

MEA • voice

ELECTION 2024
PULLOUT VOTER GUIDE
INSIDE



vote *hope*

Elections have consequences

Whether we like it or not, every decision about education — from school funding and academic standards to educator pay and certification requirements — is a political decision made by elected officials. It's challenging to think of many other professions in which who's elected to office matters more.

We cannot watch from the sidelines — we need every educator to climb down from the bleachers and get into the game to help our students succeed.

It is critical for our profession, our students and our own families that we send Kamala Harris and Tim Walz to the White House, elect Elissa Slotkin to the U.S. Senate, and keep our pro-educator majority in the Michigan House of Representatives.

Because of the hard work of MEA members, we elected Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in 2018, who subsequently passed numerous record education budgets. In 2020, we helped elect President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, leading to a massive investment in Michigan's public schools thanks

to the American Rescue Plan. We kept up the momentum in 2022, when we helped re-elect Whitmer AND elect the first pro-public education Legislature in 40 years.

Elections have consequences. Our state's Democratic trifecta has passed record school budgets, adopted free universal school meals for every student, restored collective bargaining rights for educators and more.

But the game is far from over. We've seen what can happen when anti-educator politicians grab control of power. We can't go back.

So from now through Nov. 5, it's game on to maintain our momentum. Please visit MEAVotes.org to make a one-time or recurring donation to MEA-PAC, view a list of MEA-recommended candidates in your area, and learn how to volunteer as we march to victory.

In Solidarity Always,

Chandra Madafferi

Brett Smith

Aaron Eling



*Chandra Madafferi,
MEA President & CEO*



*Brett Smith,
Vice President*



*Aaron Eling,
Secretary-Treasurer*

Register for October Higher Ed Conference

This year's MEA Higher Education Conference on Friday, Oct. 25, will build on the success of last year's groundbreaking program on Artificial Intelligence. The theme for this year's gathering at MEA Headquarters is A Vision for the Future: Bargaining, AI, and New Campus Models.

Go to mea.org/conferences to register for the one-day event which brings together members from higher education units across the state for learning and networking.

Discover the new Michigan Achievement Scholarships

The new Michigan Achievement Scholarships are designed to help recent high school graduates in Michigan receive funds for continuing education. Eligible students could receive financial aid to attend a college or university with the Michigan Achievement Scholarship, or for a career training program with the Michigan Achievement Skills Scholarship.

Go to michigan.gov/achievement to learn more and direct students and families to sign up there for a series of virtual informational meetings between now and Dec. 10.



In races from school boards to the state House and U.S. Senate, “We need to talk with every voter, and we’ve got a great message to share,” says Rep. Matt Koleszar (D-Plymouth), who’s up for re-election (pictured at Detroit’s Labor Day parade with MEA President Chandra Madafferi and NEA President Becky Pringle). *More on page 11; MEA Pullout Voter Guide in the center of this issue.*

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



7

On the cover: Robin Smith and Amy Scrima, MEA delegates to the Democratic National Convention, talk candidates and stakes in this election, pages 11-14. Photo by Tom Gennara.

Custodian honored, page 7.

Opening doors, page 8.

Loan debt help, page 10.

More inside: Aspiring leaders, page 5. Election 2024 Voter Guide, pages 15-18. Slotkin for Senator, page 19. Region Elections, page 23. Affordable housing for educators, page 30.



