that name is placed on any ballot. **Please print.**

Name _____

Home address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home phone _____ Work phone _____

Local ESP association _____

The named candidate is nominated for the following position(s):

☐ ESP NEA RA at-large delegate:
4 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17

☐ ESP NEA RA at-large delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g):
2 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17

Biographical statements of no more than 150 words may be submitted, in paragraph form. Pictures will be accepted for regions participating in the online elections.

Nomination form must be received no later than Dec. 31, 2016. Mail to: Mike Ostertag, MEA, PO Box 2573, East Lansing, MI 48826-2573.

Positions to be elected

* is used to represent a Representative of Minority 3-1(g) seat

Region 2

Position 3-MEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

3 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17
1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/18

Position 4-MEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

4 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Position 6-EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

5 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Position 7-EA/ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate

1 position, immed. thru 8/31/17

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/16

Position 8-EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17

Position 9-EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17

Position 10-ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate

3 positions, immed. thru 8/31/18

1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/18

1 position, immed. thru 8/31/19

Position 11-ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate

4 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17

Position 14-ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate

4 positions, immed. thru 8/31/17

4 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17, same seats as above

1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/17

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above

Position 15-ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate

3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17

Elections Chair: Jenni Lamb,
lamb.jenni@gmail.com

Region 3

Position 1-MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17

Position 2-MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17

Position 3-MEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

2 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17

Position 4-MEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

4 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Position 5-EA NEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17

Position 6-EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

6 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Position 8-EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17

4 positions, immed. thru 8/31/17

4 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17, same seat as above

1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/17

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above

1 position, immed. thru 8/31/19

Position 9-EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate

3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Position 10-ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position, immed. thru 8/31/17

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above

3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17

1 position, immed. thru 8/31/18

1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/18

Position 11-ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate

5 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17

Position 12-EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate

2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17

1 position, immed. thru 8/31/17

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above

Position 13-EA NEA Cluster Alternate

2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Position 14-ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position, immed. thru 8/31/17

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above

Position 15-ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17

Elections Chair: Margaret Thiele,
mskidmore@me.com

Region 4

Position 3-MEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17

Position 4-MEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

2 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Position 6-EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

4 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Position 7-EA/ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate

1 position, immed. thru 8/31/17

Position 8-EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position, immed. thru 8/31/19

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17

Position 9-EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate

2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Position 10-ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate

2 positions, immed. thru 8/31/18

Position 11-ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate

3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Position 12-EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/17

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17

Position 13-EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17

Position 14-ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate

3 positions, immed. thru 8/31/18

1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/17

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above

Position 15-ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate

2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Elections Chair: Craig Draheim,
draheimc@athensk12.org

Region 5

Position 1-MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17

Position 3-MEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

3 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17

Position 4-MEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

4 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Position 5-EA NEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17

Position 6-EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

6 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Position 8-EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position, immed. thru 8/31/19

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17

Position 9-EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate

3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17

Position 10-ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position, immed. thru 8/31/18

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17

1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/17

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above

Position 11-ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate

3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Position 12-EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position, immed. thru 8/31/18

2 positions, immed. thru 8/31/19

2 positions*, immed. thru 8/31/18

1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/19

Position 13-EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate

4 positions, immed. thru 3/31/19

1 position*, immed. thru 3/31/19

Position 14-ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate

3 positions, immed. thru 8/31/19

1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/19

Position 15-ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate

2 positions, immed. thru 3/31/19

1 position*, immed. thru 3/31/19

Elections Chair: Mary Cooper,
mcooper@mymea.org

Region 6

Position 1-MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate

2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17

Position 2-MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17

Position 3-MEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17

Position 4-MEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

5 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Position 5-EA NEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17

Position 6-EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

5 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Position 9-EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17

Position 11-ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate

3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Position 12-EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate

2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17

Position 13-EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17

Position 14-ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position, immed. thru 8/31/17

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above

1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/17

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above

1 position, immed. thru 8/31/19

Position 15-ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate

2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17

Elections Chair: Heather Schulz,
hschulz28@gmail.com

Region 7

Position 1-MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate

2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17

Position 2-MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17

Position 3-MEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

3 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17

Position 4-MEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

8 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Position 5-EA NEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17

Position 6-EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

5 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Position 7-EA/ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate

