

MEA • VOICE

HOW TO DE-ESCALATE
STUDENT BEHAVIORS

Page 15

SUMMER CONTRACTS
BOOST FALL SPIRITS

Page 20



**We can shift
the trajectory
for at-risk youth**

Letter to Members: health and safety

Concerns about school safety and student mental health have been forefront in the minds of MEA members for several years. Educators return to these related topics again and again, in surveys, trainings, conversations, and calls for resources from leaders and policymakers.

The tragic shootings at Oxford High School and Michigan State University provided stark and emotional proof points to these discussions. And we know, too, that so many of us have been affected by student suicide, which is nothing but heart-wrenching.

The fact is every day in schools across Michigan, struggles play out that don't make the news.

Depression, anxiety and teen suicide are on the rise in young people, along with classroom outbursts that disrupt routines, interrupt learning, and threaten the well-being of students and staff alike.

As educators, ensuring the safety and health of our students and colleagues is essential to our work. Classrooms, hallways, playgrounds, busses, cafeterias and beyond must be safe spaces — and we owe our children the help they need to navigate a complex world.

This issue of the *Voice* highlights just a few ways in which MEA members

once again are demonstrating their knowledge, commitment and resolve to be part of the solution to large societal problems.

From risk assessment and intervention, to training in de-escalation techniques, to innovative new ways to provide crucial support for individual students, our members focus on helping those who are hurting and in need.

More must change, including laws, policies and funding to provide educators large-scale tools and supports to turn around students who are struggling, acting out, or at-risk of harming themselves or others.

And we must continue to raise our voices and tell the stories that show these issues will not go away on their own and we're willing and able to tackle them together.

In this issue and throughout this school year, we'll highlight the work being done to keep students and educators healthy and safe — and we will keep calling for more support until every student has what they need.

In Solidarity Always,

Chandra Madafferi, MEA President
Brett Smith, Vice President
Aaron Eling, Secretary-Treasurer

75

Number of days from their first pay period that new public school employees have to elect their retirement plan — a decision that can't be changed. If you are new to public school employment, contact your building rep or MEA field office for MEA resources to make an informed choice.

MEA is supporting **House Bill 5021**, introduced by former educator Matt Koleszar — House Education Committee chair — to change the default election (if a new employee fails to make a selection) to the Pension Plus 2 plan instead of the Defined Contribution plan. Learn more at mea.org/legislation.



Wear red on Wednesdays to show solidarity with UAW workers

MEA is encouraging members to **WEAR RED** on Wednesdays to show solidarity with striking UAW members who are seeking a fair contract. Let's show our fellow union members that we have their backs as UAW workers stand up to corporate special interests and demand wage increases and a better quality of life for working families.



NEA President Becky Pringle (center) joined Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and MEA President Chandra Madafferi on a tour of Michigan schools, page 16.

For more indepth story coverage with links and additional photos, visit mea.org/voice



On the cover: Raquel Fernandez-Earns and Cinthia Mendoza-Medina are school psychologists who have helped design and operate an innovative risk assessment system in the Upper Peninsula, page 9. Photo by Miriam Garcia.

Inspiring advice, page 7.

Behavior strategies, page 15.

More contract wins, page 21.

More inside: Ed Rising, page 5. Health and safety, page 8. Preventing targeted school violence, page 13. Office clerical unit builds strength, page 18. Region elections, page 23. Capturing hearts, page 30.



MEA • VOICE

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ABOVE AND BEYOND

The Grosse Pointe Education Association's Family Flamingle Event was a wonderful opportunity for GPEA members and their families to have fun together at a beautiful local park to kick off a new school year. The free event included a wild bubble-making machine, face-painting, free coney dogs and more. The event came at a perfect time as the GPEA just settled a one-year contract amid significant challenges including Central Administration changes, budget cuts, declining enrollment and a contentious Board of Education.

"So many members showed up to Flamingle with their spouses and children just to relax and have fun together," said Heather Albrecht, GPEA Member Engagement chair. "It was a great event to strengthen our connections to each other by simply sharing some talk, smiles and laughter in what has been a challenging time in our district."



ICYMI

Watch for action this fall on some key education priorities in the Michigan Legislature, including:

Senate Bill 395 to amend Michigan's teacher evaluation system to remove student growth from educator scores, eliminate punitive aspects of the system to focus on teacher development, and get rid of mandates to test kindergarten students in the first 30 school days, among several other provisions.

House Bill 4752 to change a nine-month waiting period for retired educators to work in schools and receive retirement benefits. Under substitute HB 4752, public school retirees could make up to \$15,100 per calendar year in the first nine months after retirement and still receive pension and health benefits.

Add your voice to help pass these and other important measures! Visit mea.org/legislation to contact lawmakers, use our new legislative tracker to stay up to date, or sign up for our *Capitol Comments* e-newsletter.

Nominations sought for ESP Caucus Board

Nominations are being accepted for several positions on the MEA ESP Caucus Executive Board. Open positions are as follows beginning Sept. 1, 2024:

PRESIDENT:

1 Position — Sept. 1, 2024 to Aug. 31, 2027

VICE-PRESIDENT:

1 Position — Sept. 1, 2024 to Aug. 31, 2027

SECRETARY:

1 Position — Sept. 1, 2024 to Aug. 31, 2027

AT-LARGE:

4 Positions — Sept. 1, 2024 to Aug. 31, 2027

DIRECTOR BY CLASSIFICATION

FOOD SERVICE:

1 Position — Sept. 1, 2024 to Aug. 31, 2027

MAINTENANCE:

1 Position — Immediate to Aug. 31, 2025

HIGHER EDUCATION:

1 Position — Sept. 1, 2024 to Aug. 31, 2027

Elections to the ESP Caucus Executive Board will take place during the MEA Spring Representative Assembly on April 19-20, 2024. Information needed for each candidate includes: name, present occupation, home address, home and work telephone numbers, home email address, school district, name of nominee's local ESP association and written consent of the candidate running for office.

Candidates and nominators must be members in good standing of MEA/NEA. Information must be received no later than Feb. 20, 2024 and should be mailed to: Shannon Alston, MEA/ESP Department, PO Box 2573, 1216 Kendale Blvd., East Lansing, MI 48826-2573, or it can be sent via email to salston@mea.org.

Additional nominations will be accepted from the floor at the MEA/ESP Caucus meeting on Friday, April 19, 2024. Candidates will be given up to three minutes to address delegates.

Biographical sketches can be sent to Heather Traxler, MEA staff assistant to the ESP Caucus, at htraxler@mea.org. Questions about the elections should be directed to Jim Sparapani, ESP Caucus elections chair, at 906-779-1984 or jsparapani@att.net. **v**

THE FUTURE IS NOW

New MEA affiliation brings secondary-level Educators Rising opportunities

Save the Date for our first annual Educators Rising Competition and Conference to be held on March 13, 2024 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at Wayne State University.

MEA is newly affiliated with Educators Rising, a program for middle and high school students interested in education careers to learn about building content knowledge, responsive planning, implementing instruction, using assessment and data, and engaging in reflective practice.

This jointly sponsored conference will allow participants to meet with campus advisors and tour the Wayne State campus in the heart of Midtown Detroit, in addition to competing in the following topics for a chance to advance to the 2024 Educators Rising National Conference in Washington, D.C. in late June:

- Bulletin Board
- Teacher-Created Resources
- Lesson Planning
- Children's Literature
- Researching Learning Challenges
- Public Speaking

Wayne State University offers award-winning, nationally recognized bachelor's, master's, education specialist and doctoral degree programs in 29 programs with 39 degree and certificate options.

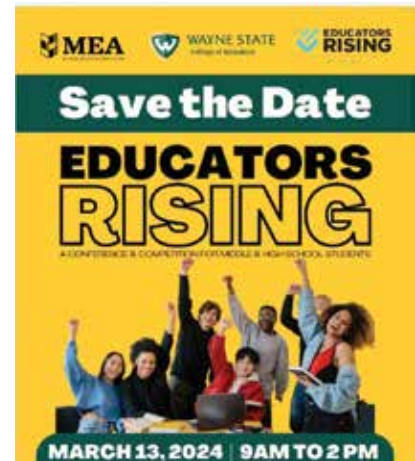
At the conference, students will learn from experts and each other as they participate in a series of whole group and breakout sessions centered around topics important to them and their chosen profession.

Advisors and instructors will have time to collaborate.

Many secondary-grade students engage in this type of learning through Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses where skilled teachers guide them through these important skills.

MEA's affiliation with Educators Rising delivers opportunities for students whose schools offer elective courses in exploring education as a career, as well as advisors and their students who are interested in creating an extra-curricular club opportunity for students.

If you are an educator who teaches a CTE course and are not already engaged in the planning of this conference and competition, or you are an educator teaching an elective course or running a club for future educators and want to be involved, please reach out to Annette Christiansen at achristiansen@mea.org or educatorsrising.org/start-a-program for more information.



Membership in Educators Rising is free for teachers/club advisors and \$15 for students to join. It is a Perkins-eligible expense. If you and your students are ready to join, go to educatorsrising.org/join-1.

For continued information and to volunteer for the Educators Rising Conference, please fill out the form at forms.gle/BGUoWBerYERb7ebL6. **v**



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[soundcloud](https://www.soundcloud.com/mineweducators)

It's time to update your benefits

It's good to have options, and MESSA offers members just that during open enrollment. If you've had health or life changes during the past year, it may be time to review, tweak or change your MESSA health plan to fit your needs.