8



10

MEA • VOICE

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Above and Beyond

The August event at Orchard View High School in Muskegon looked like a party, but it was the annual general membership meeting of a wall-to-wall support staff union representing custodians, office staff, paraeducators, maintenance employees, transportation workers, and food service staff. Goodies for giveaway lined the front of the community meeting room where dozens of MEA members sat at tables eating salad, pasta and cookies, talking and laughing. Two screens projected a spinning wheel which landed every few minutes on the name of someone who could then choose a prize. The annual meeting is the project of longtime leaders Brenda Brewer and Trude Bushaw, who wanted to find a way to both celebrate support staff and build union strength and solidarity. “Too many times, support staff gets left out,” said Bushaw, an administrative assistant in the central business office who has worked nearly 40 years in the district. “People need to be involved; they need to know they’re part of things. This event lets them know we’re hearing them and their voices matter.” Building membership and engagement shows people what a strong union can accomplish, Brewer added. “If you don’t look out for yourself, no one else will do it for you. We’ve accomplished a ton, and we wouldn’t have gotten what we’ve been able to get without the strength of our membership and the bargaining experience we have.” *Read the story at mea.org/unit-holds-monster-meeting.*



ICYMI

Daniel Vosovic is a Lowell High School grad and winner of the reality TV show Project Runway who went on to found The Kit — a New York City company focused on sustainably made fast fashion. Vosovic and others at The Kit honored their favorite educators with new clothing to start off the new year in style! Vosovic chose MEA member Christine Beachler, the Lowell school librarian who has upheld professional standards and students’ access to reading materials despite venomous personal attacks and threats. “She’s making sure that people have access to choose their own adventure,” Vosovic said in a video on social media announcing the project. “You’re my bright spot, Christine Beachler.” Beachler said of her former student, “He is such a kind, compassionate and special person, and we are all so proud of his tremendous accomplishments and thoughtful spirit!”



QUOTABLES

“When you hear the stories and the conversations around values and leadership, I think it’s a cool way to draw in young people; it’s really an inspiration.”

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, visiting the classroom of MEA member Matt Hamilton in East Jordan, where she donated snakeskin-patterned shoes to the middle school Shoe Club and heard from students about its influence on their lives. *Read more at mea.org/governor-visits-shoe-club.*

QUOTABLES

“Donald Trump likes to demonize public education, but as someone who learned and taught in rural schools, I know that public schools are the heart of small towns. We can’t let them take that away from us.”

Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota speaking on social media. The former social studies teacher and football coach, now the running mate of presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris, has been compared to the folksy lead character in the hit television comedy *Ted Lasso*. *Read more about Walz and the election on page 11.*

THE FUTURE IS NOW

Students step into leadership

Aspiring educators who are stepping up to lead in their chosen profession gathered to learn, plan and play at a leadership retreat for members from MEA's college ranks to kick off this academic year. About 30 students from 10 colleges and universities joined the two-day retreat.

The students all belong to MEA's Aspiring Educators of Michigan (AEM) as leaders on their respective campuses and in statewide roles. Because AEM members and leaders cycle through and graduate in a few years, the program continually sends forth future MEA leaders and rebuilds its own bench.

Through team- and energy-building events, activities and trainings, AEM creates incredible opportunities for young people to build their networks and hone their skills.

"Being around like-minded people is inspiring, and I can't wait for AEM to transform the school year," said Alyssa Stevenson, AEM secretary, who attends Central Michigan University.

Retreat participants were greeted by MEA President Chandra Madafferi and Vice President Brett Smith. They heard from Doug Pratt, director of Communications and Public Engagement, of educators' power in joining together. For example, AEM activism helped to secure student teaching stipends in the state budget.

At the retreat AEM leaders learned about themselves as leaders, the structure of the AEM program and how it fits into the larger structure of MEA and NEA, and the four pillars of AEM (educator excellence, social justice, political action, and community engagement). They built connections through games.

Time was also set aside for chapters to plan activities and events.

Zoe Howard, president of the Saginaw Valley State University

chapter, is partnering with other student organizations to create a Voter Information Night for members to engage with NEA's EdActivist app and League of Women Voter resources to ensure they are educated, empowered and motivated to vote.

AEM President Aryana Jharia from Eastern Michigan University said she became engaged with politics after seeing it can be a tool for solving disparities and inequities in the education system. Jharia recently was elected as a local precinct delegate to get more involved at the grassroots level.

