The MEA Advantage

For Your Career
For Your Rights
For Your Wallet
For Public Education
“...I found out that those geese can fly from way up north to way down south, and back again. But they cannot do it alone, you see. It’s something they must do in community.”

–“The Goose”
R.D. Stromberg

“...The collective power of our 125,000 members gives us the ability to achieve success for our members through the collective bargaining process.”

–Steven Cook, former MEA President
Why belong?

The answer is simple. We provide, protect and preserve public education. We collectively advocate for public education employees and we work every day to fulfill the promise of a quality public education for all!

As President of the Michigan Education Association, a professional labor union of approximately 125,000 education employees, I am proud of the collective strength we represent. Together, our voices make a difference—with policy makers, in the classroom or worksite, in our communities, and at the bargaining table.

Founded in 1852, the MEA is committed to advocating for every member. MEA’s mission is to ensure that the education of our students and the professional voice of our members and the working environments of every member are of the highest quality. And, as an MEA member, you are also a member of the over 3 million member National Education Association (NEA).

This booklet is designed to provide information about the “MEA Advantage,” outlining the services MEA provides. It is organized into four categories:

• For Your Career
• For Your Rights
• For Your Wallet
• For Public Education

While these valuable benefits explain what you get for your dues dollars, it is important to remember the most important benefit: the collective strength of membership in the MEA.

Yours in solidarity,

Paula J. Herbart
MEA President
pherbart@mea.org
Professional Development

MEA membership means a career advantage as MEA provides the high-quality professional development you need to maintain and improve your job skills. MEA sponsors several conferences throughout the year with training designed for both teachers and education support professionals. MEA also offers online instructional and professional development seminars.

Online Professional Development

Teachers and education support professionals who are MEA members receive free access to numerous online professional development opportunities that can help advance their careers.

MEA offers the courses in collaboration with Instructional Technology Services, Inc., via the MEA Online Learning Portal. Courses are offered through an easy-to-use, self-paced format and are arranged in libraries specially designed for new teachers with less than five years of experience, classroom teachers and education support professionals.

Graduate credits are available for participation and completion of the equivalent online learning library modules. SCECHs (formerly SBCEUs) are also available.

MEA members can log on to the Members Only section of www.mea.org and choose their course options.

To learn more about online professional development, contact MEA’s Member Engagement Department at 800-292-1934, or contact the MEA Help Center at 866-MEA-HELP.
In addition to providing assistance to members with certification, MEA provides mentors to help guide teachers through the process of achieving National Board Certification.

Formed in 1987 as the profession’s platform for setting standards for accomplished practice and to identify outstanding teachers, the independent, nonprofit National Board of Professional Teaching Standards has developed the nation’s highest teaching standards, which lead to improved teaching, leading and learning. National Board Certification is the profession’s representation of what it means for teachers to demonstrate advanced knowledge, skills and practices.

Find out more about National Board Certification at www.nbpts.org.

To learn more about how MEA can help, contact MEA’s Member Engagement Department at 800-292-1934.

“I now have concrete proof of what great National Board certified teachers do for our profession and our organization. We have many more great teachers who will benefit from going through the process.”

–Member evaluation at the 2013 Bargaining & Public Affairs Conference
Conferences

MEA offers the following events annually:

- MEA Winter Conference
- Education Support Professionals Statewide Conference
- Aspiring Educators of MEA Professional Development Conference
- MEA Summer Conference
- Higher Education Conference

“Having sessions offered by MDE and others was excellent. Collaboration between the union and educational programming leaders in the state is critical. Please continue this.”

—Melinda Jeffries, Beaverton Education Association

“Everything changes constantly. Conferences will help us stay up-to-date.”

—Allison Frey, Bentley Education Association

Did You Know?

MEA brings training to you, too. MEA provides training to small groups of members locally or regionally. If you’d like to build your skills in a certain area—or you’d like to know the kinds of training available, contact your local president or UniServ director.
MEA is committed to helping strengthen your local association to better meet the needs of members like you. The Building Full Capacity Locals (BFCL) initiative provides ongoing programs, trainings and resources to help build your knowledge and skills and to increase your involvement in your local association.

Here are some examples of the programs and trainings that are offered at no charge to members:

- Ladies Day at MEA
- Statewide Presidents Summit
- Advocacy Academy
- Money Matters – Local Treasurers Training
- Local Presidents Academy

In addition to the above training and programs, BFCL resource booklets are available at no charge on a variety of topics, including: member and public communication, political action, crisis planning, coalition building, handling member gripes and grievances, strategic planning and roles and responsibilities of local officers. There are also BFCL Local Funding Grants available to support a new program, training or activity at the local level.