MESSA has more than 80 medical plan combinations to choose from including MESSA ABC plans, MESSA Choices, Essentials by MESSA and the new MESSA Balance+.

All MESSA plans include free preventive care benefits when you go to an in-network provider. Each plan also includes Michigan's largest provider network, giving you the greatest choice of doctors and access to expert medical care from the best hospitals across the nation. Plan offerings may vary by employer and are subject to your bargained benefits.

messa ABC ACCOUNT-BASED CHOICES

MESSA ABC is a high-deductible health plan that features three deductible options, as well as numerous coinsurance and prescription options. All ABC plans are eligible for a health savings account (HSA),

which can be used to pay copays, deductibles and coinsurance.

Contributing to an HSA has a triple tax benefit: You don't pay taxes on contributions, earnings or payments. You own the account forever, with unspent funds carrying over from year to year and growing tax-free to help you save for health expenses in retirement. For more information, visit messa.org/ABC.



MESSA Balance+, our newest health plan, has the lowest deductible allowed with an HSA-eligible plan, plus a bundle of supplemental plans that pay cash for covered incidents to provide peace of mind during life's unexpected events. The supplemental plans include:

- **Accident:** Pays cash benefits if you or a covered dependent experience an accidental injury on or off the job. Pro tip: It covers injuries from kids' organized sports with a 25% higher benefit payout.

- **Critical Illness:** Pays cash if you or a covered dependent are diagnosed with a covered illness or condition. Pro tip: Pays \$50 per covered individual for certain preventive screenings and care that you receive every year.
- **Hospital Indemnity:** Pays a lump sum for admission and a daily benefit for a covered hospital stay due to childbirth, illness, injury or surgery. To learn more, visit messa.org/Balance.

MESSA Choices

MESSA Choices is a traditional PPO plan that comes with a wide variety of deductible, coinsurance and prescription drug options. The deductible, which resets every Jan. 1, does not apply to prescriptions. For more information, visit messa.org/Choices.



Essentials by MESSA is a low-deductible, lower-premium plan that includes 20% coinsurance. While still offering the same large network of doctors and hospitals, Essentials reduced some coverages to keep down overall cost. As a result, Essentials provides a 33% premium savings compared to the most popular MESSA Choices plan combination.

For more information, visit messa.org/Essentials.

With MESSA, you have more options than ever to choose the right plan to fit every need and budget. **v**

To ensure you select the plan that best fits your needs, take time to:

- Learn about MESSA's health plan options and use the plan comparison tool at secure.messa.org/PlanCalculator to estimate your costs.
- Review MESSA's dental and vision plans at messa.org/dental and messa.org/vision.
- Learn about MESSA's supplemental plans that pay cash for covered accidents, illness and hospitalizations at messa.org/supplemental.

Questions? Call MESSA's Member Service Center at 800-336-0013 or your local MESSA field representative at 800-292-4910. You can also connect with MESSA Member Services via live chat, secure message or through your MyMESSA member account or the MESSA app.



Despite book bans and smear campaigns, I count my blessings

By *Debbie Carew*

In my wildest imagination I never expected to be harassed and defamed for being an educator, especially one who defends literature and intellectual freedom. But that is what I'm facing for standing up to protect students' access to a variety of reading and educational materials.

In Brandywine Community Schools where I teach in Niles, four school board members who were elected last November immediately began to enact the extreme agenda of political action committees that backed their election — We the Parents and 1776 Project PAC.

Because I've resisted efforts to remove high-quality, diverse books from school library shelves, my name and reputation have been smeared by a so-called "news source" publishing utter falsehoods about me, which are echoed on We the Parents' and other far-right social media.

You can get the gist of what nonsense it is from the headline of the first hit piece: "Teacher fighting to keep porn in Brandywine Schools." It feels daunting and surreal to be targeted by extremist propaganda — like living in a dystopian movie that won't end.

Since January, my school board has instituted unclear restrictions on library books. Then they rejected a sensible plan to let parents opt-out their own children from any book with sexual content.

Last month they passed a convoluted policy to keep certain books away from view and to require librarians to email quotations of only the explicit parts to parents of interested students — a method of "banishing" books which the American

Library Association defines as "soft censorship."

Next they're poised to send back a grant for \$5,000 worth of diverse library books that a teacher colleague of mine, a parent and I secured. It's incomprehensible. Yet this experience has validated the life I've lived and the person I've tried to be.

From middle school I knew I wanted to be an educator because I watched my mother — a public school art teacher — nurture lifelong relationships with her students and their families. I, too, wanted to build strong relationships and share my passion for reading, learning and self-expression with young people.

What a rich, joyful, meaningful life it's been in the classroom!

The instruction, encouragement, guidance and love that I've poured into my students over 27 years — and the care I've extended to families who've entrusted me with their children — is coming back to me a thousand times over now that I'm facing these unfair attacks.

Former students and parents reach out with support. A retired principal saw me and said he was proud, keep going. Current and former colleagues, online and at the school board podium, have spoken movingly in my defense. My union brothers and sisters have lifted me up, and my family cheers me on.

If we measured our worth by the friends we have to wrap their arms around us, I'd be the richest woman in the world.

Brandywine is a mighty district of 1,200 students. There's no town — our schools are the source of connection, community and pride. Right now



I'm one of 35 Brandywine alumni who are staff members, and lately I've cried many tears of gratitude for my 40 years as a Bobcat.

Here's why: Those relationships I set out to build as a young teacher decades ago have woven together into a safety net of love for me and faith in my good intentions that I find incredibly humbling and comforting to my soul. This community knows my teacher heart, and that is a blessing.

I refuse to give in to despair. I live in the hope and optimism that comes from knowing others have fought this fight before and won. We will win too, if we can find the determination, courage — and the love — to stand in our truth. ♥

Debbie Carew is a middle school language arts and humanities teacher and president of the Brandywine District Education Association.

Educators' universal worries: student mental health, behavior

In recent years, student mental health woes and troublesome classroom behaviors have emerged as leading concerns among educators in Michigan.

In a review of MEA member polling since 2020, those twin topics nudged both educator pay and staffing shortages as the top concern of educators questioned — with a whopping 92% reporting they were either “extremely” or “very” concerned in a survey conducted last spring.

They are not new problems. Over the past decade, burgeoning rates of youth depression, anxiety and suicide — alongside a rise in challenging student behaviors in schools, ranging from disruptive to downright

dangerous — have been headed toward crisis levels nationwide.

The global pandemic merely escalated these and other nagging societal issues.

Educators are speaking out on the conditions they need prioritized and addressed. Yet questions remain: How do these issues affect educators' work and students' learning? What can and should be done? Where are remedies being tried and discussed?

What is your story?

In the following pages and coming months, we want to elevate the narrative around how these issues are playing out in Michigan schools to raise awareness of their significance and examine potential responses

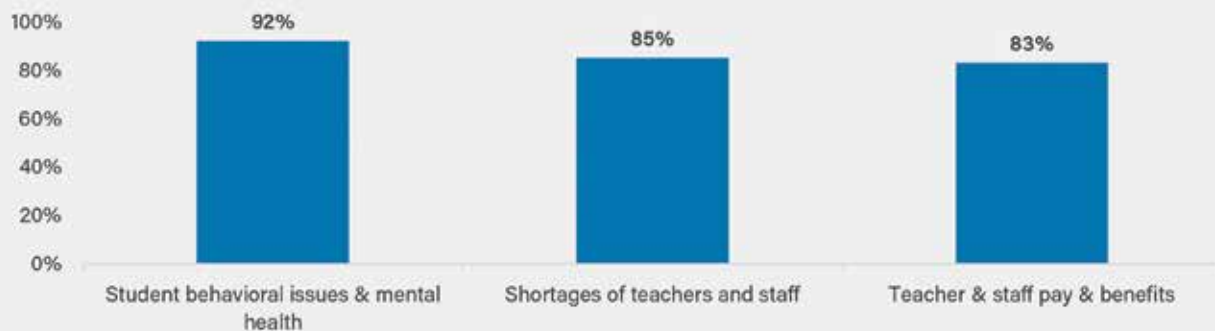
from practice, policy, and union perspectives.

What are you seeing in your classroom or school that shows an aspect of the problem? How are you, your school or district, or your local union responding? What is working or needs to change in terms of practice, policy or funding?

If you have a story or example that illustrates the issues, demonstrates a best practice, or offers an effective action, reach out to *MEA Voice* Editor Brenda Ortega at bortega@mea.org — and help to shape our coverage of these interconnected issues of such importance to the future of our children, our schools and our state. ▼

Student behavior/mental health, educator shortages, and pay/benefits are among members' top concerns.

Thinking about the challenges facing educators today, how concerned are you about each of the following where you work: (% extremely/very concerned)



Source: MEA Member Survey by Emma White Research, May 2023

Innovative UP program intervenes with troubled students

Stories by Brenda Ortega
MEA Voice Editor

As a third-year psychologist in the Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District (EUPISD), MEA member Cinthia Mendoza-Medina has not seen it all.

But so far one thing has surprised the early-career educator in her role leading multi-disciplinary teams conducting risk assessments for students feared to be a danger to themselves, others or property.