"I'm eager to learn more, especially so I can share more about how young people can get involved with creating systemic change through political action," Jharia said.

Kenzie Atkins, AEM vice president, said the retreat brought together leaders from across the state who bonded together with openness. Atkins formed the AEM chapter at Grand Valley State University two years ago and rose to a statewide elected position in that short time.

"My journey exemplifies the growth and leadership potential nurtured in spaces like these," Atkins said. "This retreat wasn't just about learning; it was about cultivating a network of passionate, forward-thinking educators who will continue to lead and inspire for years to come." ▼



At a two day retreat of MEA's Aspiring Educators of Michigan (AEM), students who lead AEM chapters at 10 colleges and universities built skills, connections, and plans for the year.





MESSA has options

Find the right health plan combination that works for you

options, as well as numerous coinsurance and prescription options.

“I’m not only a MESSA employee, I’m also a MESSA member. As a family of five, we love our ABC plan. We are able to take advantage of some free medications with this plan while maintaining the full comprehensive MESSA coverage. The health savings account has really been the most advantageous part of the plan for our family.”

Heather Scott,
MESSA field representative



MESSA Choices is a traditional PPO plan that comes with a wide variety of deductible, coinsurance and prescription drug options.

“MESSA Choices offers robust benefit coverage, access to the largest PPO network in Michigan and can be paired with a flexible spending account.”

Rahshaan Watson,
MESSA field representative



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Essentials by MESSA is a low-deductible, lower-premium plan that includes flat dollar copays or coinsurance for prescription drugs and 20% coinsurance on medical services.

“The Essentials by MESSA plan is a versatile medical option that combines the great coverage and service MESSA members expect with a very low deductible, no deductible on prescriptions, and the lowest premium for our members and their families.”

Jim Gleason, MESSA field representative



Your local MESSA field representative can attend association meetings and explain the MESSA plan options that are available to your group. Our goal is to help you understand your options so you can feel confident that you’re making the best decision.

MESSA health plans are subject to collective bargaining. For more information, contact your MESSA field representative by calling 800-292-4910, ext. 7817. ♥

MESSA knows it’s important to have options when it comes to finding the right health plan to fit your needs and your budget. We also know that it’s important to understand what those options are — and that’s where our team of local field representatives comes in.

MESSA field representatives are experts when it comes to knowing the ins and outs of our health plans, our prescription plans, and how they can be combined to find the right options for you and your family.

Here is what they have to say about MESSA health plan options:

messa ABC[®] ACCOUNT-BASED CHOICES

MESSA ABC is a high-deductible health plan that is eligible for a health savings account (HSA). It features three deductible

MESSA BALANCE⁺

MESSA Balance+ is a high-deductible health plan that is eligible for a health savings account and includes MESSA’s bundle of supplemental plans. It features copays for appointments and coinsurance for services.

“A number of my members enrolled in Balance+ for the premium savings and the added benefit of the supplemental plans that pay cash for services they or their family members might have if they were in an accident, hospitalized or diagnosed with a critical illness.”

RaeAnn Loy, MESSA field representative



MESSA Choices

Kind custodian, leader wins award

Laura Shattuck has come to be known fondly as “Grandma” by some students at Grant Middle School in Newaygo County where she’s worked as a custodian for 28 years. The name has stuck ever since she befriended a troubled boy who first tossed it as an insult.

Ignoring his intent, Shattuck began paying the boy attention at school. On his birthday she gave him a card and small gift. In response he stopped skipping school and raised his grades.

At a school event, the boy brought his parents to meet her, Shattuck recalled. “He said, ‘I want you to meet my grandma!’ And he introduced me to his sister. I said, ‘Wouldn’t I be her grandma too?’ And everybody laughed.”

At eighth-grade graduation, the boy invited Shattuck into family photos. Now a junior in high school, he still visits and calls her Grandma, she said. “I have no grandchildren, but I just love kids so I’ve always tried to help when I can.”