For more information contact the MEA Vice President, coordinator of MEA’s BFCL initiative at 800-292-1934.
For Your Rights

Field Services

One of the biggest advantages of your MEA membership is the service provided directly to members like you and your local association.

More than 100 highly trained professional labor relations consultants known as UniServ directors work in offices around the state to help you. They can access services from other MEA departments and staff. Some of the issues that UniServ directors may help you with include:

- Contract bargaining
- Grievance processing
- Job security protection
- Retirement concerns
- Development of training programs to meet specific local needs
- Employee counseling for work-related problems
- Contract interpretation
- Presentation of arbitration cases
- Unemployment compensation representation
- Bargaining crisis preparation
- Assistance for local leaders in governance matters
- Civil rights violations

MEA Speak

We say: UniServ
What it means: Unified Services

Background: Michigan’s UniServ program dates to 1970. UniServ, then and now, provides staff assistance to improve the delivery of services directly to members in their local associations.
“MEA always helps its members, and they helped us to the extreme. We are so grateful for everything MEA has done to help us get a contract.”

– Cherrie King, Southwest Head Start ESP

MEA ESP members featured in the DVD “Education Support Professionals Life Stories”
Legal Services

MEA members also have an advantage when it comes to protecting your rights on the job.

As a member, you receive legal protection from matters arising out of your education employment. MEA employs several full-time attorneys and also retains prestigious law firms to help protect members’ legal rights.

MEA’s legal work helps you in the following areas:

- Wage and hour laws
- Unfair labor practices
- Layoff and recall
- Retirement
- Fringe benefits
- Unemployment compensation
- Education funding
- Negotiations
- Discrimination
- Health and safety
- Civil rights
- Contract enforcement

Did You Know?

Your dues pays for up to $1 million worth of work-related liability insurance at no additional cost to MEA members. This insurance covers you if you’re faced with either a civil or criminal complaint that arises in the course of your work.

In addition, you receive up to $1,000 worth of legal fees during an investigation stage that may lead to the filing of a criminal complaint related to your work.
The federal Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act guarantees certain rights to union members and imposes certain responsibilities on union officers. You have:

- Equal rights to participate in union activities
- Freedom of speech and assembly
- Voice in setting rates of dues, fees and assessments
- Protection of the right to sue
- Safeguards against improper discipline
MEA Financial Services

MEA has an entire corporation, MEA Financial Services, designed for the sole purpose of providing our members with competitive financial programs and insurance.

Some of the financial investment options* offered include:
- 403(b) plans
- 457(b) plans
- Tax deferred annuities
- IRAs
- Roth IRAs
- Mutual funds
- 529 College Savings plans
- Investment Advisory Services/Retirement Planning

Having access to MEA Financial Services is an advantage of membership that can potentially save you money through the competitive group rates offered by the insurance companies MEA Financial Services works with.

Insurance products include:
- Group Auto and Homeowners Insurance (Multi-policy discounts available)
- Life Insurance
- Long Term Care Insurance

Once you become a member, information is simply a toll-free telephone call away at 800-292-1950 or www.meafs.com.

*Paradigm Equities, Inc., and Fairway Investment Group, LLC. are wholly-owned subsidiaries of MEA Financial Services. Paradigm Equities’ clients are offered securities through Paradigm Equities, Inc., Member FINRA/SIPC. Investment Advice is offered through Fairway Investment Group, LLC.—A Registered Investment Advisor.
Members-Only Discounts

Another advantage of MEA membership is a Membership Card loaded with money-saving discounts—from oil changes to hotel stays and vacation packages. You can save hundreds of dollars per year in categories such as:

- Dining
- Shopping
- Entertainment
- Health & Beauty
- Home & Garden
- Movies
- Services
- Travel
- And More!

Visit the Members Only section of www.mea.org to access these savings.

NEW – You can now get your discounts on the go using the My Deals mobile app, available for free download on iPhone and Android mobile devices. Use the app to find discounts near you and use your phone as a coupon at more than 75,000 locations, including national chains and local favorites.

NEA Member Benefits

MEA members have access to national savings and benefits through NEA Member Benefits. You can learn more about the following at www.neamb.com:

- A FREE life insurance policy through the NEA Complimentary Life Insurance program. Just go online to register your beneficiary.
- Use “NEA Click & Save” when shopping online to get discounts on national brands, or learn about other money-saving programs offered for everything from magazines to auto purchases.
- Take advantage of great rates for mortgages and student or personal loans.
- Access classroom resources and professional development programs, such as discounted online graduate courses.
Turning Dues into Savings

Through the collective power of MEA, your dues turn into savings for you and your family. And we’re not talking about just a few dollars here and there – as an MEA member, you can save more money in a year than you spend on dues!