“When we say, ‘Do you understand why people may be concerned about you?’ most of the students don’t shy away from the tough conversations,” Mendoza-Medina said. “They want to express their frustrations and their needs. They know how their trauma has affected them.

“That has really surprised me because I thought we’d have to spend a long time trying to build rapport with students for them to answer questions — and sometimes we do. But many students are very, very clear about what they want to do and what supports they need, so that’s been eye-opening.”

The EUPISD in Sault Ste. Marie stands at the leading edge of a nationwide movement toward addressing skyrocketing rates of student mental health struggles, teenage suicide, and school violence by intervening with troubled young people before they carry out desperate acts.

Such innovation in the ISD — which services 7,000 students in 19 school districts across a 4,000 square-mile region of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula — is what drew Mendoza-Medina to relocate her young family of four

(plus two dogs) across the bridge from Holland to work there.

“As psychs, we are encouraged to not only research the things we’re interested in but to put our ideas into action,” she said. “We are very much supported by our special educa-

Since then the process has been refined and formalized, drawing on experience and numerous tools pulled from various professional sources, according to Raquel Fernandez-Earns, Ph.D., an MEA-member psychologist in the



Raquel Fernandez-Earns (left) led development of the comprehensive risk assessment system in 2016, and Cinthia Mendoza-Medina took over leadership when she retired.

tion department, which is wonderful because then we can come up with really trailblazing types of projects.”

At the request of Special Education Director Rachel Fuerer, the ISD initiated its first internally driven risk assessment in December 2016 — for a middle school girl who was harming herself and others in a self-contained special education classroom for students with emotional impairment — after an external report proved inadequate.

ISD from 2013-21, now retired, who led its development.

Private psychological consulting services — contracted to fill in gaps left by understaffed school psychology departments — do the best they can with the information they have, Fernandez-Earns said, adding: “This is not to disrespect the services out there.

“But as soon as we saw the richly detailed picture we could draw by assessing students from within the



Cinthia Mendoza-Medina moved her family to be part of the ISD where psychologists are encouraged to pursue passions.

school setting — being able to access school records in some cases all the way back to kindergarten and having access to school staff where kids spend so much of their waking hours — we thought, *Wow, we've really got something here in terms of helping our students.*"

Today the EUPISD operates among the most comprehensive risk assessment systems in the state, if not the country.

To be clear, the term "risk assessment" is often used interchangeably with "threat assessment." Both terms can refer to programs like the one at EUPISD, which seek to assess students at-risk of violence or self-harm and intervene to prevent tragic outcomes.

At this time, nine states require schools to implement threat

assessment teams, though requirements and oversight can be spotty.

Instead of mandates in the wake of the deadly shooting at Oxford High School in December 2021, in Michigan the focus has been on developing a proven set of guidelines for communities to use in building and refining their approaches.

A national leader is The Comprehensive Student Threat Assessment Guidelines, pioneered for more than 20 years by Dr. Dewey Cornell at the University of Virginia, where training and resources are available and research continues to ensure the safety, effectiveness and fairness of systems.

What makes the EUPISD model exemplary is the depth of the assessment and the encompassing breadth of plans developed to deliver services and supports to students at home, at school, in treatment, and in the community, and then monitor their progress throughout their academic careers.

"What we're doing here is making a difference," said Fernandez-Earns, a self-described "inner-city girl, born and raised in Chicago," who moved to the UP in 2003 after falling in love with its natural beauty. She initially worked in private practice before joining the ISD.

How it works

School psychologists at EUPISD play many roles in addition to leading risk assessments, including overseeing special education assessments, coordinating regional crisis response, and developing Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports to ensure all students have their social, emotional, behavioral and academic needs met.

To keep workloads manageable, requests for risk assessment from school districts in the three-county area served by the ISD must come from administrators and are first

screened by a behavior specialist. That person either refers to the team evaluation process or begins an expedited response if a student is at imminent risk — a drop-everything-and-act scenario determined by circumstances.

When cases are referred on, the **Emergency Student Assistance Team (ESAT)** begins the evaluation process.

The team consists of the psychologist, the student's parents and teachers, a building administrator and social workers. Some parents of children referred for help may feel overwhelmed by the speed and intensity of the process, said Cinthia Mendoza-Medina.

"But that has been the case much less than the times I've encountered parents feeling supported — because they're going through a lot of difficulties too, and they're struggling with everything that's happening in their families," she said.

Over two to three hours, the ESAT meeting explores wide-ranging questions on the student's grades and school attendance, family history, trauma, friendships and social difficulties, mental health issues, suicide attempts or suicidal ideation, self-harm, harm toward others or threats of harm, sleep patterns, and more.

Protective factors in the student's life also are considered, which are the connected relationships, mental health services, and healthy activities that help young people build self-esteem and resilience.

From there, the student's level of risk is pegged at low, moderate, high or severe. Regardless of risk level, all students who go through the ESAT process receive a Safety & Supervision Plan, while students determined to be high or severe risk also go on to receive an even more thorough risk assessment.

The **Safety & Supervision Plan** lays out interventions across multiple environments. At school students could be required to check in each morning with a staff member who makes them feel comfortable and safe. That person might check the student's backpack and have a chat to see how he or she is doing.

"That person could be a teacher, it could be a janitor, it could be a school secretary — it's an adult the student gravitates towards when they have needs," Mendoza-Medina said.

If a student requires breaks throughout the day, or extra supports, or needs to be allowed to leave the room when frustrated to visit the school counselor or trusted adult — a plan is put in place to ensure everyone understands expectations and the student's well-being is continually monitored.

At home, if the student has engaged in self-harm or suicidal ideation, parents or guardians are responsible for ensuring sharp objects are removed from the student's access and guns are locked in a safe storage unit, which is provided if necessary.

Families also receive direction or supportive services to help them strengthen and maintain communication with their child and the child's teachers and school. If the student has a probation officer, that person is brought into the conversation.

Needed mental health services are identified in the community, and the student's priority as part of the ESAT process can sometimes move them to the top of external providers' (often lengthy) waiting lists. If not, school-based mental health personnel step in to fill the void in the meantime.

The Safety & Supervision Plan also can identify relationship-building interventions, such as extra-curricular activities the student can join, or community recreation opportunities

or organizations. Support is provided to help students access music lessons or other personal interests.

"So it's quite comprehensive and very individualized in terms of the supports that are put in place for the student in school and out of school to address anything they might need, socially, behaviorally, academically, emotionally," Mendoza-Medina said. "It's a team effort all the way."

In addition, those young people identified in the ESAT as demonstrating high or severe risk go through the **Student Risk Assessment**, a lengthier process to better identify needs and build a more detailed Safety & Supervision Plan.

Last year, the EUPISD conducted 40 ESAT meetings and 12 risk assessments — down from 55 and 23, respectively, the year before. The risk assessment stage is where the student becomes involved in the process.

Those students are interviewed for three to five hours or more and assessed using a variety of professional tools, such as a mental status exam, the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test, Beck Youth Inventories, and the recently updated edition of the Psychosocial Evaluation & Threat Risk Assessment (PETRA), among others.

The conversation begins casually and then delves deeper with genuine concern and empathy. Fidgets and snacks are supplied, and trained school psychologists know and develop instincts about how to leave the script of questions to pursue threads in the student's story, Raquel Fernandez-Earns said.

"We found again and again from bringing this full circle of people together who are involved in the student's life — plus interviewing the students themselves, who are usually hungry to tell their stories — that everyone involved had missing pieces of the puzzle," she said.



Raquel Fernandez-Earns initially worked in private practice after moving to Sault Ste. Marie from Chicago.

"The teacher didn't know this, or the parent didn't know that, and suddenly we had all of these 'Aha' moments because getting everyone together and sharing information helped us paint a more in-depth picture of the student."

In some cases, students are identified for the first time as needing special education services, Fernandez-Earns said. She recalled cases where the assessment process revealed students had cognitive impairments or autism and had slipped through cracks in the regular identification systems.

Others have been found to be experiencing psychosis or hallucinations tied to mental illness.

"The fascinating piece about this is that many of these children have — for lack of a better word — a hidden

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

- A cadre of trainers is available through the Michigan State Police Office of School Safety to deliver workshops on Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management. Search for “MI-BTAM training.”
- Search “University of Virginia school threat assessment” for links to research and free training videos and threat assessment program guidelines from a national leader in the field.
- The National Association of School Psychologists put together Brief Facts and Tips with an overview of best practices and links to resources. Search “NASP threat assessment at school.”
- For more information about the EUPISD Emergency Student Assistance Team and Risk Assessment Process, contact Rachel Fuerer, Director of Special Education at rfuerer@eupschools.org or Stacey Miller, Behavior Specialist (and MEA-Retired member) at staceym@eupschools.org.

issue of some sort that is connected to their behavior but no one realized.

In addition to discovering the value of conducting risk assessments internally, Fernandez-Earns gathered several lessons from her experience leading the program at EUPISD.

“For one thing, it can be quite moving and extraordinary to see how much teachers and staff will do to try to help students,” she said. “They will go the extra 10 miles for kids, but they need help. They’re not trained for every situation, and they can’t do it all on their own.”