A longtime union president, Shattuck was awarded the 2024 Leon A. Brunner Award last spring, MEA’s highest award given annually to an Education Support Professional (ESP) for dedication to their union, advocating for ESP member issues, and promotion of ESP careers.

Shattuck picked up a solid work ethic and union values from her father, a machinist and union president who taught her to work hard and treat people fairly, she said. As a leader, she has fought for pay increases, holidays, and other paid time off for support staff.

“I believe that you give 100% to earn your money. I’m the lead custodian, and there’s not a job here that I’d ask somebody to do that I haven’t already done — and I don’t care if it’s cleaning

toilets, cleaning out the drain, whatever. If something needs to be done, I do it.”

Shattuck started working at age 12, weeding muck fields, packing carrots, and chopping onions. After a divorce, raising a daughter, she worked at the grocery store and subbed in schools as a night custodian hoping to get a permanent union job — which she did at age 39 nearly three decades ago.

Rebecca Stark-Krueger, a health teacher at the middle school who wrote a nomination letter for the award, was a par-aeducator in Shattuck’s ESP unit for 10 years before getting her teaching credential.

“It was Laura who encouraged me to join the union as well as getting my teaching certificate,” Stark-Krueger said. “She has always been an advocate for not only our support staff but all staff members.”

High school social studies teacher Devon Conley said Shattuck’s friendliness made him feel at home when he was new. “She offers a friendly smile, an ear to listen, and a calm presence on often hectic days, supporting us in ways we might not even realize!”

A decade ago, the district privatized transportation and phased in outside custodial services with attrition. Shattuck fought for district officials to keep ownership of buses and cleaning equipment so those decisions could be reversed.



Laura Shattuck, a custodian at Grant Middle School in Newaygo County, received the Brunner Award for her union leadership and support she offers students and staff.

Now she’s hopeful a new superintendent will heed calls of staff and the community to return to unionized in-house custodial staff who stay in the job longer, do better work, and keep buildings cleaner and safer.

In addition to cleaning rooms and doing cafeteria duty, Shattuck goes above and beyond, nominators said. Every day she makes coffee for teachers, opens windows and starts fans in hot rooms, answers calls for help. After school she often attends student activities and performances.

“That’s the way it should be,” she said. “I love my job, and I like to think we’re a family, so I try to see to it everybody’s taken care of. It doesn’t hurt to put on a pot of coffee for people or say good morning, how are you doing? That’s just the way it should be, and it’s how I like to do it.” ▼

Jessyca Mathews: Opening doors



MEA member Jessyca Mathews teaches her students to find their passions and use their strengths to shape their world. Like all great educators, she lives her values and stretches her talents toward achieving big goals.

Mathews is widely recognized for the senior English class she teaches at Carman-Ainsworth High School (C-AHS) in Flint, her alma mater where she has taught for 20 years. Under her leadership the class transformed into a research and activism platform which foregrounds student voice.

This year the award-winning educator and nationally known keynote

speaker is tackling the challenge of bringing a new Advanced Placement (AP) African American Studies course to C-AHS.

At the same time, Mathews stepped into a prominent new role this fall as president of the Michigan Council of Teachers of English (MCTE), becoming the first Black woman to lead this state's affiliate of the prestigious national professional association.

She hopes to bring more attention and opportunities for educators from BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and other under-represented communities. "I am honored to be the first Black president

of MCTE, and I want to open doors for others to have the chance to lead and be role models for all of our students," she said.

Named MCTE's Secondary Teacher of the Year in 2018 and a Michigan Regional Teacher of the Year in 2019-20, Mathews added: "My goal is to ensure that all educators and students in our state are seen, loved, celebrated and respected — especially those from marginalized communities."

With her launch of an AP African American Studies class at C-AHS, Mathews joins the roll-out of a long-developed College Board curriculum which was piloted nationally over the past two years — including in 12 Michigan schools — amid intense political scrutiny.