Here’s an example:

John and Mary Smith are a married MEA couple – Mary is a teacher and John is a custodian. They work hard, own a modest home and two American-made cars, and have two children. Combined, they make about $80,000 per year and are paying about $1,000 in MEA dues. Like every working family, they have to meet a budget and make ends meet. Here’s how they turn their MEA dues into savings:

MEA Financial Services Insurance

Through MEA Financial Services, they save $300-500 per year on their home and auto insurance premiums.*

*NOTE: Savings can vary significantly based on your personal situation – please call MEA Financial Services for a complimentary, no-obligation quote at 800-292-1950 x7800 or request a quote online at www.meafs.com.

MEA Cash Back Platinum Plus Credit Card

John and Mary each carry the no-annual-fee MEA Cash Back Platinum Plus Credit Card, which gives them 1 percent cash back on all purchases. Unlike other cards that may limit the type of purchase eligible for cash back, or limit the amount of purchases eligible for cash back, the MEA Cash Back Platinum Plus Credit Card gives 1 percent cash back on all purchases with no limit on the amount of purchases. Those cash back rewards can add up quickly.

For more information on the MEA Cash Back Platinum Plus Credit Card, call MEA Financial Services at 800-292-1950.
MEA Membership Card Discounts

Using discounts provided through their MEA Membership Card, they find using both the Members Only area of www.mea.org and the My Deals mobile app, John and Mary save more than $1,600 per year on everything from shopping and local services to entertainment and vacations!

### The Savings Really Add Up!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purchase</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Typical Savings per purchase</th>
<th>Purchases per Year</th>
<th>Yearly Savings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOOD</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocery Store Coupons</td>
<td>5 items per week</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>$180.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining–Lunch</td>
<td>1 meal/week</td>
<td>$3.25</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>$169.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining–Dinner</td>
<td>2 meals/month</td>
<td>$7.50</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>$180.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pizza</td>
<td>2 purchases/month</td>
<td>$8.00</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>$192.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVERYDAY NEEDS &amp; SERVICES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apparel</td>
<td>8 items per year</td>
<td>$15.50</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$124.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Improvement</td>
<td>2 purchases/yr</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpet Cleaning</td>
<td>1 purchase/yr</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. Shopping</td>
<td>8 purchases/yr</td>
<td>$9.00</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$72.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flowers/Gifts</td>
<td>2 purchases/yr</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil Changes</td>
<td>5 oil changes/yr</td>
<td>$8.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENTERTAINMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling/Lasertag/Minigolf</td>
<td>4 purchases/yr</td>
<td>$5.50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$22.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme Park Visits</td>
<td>4 passes/yr</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concert/Sports/Event Tickets</td>
<td>4 tickets/yr</td>
<td>$19.00</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$76.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>4 rounds/yr</td>
<td>$8.00</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$32.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRAVEL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Stays</td>
<td>7 nights/yr</td>
<td>$28.00</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$196.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Rental</td>
<td>5 days/yr</td>
<td>$14.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$70.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruise</td>
<td>1 cruise for two/yr</td>
<td>$35.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$70.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL SAVINGS** $1,612.00

So, $300-500 saved on insurance.

More than $1,600 in discounts.

**John and Mary turn their MEA dues into real savings of more than $1,900 per year!**

**And you can too!**

To access these and more ways to save, visit the Members Only section of www.mea.org.
With passage of Michigan’s Public Employment Relations Act (PERA) in 1965, teachers went from begging to bargaining.

Now all school employees have the right to negotiate fair wages and good working conditions – that makes for better learning conditions for your students and your school.

MEA staff helps you use your collective power to get good contracts that benefit everyone. Your dues pays for the professional bargainers, lawyers and other experts you need to bargain and uphold all aspects of your contract.

When you're an MEA member, you're not alone. And when we stand together, everyone can benefit from the MEA advantage for public education.

Did You Know?

- MEA has approximately 125,000 members.
- MEA members include employees of traditional K-12 public school districts and intermediate districts, charter public schools, community colleges and public universities, as well as public school retirees and future teachers.
“...You get a contract. That doesn’t happen from thin air, but from dedicated work by your colleagues, with excellent legal and pragmatic advice from your MEA UniServ director, backed by a skilled organization.”