At a conference presentation by threat assessment experts in Colorado, she learned the importance of maintaining monitoring of students throughout their academic careers in home districts — as needed daily, weekly, monthly or annually — because improvements can erode as circumstances change.

An understanding of the commonalities among at-risk students also emerged from the work, Fernandez-Earns added. These children have suffered trauma, experienced bullying — especially on social media — and isolated themselves, furthering social and academic marginalization.

“Trauma changes the architecture of the brain and it puts the brain in survival mode, which means problem-solving, future planning, none of that is possible,” she said. “But if there is intervention early enough, kids can heal and become resilient and have a more restorative trajectory for their lives.”

What’s next

School psychologists do not have regular contact with students once the Safety & Supervision Plan is being followed, which can be a difficult part of the job, Cinthia Mendoza-Medina said. But they do hear back about students and continue to revise plans to help them, she added.

“Students do want help; they’re just humans who are struggling and don’t know who to turn to or how to ask for it. But they have so much potential... they are amazing.”

Not every student who comes through the program makes a turnaround, although most will learn new coping strategies, develop skills to seek assistance in times of crisis, or emerge from their shells, make friends, find jobs, and plan for the future — all of which is incredibly rewarding, she said.

“It’s not perfect, and there’s always more work to be done to better ensure that our students are safe and have everything they need to be successful,” Mendoza-Medina said. “But this process gives me a lot of hope for our kids, and I’m appreciative to be part of something that I’m so passionate about.”

She has been heartened to see more money allocated in state budgets over the past few years for hiring mental health personnel, as need continues to strain school systems, but shortages in every job category persist.

Mendoza-Medina wants to see risk assessment become a part of every school, which will require ongoing funding and attention to ensure those highly trained, trusted adults are there to deliver the best programming for kids — whatever their needs may be.

“We need more social workers, we need more school psychologists, we need more school counselors, and we need more teachers. And we need people to be paid what they are worth, because every student’s life is priceless.” ▼

Michigan launches 5-year pilot to stem targeted school violence

In March of 2018, the rural community of Paw Paw west of Kalamazoo was shaken by terrifying news of tragedy narrowly averted: a 15-year-old student had been arrested just hours before he planned to commit a mass shooting at the local high school the next day.

The teen was found to have a hit list and an arsenal of guns, explosives and ammunition in his dresser when his mother turned him into police after his grandfather discovered two missing weapons and evidence of sawed-off gun barrels in his barn.

Convicted of weapons and explosives charges, the boy served more than three years in juvenile detention until he was released on parole at age 19 in 2021.

One month after getting out, the same young man opened fire at a crowded South Haven beach. He randomly shot two people on the pier, killing 73-year-old Chuck Skuza and critically injuring Chuck's wife of nearly 50 years, Barbara, before turning the gun on himself.

Two experts on mass shootings who co-authored a case study of the averted Paw Paw High School attack and the terrible aftermath in South Haven say the murder-suicide serves as another devastating example of the need to identify adolescents at high-risk for targeted violence and deliver sustained, meaningful interventions.

For that to happen, a new "next step" is needed in the school threat assessment process, according to Dr. Alyse Ley, associate chair of Education and Research in the Michigan State University Department of Psychiatry, and Dr. Frank Straub, senior director

of Violence Prevention Research and Programs at Safe and Sound Schools.

"The idea is to increase the community collaboration and supports around high-risk, high-need adolescents so we can change the trajectory of their lives and reduce the likelihood they will commit an act of violence," Ley said in a joint interview.

Ley and Straub are leading an effort to build that next step now as co-directors of "Prevent 2 Protect: The Adolescent Targeted Violence Prevention Project" — a five-year \$15 million Michigan Department of Education-funded pilot starting up this fall in two Michigan regions to potentially serve as a national model for preventing acts of mass violence in schools.

"Without holistic, cross-system management of these individuals, they get lost in the cracks; we see that over and over and over again," Straub said. He added in the case of the South Haven shooter, "There was no contemplation of how do we manage this potentially dangerous person in a community context."

The same problem occurred leading up to the 2018 school shooting in Parkland, Florida, in which a 19-year-old former student killed 17 people and injured 17 others, Straub said. He and Ley were among a team of experts who produced a report on lessons learned and recommendations after the tragedy.

"With the shooter in (Parkland's) Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, mental health had a piece of the puzzle, law enforcement had a piece of the puzzle, the school had a piece of the puzzle, but nobody brought all of the pieces together."



Co-directors Alyse Ley, associate professor of psychiatry at MSU, and Frank Straub, a criminology and forensic psychology expert, have teamed up before to study averted and completed mass shootings.

Straub has an extensive background in federal, state and local law enforcement, criminology and psychology with experience developing the Averted School Violence database and reporting on averted and completed school attacks.

Ley, a Michigan State University child and adolescent psychiatrist with clinical expertise in trauma-related disorders, has partnered with Straub and Safe and Sound Schools — a non-profit founded by Michele Gay, who lost her first-grade daughter in the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in 2012.

Backed by an advisory board of notable national experts, with the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health acting as third-party

evaluator, the pilot is launching in two regions this fall — Calhoun and Mason counties. Three more regions will be phased in next year.

The project will feature a state-level Hub of experts, including psychiatrists, psychologists, criminologists, physicians, educators and law enforcement experts with back-

navigate challenges and identify activities of interest to further build connection.

“All treatment and services will be implemented in the community and not by the Hub or the regional support team, although the community professionals working with the adolescents will have access to expert

completed school shootings that the majority of attackers are adolescents and most schools involved are public high schools in rural and suburban communities.


An exception exists for every rule, so it’s important not to focus on a subset of individuals but to zero in on behavior, Straub said: “What are the behaviors that are manifesting and what are the causes of that behavior? What are the triggers — the antecedent events — that stimulate that behavior?”

“Then how can we stop it? Behavior is a manifestation of underlying mental health challenges or life challenges — and we can try to address those.”

Outlines of the project have been discussed and evolved over years by Ley and Straub, along with Ley’s professional mentor, Dr. Frank Ochberg — a giant in the field of trauma-related stress who is on the advisory board. Ley is grateful to Gov. Gretchen Whitmer for securing funding for the pilot.

Above all, Ley said, the project’s partners believe young people in distress can be helped to create a sense of connection and confidence within their communities which shifts them away from a path toward violence.

The hope with Prevent 2 Protect is to create a model for averting school violence that can be replicated across Michigan and the U.S., she added. “What an extraordinary opportunity to work with experts from across the country who all have a common goal — and that’s to protect our children.”

Learn more at prevent2protect.msu.edu. 

“What an extraordinary opportunity to work with experts from across the country who all have a common goal — and that’s to protect our children.”

— Dr. Alyse Ley, co-director,
Prevent 2 Protect

grounds in research, training, and providing clinical services and technical assistance.

The Hub will conduct psychiatric, behavioral threat, and needs assessments of children or adolescents who get referred and enrolled in the program. From that information, a comprehensive and individualized care plan will be developed.

Each region will also receive an intensive support team that includes a case manager, responsible for monitoring local implementation of the plan, and a mentor who acts as an adult role model and stays in regular touch to help the young person

consultation,” Ley said. “It doesn’t make sense for kids to leave to get treatment when the goal is to better integrate them and their families into the community.”

Care plans could include psychiatric or medical treatment, vocational training, social skills and connections interventions, therapies such as speech or language services, family supports — whatever is needed to address the struggles a young person is facing.

There is no “profile” of a school shooter nor one-size-fits-all solution, Straub said.

Researchers have learned from compiling data on averted and

Paraeducator trains others on how to de-escalate behaviors

The first time MEA member Fred McFadden attended Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) training 27 years ago, he was a new technician at an inpatient mental health facility in Auburn Hills, Havenwyck Hospital, and he didn't believe the techniques would work.

Nearly three decades later McFadden still works nights at Havenwyck, plus he's a paraeducator by day in his 26th year working with special needs children in Pontiac School District — and he's a certified CPI trainer.

"The first year working at the hospital, I had reservations about doing CPI," he told paraeducators in Oak Park where he led a back-to-school training at the start of this school year. "I thought, *that don't look like it'll work*. But you know what — the more I got to doing it, it does work."

The CPI approach, developed by the Crisis Prevention Institute over the past 50 years, involves hands-off strategies for managing disruptive and assaultive behavior through de-escalation techniques.

McFadden took the group of about 40 new and veteran paras through the two-day training, which includes methods for safely performing holds in a crisis moment but primarily focuses on how to avoid physical restraint by steering potentially volatile situations out of deep waters.

McFadden stressed the need to build relationships with students so they learn to talk about problems instead of acting them out. You don't always know what a child is dealing with outside of school — hunger, conflict, abuse — so don't take behavior

personally: "Behavior is communication," he said.

The training shares self-calming strategies the adult can use to avoid power struggles and manage his or her own attitudes. "Behavior influences behavior," he said, and the goal is to reduce tension in a crisis and bring the child back to using the rational part of the brain.