Conservative politicians such as Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis banned the course as part of broader Republican-led attacks on library books and history lessons by or about people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Arkansas and South Carolina followed suit.

As some states restrict students' right to learn, polling shows most Americans favor freedom to teach and to read. And as Vice President Kamala Harris highlights themes of freedom in her barrier-busting presidential campaign, Mathews said she feels hopeful for the first time in a while.

That spark of hope was ignited at an August rally Mathews attended in Detroit where she witnessed thrilling energy from people of every background coming together in support of Harris and her teacher-running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, she said.

"Having a Black woman president of the United States would show the world is ready to head into a different and more just direction filled with freedom, joy and acceptance." ▼

On the next page, Mathews shares what motivated her to launch the AP course at C-AHS.

The Evolution of Student Voice

By Jessyca Mathews

“Ms. Mathews, why don’t we have Black History courses here?”

I’ve heard this question often over two decades of teaching. In fact I asked the same question as a student at the same building — Carman-Ainsworth High School (C-AHS) in Flint — where I now work.

For many years, I would answer kids by telling them to advocate for what they wanted to have in their educational spaces. Some kids thought it would be a lost cause because “adults in charge won’t change” and “too many people would get mad at that kind of class.”

More recently the students decided they couldn’t sit back and not speak out on classes they needed for their personal growth and expansion of their knowledge.

Some students wanted to learn about their racial history, while others wanted to learn about their African origins. Some ally students wanted to know true history so that they could tell others and be supportive toward their classmates. The kids knew what they wanted.

When I was approached by Tica Stinson, a C-AHS counselor and fellow MEA member who had done preliminary research into requirements for bringing the new Advanced Placement (AP) African American Studies course to our school, I couldn’t ignore this call to action.

As educators, we should always ask ourselves, “Are we truly listening to what our students need in schools?” and “Is true history being provided for our students?”

In a world filled with misunderstandings, misconceptions, and hate, we cannot allow fear to drive us out of our main responsibility for our students: creating leaders who will improve the world.

With these questions in mind, Tica Stinson and I embarked on a journey to introduce the course at C-AHS.

The process took a lot of work. We faced challenges, including completing requirements to bring the course to our school board and securing the right resources and training for me to teach the AP course according to the College Board’s standards.

The load was heavy at times, but the work had to be done due to the determination and passion of my students, who were powerful catalysts for change.

Finally, our efforts paid off when the school board unanimously adopted AP African American Studies at C-AHS, marking a significant milestone in our school’s commitment to offering a curriculum that reflects many of our students’ diverse experiences and histories.

The course has become a symbol of progress and inclusivity, demonstrating that student voices, when united and persistent, can indeed shape educational policies and offerings.

The evolution of student voice is not just about adding courses or changing curricula. It’s about fostering an environment where students feel heard, valued, and empowered to drive positive change.

Educators help build a foundation for a more equitable and informed future by listening to students when they advocate for their needs.

Introducing AP African American Studies is just one step toward a more inclusive and representative educational landscape — a journey on which I will always be an ally, accomplice, and supporter to my students. ♥



Pro tip: Get help with loan debt

Sophia Connelly believed she was within three years of getting her remaining federal student loan debt forgiven when she joined a Zoom call with Christine Anderson, an MEA UniServ Director (UD) who helps MEA members navigate Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF).

Anderson doubted it. Hadn't Connelly made payments since graduating college in 2015? Didn't she start teaching in Avondale in 2016? She should have been closer than that to wiping away her balance.

The federal PSLF program offers loan forgiveness to full-time public service workers after 10 years of qualified payments on qualifying debt, though it mostly failed to deliver until the Biden-Harris administration took office.

With Connelly sharing her screen, which showed her federal student aid account, Anderson directed her through pages to look at her loans, balances, repayment plan, and employment certification.

Within minutes, Anderson got Connelly switched into a qualifying repayment plan and identified why the system didn't show her as close to forgiveness as she should have been: Two years of payments weren't counted because she hadn't properly verified employment back then.