– Gary Thompson, Saginaw Valley State University Faculty Association past president, English professor

In 2013, full-time wage and salary workers who were union members had median usual weekly earnings of $950, compared with a median of $750 for wage and salary workers who were not represented by unions.

(Source: U.S. Department of Labor)
MEA members rely on an array of valuable services provided by professional consultants who are based at the association’s headquarters complex in East Lansing. Your local UniServ office can help access services designed to maximize your effectiveness as an educational employee and as an active member of the association. Services are available in the following areas:

- Bargaining
- Communications
- Contract maintenance
- Educational support professional advocacy
- Higher education issues
- Human rights
- Organizing
- Privatization
- Professional development
- Public relations
- Research

MEA headquarters in East Lansing
Think about the people who make decisions about:

- your salary and health benefits,
- your retirement,
- the educational requirements for your profession,
- the amount of money your school will receive, and
- the standards your students must meet to graduate.

What do these people have in common? They’re all politicians—from your local school board to the state capitol to the White House. Every education decision is a political decision.

That’s why in addition to monitoring legislation and policies that may impact public schools, school employees and students, MEA assists with political campaigns at the local, state and national levels.

MEA gives you a voice at the state capitol in Lansing, from the Legislature to the State Board of Education and beyond. MEA has a well-earned reputation as the leading advocate for Michigan’s public school employees and the development of pro-education public policy.

Electing friends of public education matters for your career, your livelihood and your students – that’s why MEA is actively engaged in politics, employing experienced political consultants and mobilizing MEA members to take action.

Members like you sit on local and statewide screening committees that interview and identify pro-public education candidates and recommend them to members for election.

Having a strong voice in the political and legislative process is truly an MEA Advantage.
Keeping Members Up-to-Date

MEA’s award-winning magazine, the *MEA Voice*, provides news and information all types of school employees can use – both on the job and off. From the impact of legislation on your school, to trends in education research, to advice regarding your retirement, the *MEA Voice* brings accurate information right to your mailbox.

Between issues of the *Voice* magazine, electronic communications such as [www.mea.org](http://www.mea.org) and the *MEA Voice* Online and Capitol Comments email newsletters keep you informed on the latest issues facing MEA members across the state.

MEA is also aggressively using social media – connect with us online via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube to get updates, share your thoughts and hear what members like you think.

You can now download the new MEA mobile app for iPhone or Android devices. Just search in your app store for Michigan Education Association.
MEA—When There’s a Crisis

Whether it’s a crisis at the bargaining table, a proposal to outsource or downgrade your job, or an emergency at your work site, MEA is at your side, ready to help. MEA staff will help with all aspects of a crisis—planning, internal and external communications, strategy development and implementation, legal assistance, consulting and expertise. MEA also may be able to provide some financial assistance to help with a local crisis—contact your local president or UniServ director to learn more.

“"It took us a while to realize that our bargaining was in a crisis mode…MEA was with us every step of the way, giving us the expertise that helped us reach a settlement. We’re a small local, and we couldn’t have done it without MEA’s help."

– Dee Brock, past president, retired Shepherd Education Association.

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

– Judeen Huston, food service, Manton Public Schools
Our Proud History

1852: The Michigan State Teachers Association (MSTA) was formed by 20 charter members in a meeting at the State Normal School (now Eastern Michigan University) in Ypsilanti.

1857: National Education Association was organized in Philadelphia.

1911: MSTA’s constitution was amended to make the membership fee $1 for both men and women. MSTA membership was 8,288, with 7,148 women.

1926: MSTA changed its name to Michigan Education Association.

1960: MESSA, the Michigan Education Special Services Association, was chartered to provide affordable health insurance to school employees.

1964: MEA completed a petition campaign, gathering 325,000 signatures, to get a mandatory statewide tenure bill before the Legislature, which approved the measure.

1965: Passage of the Public Employment Relations Act (PERA) gave public education employees the right to organize into local bargaining units to negotiate salary, benefits and other working conditions.

1973: MEA established MEA Financial Services, a wholly-owned subsidiary, offering an array of financial products and services for school employees.

1984: MEA and Michigan Educational Support Personnel merged, making MEA one of the first state associations to offer full membership rights to school support personnel.

1994: Anti-union forces in the state Legislature rewrote the Public Employment Relations Act of 1965 to restrict MEA members’ bargaining rights.