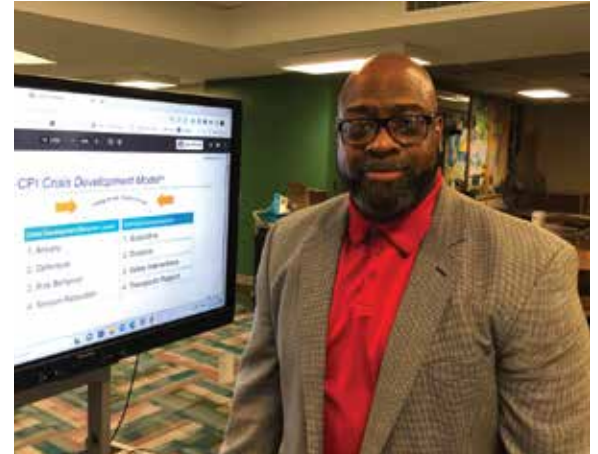
If necessary, remove other students who can act as an audience and speak in a calm tone at an understandable rate, McFadden said. Offer choices with consequences.

"Don't take it personal if they call you a name or insult your mother. Remove the audience and give it time, talk to them calmly and not threatening, and I promise you that child will calm all the way down. And then you can re-establish the relationship, figure out what's going on."

As president of his local paraeducators unit in Pontiac, McFadden also urged attendees to join the union for support and make a habit of documenting incidents for future reference.

Nichol Mullen, vice president of the paraeducators unit in Oak Park, said she set up the training because it was last offered before the pandemic. New people needed to learn the strategies, but it helps veterans to be reminded of how to handle situations that can be triggering, she said.

"Behaviors are growing in schools, and we definitely want to be able to protect our children and keep them safe, as well as to protect our members," Mullen said.



Paraeducators Fred McFadden of Pontiac and Toni Brown of Oak Park agree on the power of de-escalation strategies for keeping everyone safe.

Toni Brown, the longest-serving paraeducator in the district, said she has learned and used CPI tools often over her 40-year career working with students in both special and general education classrooms.

"CPI teaches me how to react and it gives me the tools to protect the student and protect myself," Brown said. "I love CPI because it's given me a wealth of wisdom to use in this endeavor of being a para." ▼

NEA president on Michigan visit: *'I wi*

To start this school year off right, NEA President Becky Pringle visited four school districts in Michigan to see what change looks like when a governor and state Legislature prioritize public education.

Pringle and MEA President Chandra Madafferi began at Dublin Elementary in Walled Lake by bagging and distributing free breakfast to youngsters. This fall, Michigan became only the eighth state to fund universal free school meals in public schools.

The pair joined Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in Flint where they touted many spending priorities from five straight years of highest-ever state education budgets and visited classrooms at Beecher Community Schools where teachers recently settled a strong contract. (Read more about that on page 20.)

They moved on to the west side of the state for student and educator discussion panels at Grand Rapids Public Schools' City Middle High School — top-ranked in the state — and a tour of a brand new, state-of-the-art Grandville Middle School with a first-in-the-nation robotics arena.

"I'm very tired of the narrative that our public schools are not working, because that is absolutely not true," Madafferi said. ▼

Read the whole story at mea.org/nea-president-spotlights-successes.



A



D



F

All tell your stories everywhere I go'



- A. NEA President Becky Pringle read to first graders in the classroom of MEA member Laura Kauffman.
- B. Educators are in it for the kids, said Jared DeWitt, president of the Walled Lake Education Association.
- C. Michigan shows what is possible with support for public education, NEA President Becky Pringle said.
- D. Paras deserve better, said Micah Knox (center-right), president of the Beecher paraeducators union.
- E. In a discussion, Grand Rapids City High School senior Sabina Cobo (center) said teachers need support.
- F. Grandville teacher and coach Mike Evele showed the robotics arena at the district's new middle school.
- G. Grandville EA members served on a committee to help design the middle school, Vice President Jeff Pietrowski said.

Grosse Ile office clerical unit rebuilds, tal

Just two years ago, the MEA unit representing 11 office clerical workers in Grosse Ile Township Schools consisted of one member. The group was working without a contract, and the unit faced decertification for low membership numbers.

In the winter of 2021, that one member recruited two others and the trio did their best to assist MEA UniServ Director Jimalatice Thomas-Gilbert in negotiating a new contract.

But as they rounded the corner toward last summer, when that 18-month agreement was set to expire, the group needed to build strength they could exert at the bargaining table. In that turning point, the administrative assistants came together and never looked back.

“Once they understood that being members and being active they could create their own power to address problems, there was no stopping them,” Thomas-Gilbert said.

With help from Thomas-Gilbert and an MEA organizer, they rebuilt the unit and then set out to negotiate a contract — together as a group — that addressed their needs and their value.

“I really think we surprised the administration when we went in there,” said Suzi Sanchez-Honkala, middle school secretary and president of the Grosse Ile Education Support Personnel Association. “I don’t think they were anticipating the force that we are.”

The positive changes grew out of loss.

In the fall of 2021, Sanchez-Honkala became the only member in good standing of the Grosse Ile ESPA after

the jobs of bus drivers — who previously made up nearly all of the membership — were privatized. She became president by default and convinced a friend and another member to join.

This year the administrative assistants all got together to discuss their future with Thomas-Gilbert and Mark Hoffman, MEA UniServ Organizational Development Specialist.

“For our people, a lot of the issue with joining the union was the cost of being a member,” Sanchez-Honkala said. “And Mark explained why it’s actually minimal when you realize that not having a union has costs and those come out of your pocket. I think we had three more people sign up that day.”

More meetings flushed out job issues many were experiencing and talk of remedies.

Soon the fledgling unit had eight members in good standing and a hefty homework assignment for their first bargain. The eight members researched and printed a stack of model contracts from comparable districts, then spent evenings poring over them and listing priorities in a joint Google form.

Newly elected leaders — president, vice president, secretary — sifted through the group’s ideas to create their ideal contract with fine-tuning by Thomas-Gilbert. “We turned that in, and asked for that!” Sanchez-Honkala said. “But then we fought for what was fair.”

Talks began in the spring with all eight members in attendance — in what’s called “open bargaining.” After leaving the first session,

they laid documents on the hood of Sanchez-Honkala’s car and made notes while events were fresh in their minds. It was remarkable, Thomas-Gilbert said.

“I’ve never seen a group come together so quickly and get it so quickly and dive in so quickly. First, Mark and I were kind of leading them, and then it turned into them leading us in a matter of months.”

Once they recognized issues they had in common and understood their rights and powers as union members, Hoffman added, “That’s all it took for a bunch of go-getters like these people.”

Talks continued for months with the unit seeking a wage increase plus compensation for extra duties. Members created a day-in-the-life document to show how much they do — administering medications, finding substitute teachers, supervising students — which adds to their workload.

At first the two sides were far apart on financial proposals, but the office clerical staff — who monitor spending and budgets for their buildings — challenged the administration’s stance. “We did our homework, and we knew what we deserved,” Sanchez-Honkala said.

Building secretaries act as office managers, responding to students, parents and other visitors; juggling staff needs; reminding principals of major deadlines; and balancing budgets — among many other duties.

In a final settlement approved in August, the unit secured a 5% pay increase in year one of a two-year deal, plus \$1,250 in off-schedule payments. One paid holiday was added,

kes charge

and some members clinched unpaid time off they desired instead of being required to work or use paid time off during quieter summer or holiday weeks.

Just as important to members were agreed-upon changes to fix troublesome work conditions.

First, the members wanted language to ensure two certified people are present when medication is administered to students — as their training and certification require — to prevent mistakes and protect individuals from liability.

They sought extra compensation for times they supervise students who are sent from class and wait to be seen or those who sit in the office after school until late rides arrive — which makes them privy to sensitive business or prevents work from getting done, Sanchez-Honkala said.

“Bargaining made it easy to come right out and say, ‘We want \$2,500 for handling these situations, because it happens more often than you know.’ It brought to light what we deal with and what we’re lacking in our jobs.”

They pursued stipends for their work to find substitute teachers, conducted before contractual hours on personal cell phones, entering absence information for teachers and texting subs for availability.

“Here it is 6 a.m., and I’m trying to do my hair, get dressed, brush my teeth — and I’m trying to get my 10-year-old ready for school — and



Taking notes after the first bargaining session, (left to right) MEA’s Jimalatice Thomas-Gilbert, Wendy Robledo-Castillo, Nicole Litteral, Linda Cobb, Suzi Sanchez-Honkala, Christina Cobb, Kelly Chessor.

now I’m having to log on and put in the absence and try to find a substitute who can be in the building in 45 minutes.”

The group did not get extra pay or stipends, but they forged agreements to ensure two certified people will administer medications, administrators will limit students waiting in the office to a time maximum, and a new policy will address parents who are chronically late picking up students.

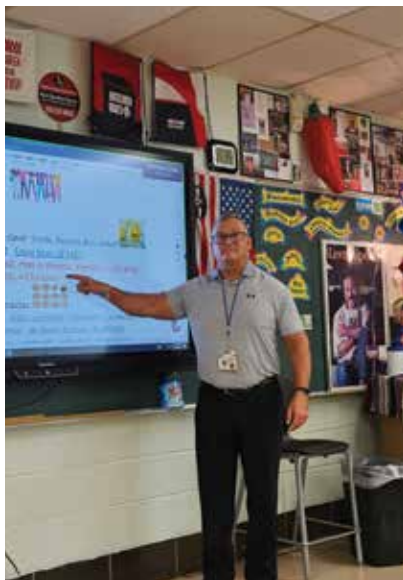
A new work group will write those changes into board policies for adoption. In addition, the unit won agreement for principals to handle early-morning absence inputs, with additional paid days off to be used at individuals’ discretion as compensation for other after-hours work.