Once those issues were fixed, Connelly stood ready for PSLF to wipe out her balance of more than \$30,000 in 2025. The third-grade teacher looked forward to not having student debt and monthly payments hanging over the life she's building with her husband and baby daughter.

"I'm amazed and I'm shocked and I'm grateful," Connelly said of Anderson's knowledge of PSLF. "I thought I did



Avondale teacher Sophia Connelly expects her student loan debt to be erased in 2025 thanks to help from MEA staff who offer training and assistance.

everything right; I've been keeping up every year doing the employment certification. I'm a little surprised so many payments hadn't been counted."

She added in a follow-up email: "That same day I was able to take what I learned in our Zoom and help a fellow colleague apply for an income driven plan and certify employment online for PSLF."

Before 2021 nothing about PSLF was easy, and few applicants got approved. When the first people became eligible in 2017, Betsy DeVos was the U.S. Education Secretary and 98% of applications were denied, said Marty Zmiejko, an MEA UD who also trains and assists members in applying.

"Back then the hoops you had to jump through were very very small, so fewer than 2% of people who applied were successful," Zmiejko said.

Under leadership from Biden-appointed U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona, the process has been reformed, simplified, and digitized — and improvements continue to be added.

Anderson leads a cadre of MEA staff who voluntarily provide assistance on PSLF beyond their regular job duties of serving units in the field, including UDs Zmiejko and Terese Fitzpatrick.

Fitzpatrick said many members feel intimidated to even get started, "so it's a matter of giving them the tools. To hear back from people that have had loans forgiven or reduced their monthly payments and started on the journey toward forgiveness, it's very gratifying."

Those interested should enroll in PSLF even before reaching the 10-year mark in a public service role. Members of the cadre deliver group trainings that include individual assistance, and they conduct one-on-one sessions as schedules allow.

MEA has helped members discharge millions of dollars in student loan debt in the past three years, and for many the financial relief is life changing, Anderson said. That's why she and others do the work.

"Helping members obtain the promise given to them as public servants matters very much to me," Anderson said. "Thanks to the Biden-Harris administration, the promise is being kept." ▼

To inquire about scheduling a virtual training, contact your local MEA field office.

Critical election stirs hope and action: **Get involved!**

*By Brenda Ortega
MEA Voice Editor*

As a professor of organizational psychology, MEA member Amy Scrima knows it's not simple willpower that prompts people to do difficult tasks. It's hope.

"When we human beings know there's a path forward — a path toward accomplishing big, important things — nothing will get in our way of doing the hard work that's required," says the mid-career educator and head of the social sciences department at Lake Michigan College in Benton Harbor.

Scrima is seeing that truth play out as chair of the Berrien County Democratic Party, headquartered in St. Joseph on the southern shore of Lake Michigan. The number of volunteers and donations have risen sharply since Vice President Kamala Harris entered the race for president, she said.

"People are showing up, and they're ready to go — especially after we get them trained. But we still need more help with outreach. Every door matters. Every phone call matters. We have to do it, and we are doing it. We'll have time to sleep later."

The energy has only built up as Harris chose a longtime educator — Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz — for her running mate; the pair launched a smart, people-centered, forward-focused campaign; and they accepted the party's nomination at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

Scrima experienced the convention in person as a delegate from MEA-NEA and the 4th Congressional District. She will never forget the sensation of a crowd of thousands



Energy is high, and work is happening to elect great candidates up and down the ballot, say Robin Smith and Amy Scrima, MEA members and delegates to the Democratic National Convention who are helping lead local efforts to get out the vote.

pouring enthusiasm across four nights of speeches that voiced a vision of working together to benefit everyone, she said.