1 position, immed. thru 8/31/17

1 position, immed. thru 8/31/19

Position 11-ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate

4 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17

Position 14-ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate

4 positions, immed. thru 8/31/17

4 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17, same seats as above

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17

1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/17

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above

Position 15-ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate

4 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

2 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

Elections Chair: Aimee McKeever,
amckeever@mea.org

REGION ELECTIONS

Region 8

Position 1-MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate
2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17
Position 3-MEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/17
3 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17
Position 4-MEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
5 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 5-EA NEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
Position 6-EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
6 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 8-EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate
2 positions, immed. thru 8/31/18
1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/18
Position 9-EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate
2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 10-ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate
1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/17
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above
3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17
1 position, immed. 8/31/19
Position 11-ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate
5 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Position 12-EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate
4 positions, immed. thru 8/31/18
1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/18
1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/19
Position 13-EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate
4 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Position 14-ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate
3 positions, immed. thru 8/31/18
2 positions*, immed. thru 8/31/18
1 position, immed. thru 8/31/19
Position 15-ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
5 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
2 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Elections Chair: Lance Little, llittle@mea.org

Region 9

Position 4-MEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
5 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 6-EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
7 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 7-EA/ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate
1 position, immed. thru 8/31/18
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/16
Position 8-EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate
1 position, immed. thru 8/31/17
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above
1 position, immed. thru 8/31/18
Position 9-EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate
2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 10-ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
5 positions, immed. thru 8/31/18
1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/18
Position 11-ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate
3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 12-EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate
2 positions, immed. thru 8/31/18
1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/18
Position 13-EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate
2 positions, immed. thru 3/31/18

Position 14-ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate
5 positions, immed. thru 8/31/18
1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/18
1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/17
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above
Position 15-ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
5 positions, immed. thru 3/31/18
2 positions*, immed. thru 3/31/18
Elections Chair: Michelle Munoz, mickeyteach@gmail.com

Region 10

Position 1-MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
1 position, immed. thru 8/31/17
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above
Position 3-MEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
2 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17
Position 4-MEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
4 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 6-EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
5 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 8-EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate
1 position, immed. thru 8/31/18
2 positions, immed. thru 8/31/19
Position 9-EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate
3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 10-ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate
2 positions, immed. thru 8/31/17
2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17, same seats as above
Position 11-ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate
3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 12-EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate
1 position, immed. thru 8/31/18
1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/18
Position 13-EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate
2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 14-ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate
1 position, immed. thru 8/31/17
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above
1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/19
Position 15-ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Elections Chair: Karen Christian, kchristian@mea.org

Region 11

Position 3-MEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
Position 4-EA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
3 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 6-EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
6 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 8-EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate
3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17
1 position, immed. thru 8/31/17
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above
1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/17
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above
1 position, immed. thru 8/31/19
Position 9-EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate
5 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Position 10-ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate
1 position, immed. thru 8/31/17
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above
1 position, immed. thru 8/31/18
1 position, immed. thru 8/31/19
1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/18
Position 11-ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate
3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Position 12-EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate
1 position, immed. thru 8/31/18
2 positions*, immed. thru 8/31/18
Position 13-EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate
2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Position 14-ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate
3 positions, immed. thru 8/31/18
1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/18
Position 15-ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Elections Chair: Jason Ostrander, jostrander@mymea.org

Region 12

Position 1-MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
Position 4-MEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
4 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 6-EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
4 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 7-EA/ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate
3 positions, immed. thru 8/31/17
Position 8-EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
Position 9-EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate
1 position, immed. thru 3/31/18
Position 10-ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate
2 positions, immed. thru 8/31/18
Position 11-ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate
3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Position 12-EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate
3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17
1 position, immed. thru 8/31/19
1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/19
Position 13-EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate
2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 14-ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate
1 position, immed. thru 8/31/17
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above
1 position, immed. thru 8/31/18
1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/18
1 position, immed. thru 8/31/19
Position 15-ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Elections Chair: Jenny Van Duinen, jvanduini@svsu.edu

Region 13

Position 3-MEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/18
Position 4-MEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
3 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 6-EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

1 position*, immed. thru 3/31/19
 3 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 8-EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate
 1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/19
 1 position, immed. thru 8/31/18
Position 9-EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate
 4 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Position 10-ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate
 2 positions, immed. thru 8/31/18
 1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/18
Position 11-ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate
 4 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Position 12-EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate
 3 positions, immed. thru 8/31/18
 1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/19
Position 13-EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate
 2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Position 14-ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate
 2 positions, immed. thru 8/31/18
 1 position, immed. thru 8/31/19
 1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/17
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above
Position 15-ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
 3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Elections Chair: Jim Webber,
 jwebber@mea.org

Region 14

Position 3-MEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
 1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/17
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above
Position 4-MEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
 2 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 6-EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
 2 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 8-EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate
 3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17
Position 9-EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate
 3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 10-ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
 1 position, immed. thru 8/31/17
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above
 1 position, immed. thru 8/31/19
Position 11-ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate
 3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 12-EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
 1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/17
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above
 1 position, immed. thru 8/31/18
 1 position, immed. thru 8/31/19
Position 13-EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate
 3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Position 14-ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
 1 position, immed. thru 8/31/17
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above
 1 position* immed. thru 8/31/17
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above
Position 15-ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
 2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17