Sanchez-Honkala, a lifelong resident of Grosse Ile who worked for 15 years in corporate Human Resources before starting at the school six years ago, said it’s been empowering to watch the union team grow, learn, build confidence, make decisions, and stand up this year.

“We all brought different strengths to the process and worked together as a team. The whole team deserves recognition for that. None of us could have done this alone — and it’s an amazing feeling to know how hard we worked to rewrite our contract to what we wanted it to say.

“We’re family now,” she concluded. “This team is my family, and now I know we’ll always do right by each other.” ♥

‘Just amazing’ MEA contract wins contin



Spanish teacher Robert Fenton feels validated by a strong new contract in Flint’s Beecher schools.

Soon after teachers in Flint’s Beecher Community School District settled a strong contract, staff at the middle/high school enjoyed a visit by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on her back-to-school tour — joined by NEA President Becky Pringle and MEA President Chandra Madafferri.

After a decade of financial struggle and stagnation, the Beecher Education Association’s new contract includes steps and on-schedule increases of 18% over three years, a fully funded health savings account, and a \$10,000 bonus over three payments this year, said MEA UniServ Director Bruce Jordan.

“They’re still toward the bottom of pay in Genesee County because they have so far to go to catch up, but the consistent state funding increases

over the past few years, along with (federal American Rescue Plan) dollars, have been able to put them on the right track,” Jordan said.

During their visit on Beecher’s first day of school, the governor and two union presidents stopped in classrooms, held a press conference, and delivered donuts as after-school treats for the staff.

MEA member Robert Fenton said it was validating to have the dignitaries stop in his last-hour Spanish class. Certified in instructional coaching, the 34-year veteran said their presence underscored the positive messages educators received from the strong new contract.

“It validates what we do to be recognized by leaders of the state and leaders of our union that — yeah, because you do the valuable work that you do, you deserve a raise. Because you put in the hard work that it takes to educate kids despite all the barriers we have today, you deserve more compensation.

“Of course, it’s not all about the money, but it seemed like we were always getting the short end of the deal,” he added. “We deserve it. It’s not an easy job. We work really hard here, and it feels really good to be noticed and appreciated and rewarded for what we do.”

Many strong late-summer contract agreements followed in the lines of similar spring settlements, thanks to a fifth-straight year of record school funding from the state plus federal COVID-relief money.

In September, Lansing Schools Education Association President Chuck Alberts announced a “momentous deal” — a four-year pact that

raised starting pay to \$45,355, increased steps by 14%, restored up to six steps from frozen years, and formed a new safety committee to consider policy changes, among other highlights.

In Kalamazoo, the union of education support professionals bargained the largest wage increase that President Joanna Miller had seen in recent years — an increase of \$2 to \$4 per hour for campus safety personnel, paraprofessionals, office staff and teaching assistants.

“We made incredible headway; we did so much good for so many people,” Miller told *M-Live*.

A deal by the Waterford Education Association also is doing a lot of good, raising up teachers to their rightful experience step who were denied service credit when hired. In addition, the salary schedule changed from 20 steps to 15 — for a faster rise to the top — with increased pay at steps along the way.

Waterford had numerous open positions at the time of the settlement in August, which were quickly filled after the new contract’s publication, said MEA UniServ Director Lori Tunick.

“Had we not come to this deal, Waterford would have started the year with over 40 vacancies,” she said. “In the past, every time the district offered a position to a candidate, they heard, ‘No thanks — I can make \$10,000 more in fill-in-the-blank district.’”

In two years the WEA had 40% turnover in membership, and the bargaining team used comparisons to neighboring districts to show management what needed to

ue through summer

change. “After we made clear they were training staff for other districts, they realized they were wasting their resources,” Tunick said.

In Cadillac, an effort to build up weak spots in the schedule led to an impressive 9% career earnings boost in one bargain — a \$175,000 increase over the 30-year span. Settlement came through mediation.

“We created a pay schedule that is definitely more aggressive in trying to keep teachers in Cadillac — to the point where some teachers have said, ‘Hey, this helps my family to make the decision to stay,’” said Luke Rumohr, a 20-year middle school history teacher and member of the bargaining team.

“It’s been really great to hear from members who love teaching and now they can look at their salary and feel justified in staying in the profession. We have a lot more work to do, but we’re excited to move forward.”

Bargainers in rural Comstock, east of Kalamazoo, won a 6% on-schedule increase over two years, plus step credit for actual years of service, which meant some members will see close to a \$20,000 pay boost this year, said MEA UniServ Director Greylor Walston.

“We have a significant number of middle-tier teachers who were not given credit for their full years of service when they hired in, who have worked in the district for a number of years, and then saw new people coming in and getting all of their years on the schedule,” Walston said. “They were leaving.”

In the past two bargains, the focus was on improving early-career salaries, but members agreed: now was

time to address the middle part of the schedule plus make all teachers whole, said Comstock Education Association President Kim Sandefur, a fourth grade teacher in the STEM Academy.

It was Sandefur’s first time leading a bargain after six years on the team and the end of her first year as president. She brought data and pie charts to make the case — for example, the district has hired 50 new teachers in a staff of 120 in the past two years.

“The visuals helped to tell the story, especially the pie chart of years of experience teaching in the district — not all experience, just in the district. The 10-20 year piece of the pie was maybe 2%.”

Once financial agreement was reached, the union’s bargaining team had a heavier lift which members had prioritized in surveys: adding language to address student behavior, an increasing concern of educators across the state. (Read more on pages 8 and 30.)

In a survey, more than half of staff said they had been verbally or physically assaulted by a student in the past year. Hearing that, the district agreed to discussion, but finding consensus was not easy.

To advance the talks, the union team adapted settled contract language from other districts and encouraged members to wear buttons saying, “Comstock teachers deserve a safe workplace.”

A two-way policy emerged in the end. The district agreed to follow guidelines and communicate outcomes for student behavior referrals, and teachers got clear procedures for documenting incidents.



Teachers in Comstock wore buttons to get new contract language around student behavior and safety.

Further contract language explains teachers’ right to snap suspend a student from a class or activity with documentation and parent contact. The contract also spells out new policies for staff who are injured in an assault to get district-covered time for related treatment and recovery.

The safety language is not perfect, but it’s a good start, Sandefur said.

Centering the experiences of members and bringing collective action to make progress on salaries and safety felt “just amazing,” she added. “To set goals and then to see it happen and get nothing but good responses from members — it sets the tone for a very positive year.” ▾



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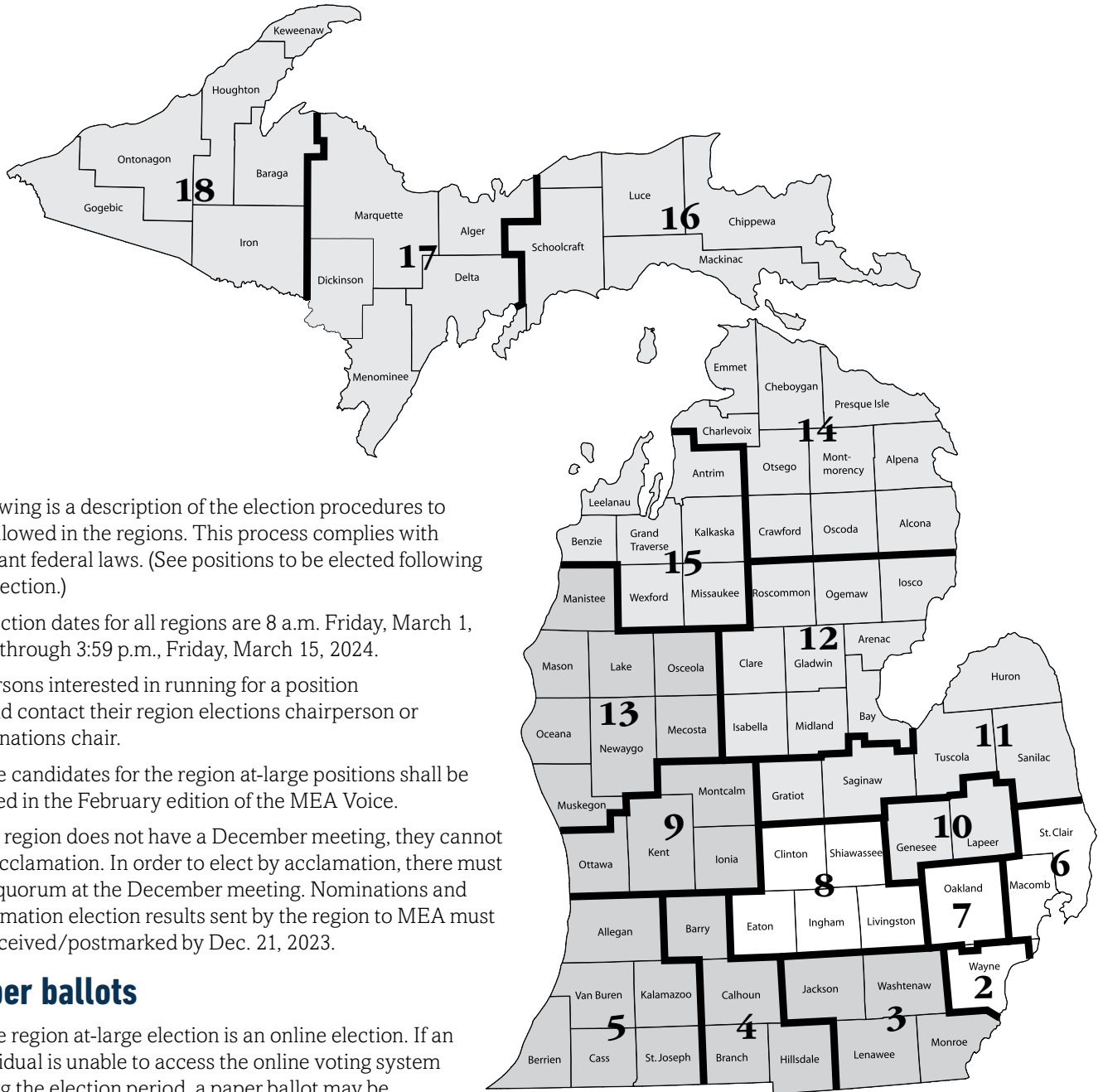
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neamb.com/free-tote to
review your beneficiary
and claim your tote!