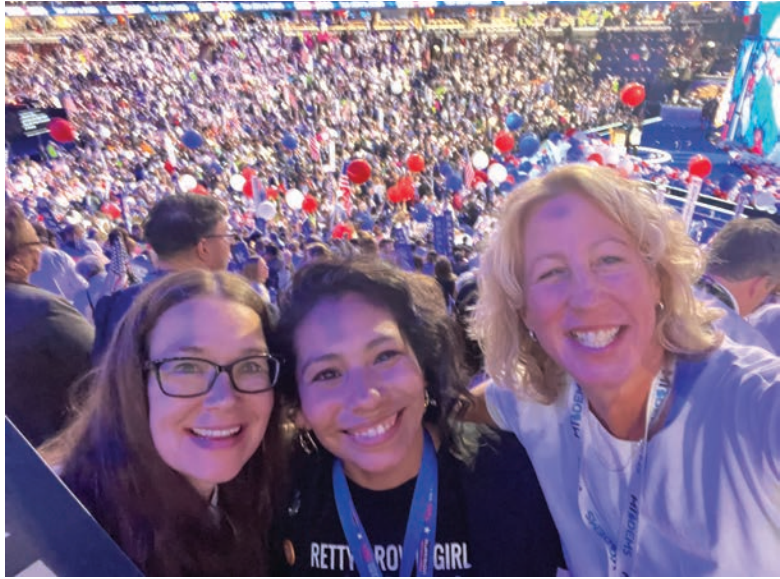
"That's a message of hope I'm fired up about sharing with others; it's a message of opportunity and equality and growth. I was communicating with people watching it on TV, and it was resonating just as much with them — they were feeling it too."

MEA members and staff totaled 20 delegates to the August convention—making up more than 10% of Michigan's entire state delegation and of the total number from NEA. About

3,800 delegates from across the country delivered pledged votes to make Harris and Walz the party's nominees.

Optimism also bloomed in delegate Robin Smith, an MEA-Retired former Lansing educator, vice chair of the Ingham County Democratic Party, and chair of the 7th Congressional District. Smith befriended Scrima amid the week's whirl of activity, events, and meetings from morning to night.

The shared experience fed people's resolve to mobilize for the future they wish to see, Smith said: "This is a movement, not a moment. A



movement is when people are starting to act, and you could feel the energy of those in that room who are ready to go back home and take action.”

Smith grew up with working-class parents, both United Auto Workers—Dad at Fisher Body and Mom at Oldsmobile. Her grandmother talked of the fight against voting discrimination in the Civil Rights movement. Both parents volunteered at union halls to help people exercise voting rights.

“I remember the first presidential election that I voted in — I was 18 in high school — and we went as a family to vote,” Smith said. “I’ve carried that through with my own children because I wanted to show them what I knew to be true: Every voice matters; every vote counts.”

What most stood out for Smith at the convention was the unity, both in themes of the Harris-Walz campaign and the crowd’s powerful response, she said. “So much has tried to divide us as a nation, but there are so many more ways that we are alike than we are different.”

She didn’t expect a woman of color to ascend to the presidency in her lifetime; that Harris is multi-racial like Smith makes the possibility extra meaningful: “Now with Kamala I believe we will bust through that glass ceiling, and the sky is the limit.

It’s wonderful to see how she’s being embraced.”

Organized labor played a big role at the convention, from delegates on the floor to leaders on stage, including NEA President Becky Pringle. “Every time I saw someone in an educator shirt or an IBEW shirt—or any union—it was like seeing an old friend and showed labor’s ability to mobilize.”

In a speech on the convention’s final night, Pringle said public education is on the ballot. The Biden-Harris administration has provided critical funding for student health and safety and delivered \$4.8 billion in student loan debt relief to nearly one million of educators — and counting.

In contrast Donald Trump favors voucher schemes to divert public funds to private schools, as do Republicans in Congress who recently tried to gut federal funding for high-poverty schools.

Trump has aligned with the far-right book-banning group Moms for Liberty, said immigrant children are “poisoning” schools, made bizarre claims about transgender people which endanger kids’ and educators’ safety, and called for school principals to be elected by parents.