Region 14 MAHE EA RA Cluster Delegate
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
Region 14 MAHE EA RA Cluster Alternate
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Elections Chair:

Region 15

Position 1-MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
Position 3-MEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
 1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/18
Position 4-MEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
 1 position*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 6-EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
 2 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 8-EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate
 2 positions, immed. thru 8/31/18
Position 9-EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate
 3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 10-ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
 1 position, immed. thru 8/31/17
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above
 1 position, immed. thru 8/31/19
Position 11-ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate
 3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 12-EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate
 1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/17
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above
Position 13-EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate
 3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Position 14-ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate
 2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17
Position 15-ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
 3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Elections Chair: Harvey Miller,
 hmliller@netonecom.net

Region 16

Position 3-MEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
Position 4-MEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Position 6-EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Position 9-EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate
 2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 10-ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
Position 11-ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate
 2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 12-EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
Position 13-EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Position 14-ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
Position 15-ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
 2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Elections Chair: Al Beamish,
 abeamish@mymea.org

Region 17

Position 4-MEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Position 6-EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
 2 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 9-EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate
 3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 10-ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate
 2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17
Position 11-ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate
 3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 12-EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate
 3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
 1 position, immed. thru 8/31/19
 1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/19
Position 13-EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate
 3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Position 14-ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate
 2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
Position 15-ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
 2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Elections Chair: Theresa Hruska,
 hruska@chartermi.net

Region 18

Position 1-MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate
 1 position, immed. thru 8/31/17
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
Position 3-MEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
 1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/18
Position 4-MEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Position 6-EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
 2 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 9-EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate
 3 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 10-ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
Position 11-ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate
 2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Position 12-EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate
 1 position, immed. thru 8/31/17
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17
 1 position, immed. thru 8/31/19
 1 position*, immed. thru 8/31/19
Position 13-EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate
 2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
 1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Position 15-ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
 2 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 4/1/17
Region 18 MAHE Cluster Delegate
 1 position, immed. thru 8/31/17
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/17, same seat as above
Region 18 MAHE Cluster Alternate
 1 position, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/17
Elections Chair: Steve Elenich,
 selenich@copperisid.org

Region 50

Region 50-ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate
 4 positions, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17
Region 50-ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g)
 2 positions*, 3 yr. terms begin 9/1/17 ■

MEA member **Amelia Leighton Camel**

is an assistant professor at Jackson College, presenter, teacher trainer and the author of *Help! My College Students Can't Read: Teaching Vital Reading Strategies in the Content Areas*, and an accompanying student workbook, published by Rowman & Littlefield.

Your first book focuses on helping struggling readers in college, and the new book you're finishing up now targets disadvantaged populations. What interests you about working with students who've historically been underserved?

I was a first-generation college student from a single-parent, low-income home, and I understand firsthand the experiences, thoughts, and beliefs of underserved students that foster their success or failure. I know what it's like to lack the social, educational, and economic capital that's required to navigate higher education with ease. And I know what it's like to believe college is for others. By far, my greatest professional joy is assisting, inspiring and motivating underserved students and preparing them for their successes that lie ahead. It is so rewarding to actually witness their transformations as they become the people they were meant to be.

What do you do to connect with under-privileged students who arrive at college lacking in confidence? And what kinds of transformations have you seen?

I get to know the students as people. I know my students' names by the end of the second week. I write a letter to students telling about myself and invite them to write back. I spend a significant amount of time building a community in my classes. I often show motivating video clips, share inspiring quotes and share my own life stories of challenge and triumph. I remind them, all the time, of the value of staying in school and sometimes even write messages on the whiteboard in really large print: "If you're thinking about quitting, DON'T. Come talk to me first." One of the most important things I do is to respect my students all the time, even during the hard times. I assume the students have positive intent and are doing the best they can.

I've had the privilege of seeing amazing transformation among my students. I have had students tell me the first book they ever read, cover to cover, was in my class. I've seen students who might not have had the best attendance in high school, come every single day and not miss one class during the semester. I even had one student last fall who had surgery but used FaceTime in the recovery room so he wouldn't miss being a part of class. I've seen tentative students grow to confident young men and women who know they can be successful. I've watched with shining pride and teary eyes as my students walk across the stage to become the first person in their family to receive a college diploma. What's better than that?



I remind students, all the time, of the value of staying in school and sometimes even write messages on the whiteboard in really large print:

"If you're thinking about quitting, DON'T. Come talk to me first."

Those powerful emotional connections you create lay the groundwork for everything else, right? The students you teach are not reading at college level, and the literacy work you do in the classroom asks them to try new things and take risks to become skillful readers. That requires them to trust—both you and themselves. Can you talk about what you do in the classroom to help students develop into strong readers?