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 all regions are 8 a.m. Friday, March 1, 2024 through 3:59 p.m., Friday, March 15, 2024.

Persons interested in running for a position should contact their region elections chairperson or nominations chair.

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

If a region does not have a December meeting, they cannot use acclamation. In order to elect by acclamation, there must be a quorum at the December meeting. Nominations and acclamation election results sent by the region to MEA must be received/postmarked by Dec. 21, 2023.

Paper ballots

The region at-large election is an online election. If an individual is unable to access the online voting system during the election period, a paper ballot may be requested by contacting meait@mea.org. Paper ballots must be returned by U.S. mail and received by the MEA Executive Office no later than the last day of the election. Late paper 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 Feb. 7, 2024.

REGION ELECTION INFORMATION

Attention ESP members — 2024 Region 50 statewide election for ESP only

ESP members of the MEA are entitled to send delegates to the National Education Association Representative Assembly (NEA RA). Next year, the NEA RA will be held in Philadelphia, PA July 2-7, 2024. Expenses to attend the NEA convention are reimbursed in accordance with the adopted state delegate expense policy.

All Michigan ESP candidates for NEA statewide at-large delegate seats run as delegates for Region 50. All Michigan ESP members vote as part of Region 50 in electing their statewide at-large delegates to the NEA RA. The NEA procedures require that these statewide delegates and alternates be elected by secret ballot. Elections for Region 50 will be conducted in accordance with the 2024 Online Region Elections.

Any MEA ESP member in good standing is eligible to be nominated or may nominate themselves at the region nominations meeting or by using the Region 50 Nomination Form. Additional forms may be obtained from your region president or region election chairperson or can be found at mea.org/governance under the Forms section. Candidate consent must be secured before the name is placed on any ballot.

Each nominated candidate may submit a biographical statement of no more than 150 words to be included with the online ballots (Bio forms can be obtained from the elections chair). Statement must be in paragraph form and will be printed as received. Pictures can also be submitted along with the biographical statement (see Bio form for picture specifications). Biographical statements and pictures

must be received by Dec. 31, 2023 and can be emailed to renst@mea.org or mailed to the MEA Executive Office c/o Rebecca Ernst, 1350 Kendale Blvd, East Lansing, MI 48823.

If you wish to nominate yourself or someone else, obtain the consent of the candidate, complete the nomination form and send to Rebecca Ernst no later than Dec. 31, 2023. Nominees must complete the Nominee Consent Form. Nominations received after Dec. 31, 2023 will not be accepted. Names of nominees will be placed on the ballot that will be distributed to all ESP locals through the region at-large online elections process.

If you have any questions, contact your region elections chairperson, or for further clarification, email Rebecca Ernst at renst@mea.org or call 800-292-1934, ext. 5411.

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. Nominees will be required to complete the Region Elections Nominee Consent Form found at www.mea.org/governance.

Name Local ESP Association

Home Address

City State Zip

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

- ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate: 1 position, immediate through 8/31/26
- ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g): 1 position, immediate through 8/31/25

Nomination form must be received no later than Dec. 31, 2023.

Email to renst@mea.org or mail to MEA Executive Office, 1350 Kendale Blvd, East Lansing, MI 48823.

Nomination forms received after Dec. 31, 2023 will not be accepted.

REGION ELECTION INFORMATION

Positions to be Elected

REGION 2

Position 1—MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate \$

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 7/15/24

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

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 7/15/24

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

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

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

2 positions*, immed. through 3/31/26

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

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 8—EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 9—EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

1 position, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 10—ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

3 positions, immed. through 8/31/24

3 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/24

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

Position 11—ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

3 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 12—EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position, immed. through 8/31/24

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

Position 13—EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/24

Position 14—ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate

2 positions, immed. through 8/31/26

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 15—ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Elections Chair: Dave Daly,

mrddaly@gmail.com

REGION 3

Position 1—MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate \$

2 positions, 3 yr. term begins 7/15/24

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

2 positions*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

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

2 positions*, immed. through 3/31/26

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

3 positions*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 8—EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/25

1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 9—EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

3 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 10—ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

3 positions, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 11—ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

4 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 12—EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate

6 positions, immed. through 8/31/26

2 positions*, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 13—EA NEA Cluster Alternate

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 14—ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate

4 positions, immed. through 8/31/26

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/26

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

Position 15—ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Elections Chair: Jim Brousseau,

jbrousseau@mea.org

REGION 4

Position 1—MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate \$

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 7/15/24

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

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/26

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

2 positions*, immed. through 3/31/26

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

4 positions*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 8—EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 9—EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 10—ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

2 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

Position 11—ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 12—EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position, immed. through 8/31/24

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 13—EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate

1 position, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 14—ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate

2 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

Position 15—ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Elections Chair: Anthony Pennock,

anthony.pennock@gmail.com

REGION 5

Position 1—MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate \$

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 7/15/24

Position 8—EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

3 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

Position 9—EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

3 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 10—ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

1 position, immed. through 8/31/25

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/25

Position 11—ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

3 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 12—EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate

2 positions*, immed. through 8/31/25

1 position, immed. through 8/31/25

2 positions, immed. through 8/31/24

2 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/24

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

Position 13—EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate

4 positions, immed. through 3/31/25

1 position*, immed. through 3/31/25

Position 14—ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position, immed. through 8/31/25

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/25

Position 15—ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/25

1 position*, immed. through 3/31/25

Elections Chair: Mary Cooper,

coopermary29@gmail.com

REGION 6

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

2 positions*, immed. through 8/31/24

2 positions*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

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

1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

KEY:

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

\$ is used to represent MEA funded seats

REGION ELECTION INFORMATION

Position 5—EA NEA RA At-Large Delegate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
2 positions*, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 8—EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
1 position, immed. through 8/31/25
1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 9—EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$
2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 10—ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
2 positions, immed. through 8/31/25
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/24
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

Position 11—ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$
3 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 12—EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 14—ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate
1 position, immed. through 8/31/25
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 15—ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
1 position, immed. through 3/31/25
1 position, immed. through 3/31/26
1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Elections Chair: Cara Konicek,
carakonicek@gmail.com

REGION 7

Position 1—MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate \$
2 positions, 3 yr. term begins 7/15/24

Position 2—MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 7/15/24

Position 3—MEA RA At-Large Delegate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
4 positions*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

Position 5—EA NEA RA At-Large Delegate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 6—EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
2 positions*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 7—EA/ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate \$
1 position, immed. through 7/14/26
1 position, immed. through 8/31/24

Position 8—EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 9—EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$
1 position, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 10—ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
2 positions, immed. through 8/31/25
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/25
1 position, immed. through 8/31/26
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

Position 11—ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$
4 positions, immed. through 3/31/26
1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 14—ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate
4 positions, immed. through 8/31/26
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 15—ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
4 positions, immed. through 3/31/26
2 positions*, immed. through 3/31/26

Elections Chair: Robert Gaines,
rg4esp@gmail.com

REGION 8

Position 1—MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate \$
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 7/15/24

Position 2—MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 7/15/24

Position 3—MEA RA At-Large Delegate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
2 positions*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

Position 8—EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24
2 positions, immed. through 8/31/24
2 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

Position 9—EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$
2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 10—ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

Position 11—ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$
4 positions, immed. through 3/31/26
1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 12—EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate
2 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24
1 position, immed. through 8/31/24
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

2 positions, immed. through 8/31/26
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 13—EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate
4 positions, immed. through 3/31/26
1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 14—ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate
2 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24
1 position, immed. through 8/31/24
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/24
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

Position 15—ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
4 positions, immed. through 3/31/26
1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Elections Chair: Marty Leftwich,
mleftwich@mea.org

REGION 9

Position 1—MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate \$
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 7/15/24

1 position, immed. through 7/14/24
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 7/15/24, same seat as above

Position 3—MEA RA At-Large Delegate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
4 positions*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

Position 4—MEA RA At-Large Alternate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
2 positions*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 5—EA NEA RA At-Large Delegate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 6—EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
2 positions*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 7—EA/ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate \$
1 position, immed. through 7/14/26

Position 8—EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
2 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24
1 position, immed. through 8/31/26
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/24
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