2000: MEA members led the fight to defeat the statewide voucher initiative.
“A Matter of Dignity” is a free booklet that tells the rich history of the Michigan Education Association. The 37-page booklet provides background on MEA’s roots and key victories in the areas of retirement, professional development, tenure, bargaining and civil rights. Limited quantities of a companion video/DVD are available.

Call MEA’s Public Affairs Department at 800-292-1934 ext. 5508 to request these materials.
The MESSA Difference: People, not profits

MESSA is a nonprofit organization started — and still governed — by school employees. As a nonprofit, all of its members’ funds are used to pay medical bills and administer benefits. Not a cent goes to shareholder profits, CEO bonuses or insurance agent commissions.

EXCEPTIONAL HEALTH COVERAGE

- MESSA believes school employees deserve high-quality health coverage and peace of mind, and that’s why MESSA provides members with the greatest choice of doctors and access to expert medical care from the best hospitals.
- MESSA takes pride in keeping overhead down, and its administrative costs are lower than those of its competitors.
- MESSA is driving innovation and is providing education employees with more affordable options. They’ve launched a number of new plan options designed to reduce the amount of money deducted from school employees’ checks for health insurance.
- MESSA benefit packages are flexible and offer options to meet the needs of each employee group, no matter their life circumstances.
OUTSTANDING PERSONAL SERVICE

- MESSA’s friendly, knowledgeable staff can help members navigate the complex world of health care. MESSA’s East Lansing Member Service Center has earned national certification as a “Center of Excellence” for 13 consecutive years.

- MESSA’s local field representatives provide personal service to members and employers. They can consult with groups during the collective bargaining process, speak to employee groups and provide detailed analyses to help members make the best choices.

- MESSA’s asthma, diabetes, cardiovascular and medical case management nurses give members free, one-on-one guidance to help navigate serious conditions.

- MESSA’s health promotion consultant helps employees and employers create worksite wellness programs or jump-start existing programs.

MESSA believes the hardworking people who care for our kids and our schools deserve exceptional health benefits and unmatched personal service. To learn more, call your MESSA Field Representative at 800-292-4910 or visit www.messa.org.
Benefits of MEA Membership*

Members receive:

- Belonging to an organization that advocates for public schools, school employees and students
- Supporting MEA’s political, legislative and public relations efforts for great public schools
- Free online professional development
- Employment liability insurance for both civil and criminal cases, with $1 million coverage for civil liability damages
- MEA Advantage members-only discounts
- Legal services for:
  - unemployment cases
  - certification issues
  - retirement issues
  - discrimination based on union activity
  - discrimination under federal and state laws based on race, sex, age, color, religion, national origin, disability, family and medical leave, etc.
  - teacher tenure, wage and hour and whistleblower cases
  - layoff and recall litigation for teachers under the Revised School Code
  - constitutional claims
  - other claims outside the coverage of the collective bargaining agreement
- Training and consultation regarding special education issues
- Advice on employment-related statutory rights
- Subscriptions to MEA Voice & NEA Today magazines and other email newsletters
- Access to MEA and NEA conferences, including:
  - MEA Winter Conference
  - MEA Summer Conference
  - Higher Education Conference
  - ESP Statewide Conference
- Ability to attend local and regional MEA-sponsored trainings
- Assistance in obtaining National Board Certification
Right to attend local association meetings and social functions

Voting privileges (contracts, officers, etc.) at the state, local and national levels

Eligibility to hold elected office at the state, local and national levels

Access to discounted personal legal services through the Goodman Acker firm

Access to MEA-Financial Services programs:
  - Group automobile insurance discounts
  - Group homeowners insurance discounts
  - MEA Cash Back Platinum Plus Cash Back Credit Card
  - MEA Sponsored Group Term Life Insurance
  - Long Term Care Insurance – member discounts

Access to NEA Complimentary Life Insurance

Access to NEA Member Benefits programs:
  - NEA Home Financing Program
  - NEA Smart Option Student Loan
  - NEA Personal Loan
  - NEA Click & Save online discounts
  - NEA Auto Buying Program
  - Jeep Preferred Pricing Program
  - NEA ID Theft Protection
  - NEA Magazine Service
  - NEA Vacations
  - And more…

---

Benefits as of 05/2018

*If you are covered by a collective bargaining agreement with a valid agency shop agreement and you resign your membership, you will be converted to a fee payer. You will continue to receive the same benefits fee payers have always received, which are significantly less than membership. Fee payers must typically pay a service fee to the MEA, NEA, and sometimes to their local as a condition of employment. Contact the MEA Help Center at 866-632-4357 if you have any questions.
The mission of the MEA is to ensure that the education of our students and the working environments of our members are of the highest quality.