That's exactly right. I lay the groundwork by building community in the classroom so students are receptive to following my lead. Research shows that having the ability to read well is one of the biggest indicators of college success, so I work ardently to make sure my students are solid, strategic academic readers. Most of my students are able to read the words on the page. Their struggles come from not being able to understand, remember and use the information. I provide strategies that allow them to do that. The first thing I teach students is to not read everything, not every chapter, page or even paragraph. I teach them to read only what's important and relevant to what they need to know. I also teach students not to use highlighters but instead to read actively, with a pen in hand, annotating their texts with their ideas, connections, summaries, and so on. I teach students how to read with a purpose (to be aware of what they're looking for so their brains can find it), to make connections so when they encounter new information they're able to hook it to something they already know. I give students ways to remember the information they read so they are able to recall it while writing papers, engaging in discussions or electronic posts, or while taking quizzes. The reading strategies I teach students will help them in all content areas.

*You take those ideas a step further in your role as lead faculty—training other instructors—and in your first book, *Help! My College Students Can't Read*. You ask content area instructors—science, social studies, math faculty—to explicitly teach reading, offering effective strategies for them to use. Why should non-reading teachers embed these strategies in their instruction?*

Instructors are the expert readers of their content texts. If instructors take just 5-10 minutes at the beginning of each class during the first couple weeks of the term to model how to read texts in their discipline, the payoffs are HUGE. Students appreciate an instructor who will actually show them how to approach a text in their content area, how to determine what's important, the value of reading the chapter summary first, how to bullet key points while reading and how to use that information for review before an assessment.

The few minutes that instructors lose taking the time to model good, strategic content-area reading will come back later in the form of better, more effective readers who know how to glean necessary information from texts and are able to recall and use it.

Lately you've been presenting trainings across Michigan, and next February you'll speak at a national conference in San Francisco. Who are your audiences, and what sorts of key ideas do you offer them?

I present to a range of audiences, from college faculty and administrators, to K-12 teachers and administrators, and school social workers. My workshops offer insight into the ways poverty, inequity, and racism impact student engagement and success, and I offer concrete, culturally responsive approaches for responding. For example, I teach methods for understanding students' backgrounds, histories, thoughts, and beliefs. And I show instructors they have the means to reduce or prevent class disruptions by developing relationships with and among students. I believe strongly in Josh McDowell's statement: "Rules without relationships lead to rebellion." Relationships truly are the keys to the kingdom.

Amelia Leighton Gamel's next book is tentatively scheduled for publication in 2017. You can read more and view videos about her work and her presentations at AmeliaGamel.com. ■



MESSA taking on rising drug prices

By Ross Wilson,
MESSA Executive Director

MESSA staff are working hard to bring new plan options to market and lower the amount of money that's taken from education employees' paychecks for health insurance. This is especially important at a time when health care costs are rising across the nation.

The sharp increase in the cost of specialty drugs has played a significant role in the nationwide increase in health insurance premiums, as health plans and their members are being forced to pay more and more for prescriptions.

Mylan, the manufacturer of the

EpiPen, announced in May it was once again raising the price of the life-saving epinephrine-injection device. The price for a two-pack of EpiPens has increased 500 percent over the last 10 years, according to a recent article in Time Magazine—from \$100 in 2007 to over \$600 in August of this year.

This situation is not unique to Mylan. In the past five years, the prices of four of the most popular prescription drugs have increased by more than 100 percent, according to an analysis by Reuters. Consumers have paid billions more for medica-



tions for arthritis, high cholesterol, asthma and other common problems, Reuters reported.

We at MESSA are committed to helping our members with rising pharmaceutical costs as much as possible, and we are researching new prescription drug plans and riders that would save members money.

MESSA members and nonmembers alike with questions about new plan options can call their area's field representative at 800.292.4910. ■

CLASSIFIEDS

Our ad policy, rates and schedule can be found online at www.mea.org/voice. The classifieds deadline for the December issue is Nov. 11.

BOOKS

New children's book by illustrator Michael Glenn Monroe titled "Millie and the Moon" to be released Sept. 2016. For more information on Michael's books go to www.michaelglennmonroe.com or like us on Facebook.

Great Holiday Gift A Grandparent's Gift of Memories – A Pilgrimage with the Saints – a beautiful keepsake journal now available at Amazon.com. \$10

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WELLNESS

Educator 4 Educators. Clinical Psychologist serving Greater Lansing area. Former long-time educator. Understands school culture, educator stress and relationship problems. View profile at psychologytoday.com. Nancy Bernthal PhD/LP. 517-285-4329, talk or text.

Help with anxiety, depression, teaching stress, and relationship issues. Robert Goode, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist. Offices in Eastside Ann Arbor and Plymouth. Visit www.goodepsych.com. MESSA, Community Blue, BCBS, Aetna, Medicare. 734-223-4202.

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