Position 9—EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$
2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 10—ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/24
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

4 positions, immed. through 8/31/24
4 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

Position 11—ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$
3 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 12—EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate
3 positions, immed. through 8/31/24
3 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/24
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

Position 13—EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate
2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 14—ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/26
3 positions, immed. through 8/31/24
3 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/24
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

Position 15—ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
5 positions, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/24

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/24
Elections Chair: Wendy Winston,
wendy.winston@att.net

REGION ELECTION INFORMATION

REGION 10

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

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

Position 7—EA/ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate \$

1 position, immed. through 7/14/26

Position 8—EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

2 positions, immed. through 8/31/25

1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 9—EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 10—ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 11—ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 12—EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate

2 positions, immed. through 8/31/24,

2 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/24,

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

Position 13—EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 14—ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position, immed. through 8/31/24

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

1 position, immed. through 8/31/25

Position 15—ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Elections Chair: Kevyn Welter,

kweltr@gmail.com

REGION 11

Position 1—MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate \$

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 7/15/24

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

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

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

2 positions*, immed. through 3/31/26

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

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/26

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

5 positions*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 8—EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

4 positions, immed. through 8/31/26

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 9—EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

5 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 10—ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

1 position, immed. through 8/31/25

Position 11—ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

3 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 12—EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate

4 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

1 position, immed. through 8/31/24

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/24

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

Position 13—EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 14—ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 15—ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate

2 positions, immed. through 8/31/26

Elections Chair: Toni Scribner,

tscribner@mymea.org

REGION 12

Position 1—MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate \$

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 7/15/24

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

2 positions*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

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

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 8—EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

1 position, immed. through 8/31/25

Position 9—EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 10—ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

1 position, immed. through 8/31/24

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24,

same seat as above

1 position, immed. through 8/31/25

Position 11—ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

3 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 12—EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/25

3 positions, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 13—EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 14—ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate

2 positions, immed. through 8/31/24

2 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/24

1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24,

same seat as above

Position 15—ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Elections Chair: Jenny VanDuijn,

jjvandui@svsu.edu

REGION 13

Position 1—MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate \$

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 7/15/24

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

2 positions*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

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

1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

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

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/26

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

1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 8—EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

2 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

1 position, immed. through 8/31/24

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24,

same seat as above

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/25

1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 9—EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

3 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 10—ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

2 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

1 position, immed. through 8/31/24

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24,

same seat as above

Position 11—ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 12—EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

2 positions, immed. through 8/31/24

2 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24,

same seat as above

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/25

Position 13—EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 14—ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate

2 positions, immed. through 8/31/24

2 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24,

same seat as above

1 position, immed. through 8/31/25

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/25

Position 15—ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate

3 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Elections Chair: Not Available

KEY:

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

\$ is used to represent MEA funded seats

REGION ELECTION INFORMATION

REGION 14

Position 3—MEA RA At-Large Delegate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 4—MEA RA At-Large Alternate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
2 positions*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 6—EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
2 positions*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 8—EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
2 positions, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 9—EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$
3 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 10—ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
2 positions, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 11—ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$
2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 12—EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate
2 positions, immed. through 8/31/24
2 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above
1 position, immed. through 8/31/25
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 13—EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate
3 positions, immed. through 3/31/26
1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 14—ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate
2 positions, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 15—ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Region 14 MAHE EA RA Cluster Delegate \$
1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

Region 14 MAHE EA RA Cluster Alternate \$
1 position, immed. through 3/31/26

Elections Chair: Greta Brock,
gbrock@mea.org

REGION 15

Position 3—MEA RA At-Large Delegate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

Position 4—MEA RA At-Large Alternate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 6—EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
2 positions*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 8—EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24
2 positions, immed. through 8/31/24
2 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

Position 9—EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$
3 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 10—ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
1 position, immed. through 8/31/25
1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 11—ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$
3 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 12—EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24
1 position, immed. through 8/31/24
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

Position 13—EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate
2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26
1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 14—ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate
2 positions, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 15—ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26
1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Elections Chair: Not Available

REGION 16

Position 1—MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate \$
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 7/15/24

Position 4—MEA RA At-Large Alternate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 6—EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 8—EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
1 position, immed. through 8/31/24
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above
1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 9—EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$
1 position, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 10—ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 11—ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$
1 position, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 12—EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate
1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 13—EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate
1 position, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 14—ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate
1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 15—ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
1 position, immed. through 3/31/26

Elections Chair: Al Beamish,
a-beamish@mymea.org

REGION 17

Position 3—MEA RA At-Large Delegate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
1 position,* 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

Position 6—EA NEA RA At-Large Alternate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
2 positions*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 8—EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
2 positions, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24
1 position, immed. through 8/31/24
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24, same seat as above

Position 9—EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$
2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 10—ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 11—ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$
2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 12—EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate
1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 13—EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate
1 position, immed. through 3/31/26
1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 14—ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate
2 positions, immed. through 8/31/26

Position 15—ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Region 17 MAHE EA RA Cluster Delegate \$
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

Region 17 MAHE EA RA Cluster Alternate \$
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 4/1/24

Elections Chair: Paulette Pepin,
paulettelarson@chartermi.net

REGION 18

Position 3—MEA RA At-Large Delegate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
1 position*, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

Position 8—EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

Position 11—ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$
1 position, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 13—EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate
1 position, immed. through 3/31/26
1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 14—ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate
1 position, 3 yr. term begins 9/1/24

Position 15—ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
1 position, immed. through 3/31/26

Elections Chair: Steve Elenich,
selenich@copperisd.org

REGION 50

Region 50—ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate \$
1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

Region 50—ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate—Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/25

KEY:

* is used to represent Representative of Minority 3-1(g) seats
\$ is used to represent MEA funded seats

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MESSA's field representatives are sharing information with local leaders and groups on all of our plan options.

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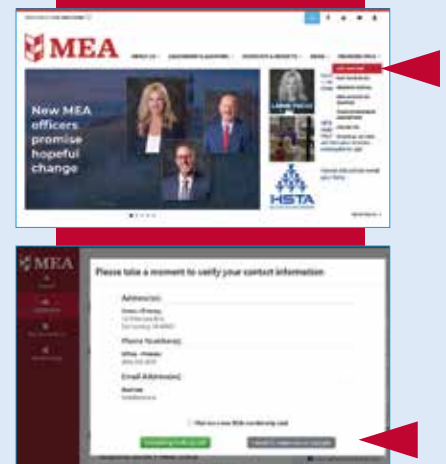


*By Ross Wilson,
MESSA Executive Director*



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St. Johns invests federal dollars to strengthen relationships



Josh Heethuis and Melissa Lonsberry say a new curriculum is improving the culture in St. Johns.

On the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers have seen deficits in students' social-emotional skills and corresponding behavioral challenges as a result. One way district leaders in St. Johns Public Schools are addressing the problem is with a new character-based curriculum.

The district used a portion of its federal COVID-relief funding last year on a program called Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH) which trains school employees and dedicates class time on building relationships, improving social-emotional well-being, and developing student-to-student connections.

Josh Heethuis, a middle school teacher who is president of the St. Johns Education Association, said the program is worth the time and dollars. "At a time when schools have the money to make this kind of

investment, this is the time to do it," Heethuis said.

MEA member Melissa Lonsberry, a middle school social studies teacher in St. Johns, said in the first year she saw improvements in her building that helped students make progress and succeed.

"What something like Capturing Kids' Hearts does is bring consistency from building to building and classroom to classroom," Lonsberry said. "This is a system of solid pieces that are just best practices and good ways to function in your classroom and as a building."

Funding for the program came from the American Rescue Plan in 2021, which provided additional revenue for the the Elementary and Secondary School Relief (ESSER) Fund to help schools address ongoing challenges arising from the public health crisis that began in 2020.

Michigan schools received more than \$5.6 billion in ESSER I, II, and III grants, with staggered deadlines. While the expenditure period for ESSER I and II is already passed, the deadline for ESSER III is Sept. 30, 2024. If districts don't use these dollars before the expenditure period ends, they forfeit the funds.

Heethuis and Lonsberry agreed the CKH training was the best professional development they have attended and it immediately spurred more staff camaraderie.

Some examples of what the program encourages staff to do includes

greeting and welcoming students each day, sharing good things with each other daily, collaboratively building a social contract, sharing affirmations, and empowering students with choices in how they demonstrate and apply learning.

"If you really want to be a successful school, you have to build, develop, and then maintain these types of systems," Heethuis said. "In education, relationships are at the core of everything you do."

Lonsberry added it all comes down to when you put in the time and effort. "You are going to be investing the time in one place or another," she said. "You're going to invest it on the front end and come up with this system and plan that works, or you're going to be correcting the behavior and dealing with it throughout."

Capturing Kids' Hearts has existed for 30 years and trains about 50,000 educators nationwide every year. In St. Johns, the district is committed to the program and plans to train new hires in CKH from this point on.

To see how much ESSER money your school district has left, search for the Michigan Department of Education COVID-19 Spend Dashboard. [▼](#)

Editor's Note: This story is one in a planned series on various ways Michigan districts are spending federal ESSER money.

To share how your district is spending that funding, or if your local union needs help to have a voice in spending decisions (which is mandated in the spending bill), contact MEA's ARP organizer, Heather Palo, at hpalo@mea.org.

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