Pringle said, “As an 8th grade science teacher for over 30 years, I can tell you that Kamala Harris and teacher

Tim Walz understand when our public schools are strong, our nation is strong.”

The NEA Board of Directors recommended Harris in July after President Joe Biden withdrew from the race and endorsed his vice president. A former prosecutor, attorney general and U.S. Senator, Harris has the qualifications, track record, and commitment to deliver on education, the board said.

In 2017, then Sen. Harris opposed Trump’s appointment of Betsy DeVos as U.S. Secretary of Education, noting DeVos used her wealth to spur a proliferation of for-profit charter schools in Michigan with little oversight to protect children or taxpayers.

Harris said at the time DeVos’ voucher schemes would further drain public funds from neighborhood schools and result in “fewer teachers, fewer resources for students and parents.”

Collective bargaining and labor rights are core beliefs for Harris. In 2019 she stood in solidarity with striking teachers in Los Angeles and her hometown of Oakland, California, decrying it as “shameful” that educators can’t afford to live where they teach.

On Labor Day this year, Harris appeared in Detroit, focusing on Trump’s anti-union record and vowing to pass the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act. “The true



(Opposite page): L-R Robin Smith, MEA-Retired Lansing educator, in convention garb. Amy Scrima (right), a professor at Lake Michigan College, with delegates Wendy Winston (left), MEA member, and Jessica Lumbreras, MEA staff. (This page): Kamala Harris and Tim Walz visit a Georgia school after the convention. MEA member Jeff Pietrowski settles in for day two.

measure of the strength of a leader is based on who you lift up,” she told the cheering crowd.

“In this election, there are two very different visions for our nation. Ours, focused on the future; the other, focused on the past. We’re not going back! We fight for a future where every person has the opportunity not just to get by but to get ahead.”

Growing up in a close-knit working-class neighborhood shaped her to become a lawyer “for the people” — a story she shared in her acceptance speech at the convention as the foundation of her beliefs.

“You can always trust me to put country above party and self, to hold sacred America’s fundamental principles. From the rule of law to free and fair elections to the peaceful transfer of power, I will be a President who unites us around our highest aspirations.”

The stories of Harris and Walz clearly highlight the significance of educators and public service, said MEA Vice President Brett Smith, who also served as a convention delegate.

“The words of Kamala Harris and Coach Walz focused attention on

what connects us as Americans — our shared values and commitment to building a brighter future for our children and our country,” Smith said. “We all felt like family, with everyone rooting for the same team.”

Walz worked as a high school social studies teacher for 17 years while also serving in various roles in the Army National Guard over 24 years. His students urged him to make his first run for Congress in 2006, he said in his acceptance speech at the convention.

“They saw in me what I had hoped to instill in them: a commitment to the common good, an understanding that we’re all in this together, and the belief that a single person can make a real difference for their neighbors.”

Walz won election to Congress as a Democrat in a deep red district despite having little experience or money to run. “Never underestimate a public school teacher. Never. I represented my neighbors in Congress for 12 years, and I learned an awful lot.

“I learned how to work across the aisle on issues like growing the rural economies and taking care of veterans. And

I learned how to compromise without compromising my values.”

First elected Minnesota governor in 2018, Walz touted a law he signed in 2023 to provide all students with free breakfast and lunch at school. “While other states were banning books from their schools, we were banishing hunger from ours,” he said.

Walz ended with a rousing pep talk from his days as a high school football coach: “It’s the fourth quarter, we’re down a field goal but we’re on offense and we’ve got the ball. We’re driving down the field — and boy, do we have the right team.

“One inch at a time, one yard at a time, one phone call at a time, one door knock at a time, one five-dollar donation at a time. We’ve got 76 days. That’s nothing. There’ll be time to sleep when you’re dead. We’re going to leave it on the field.”

Harris and Walz brought much-needed positivity to the national campaign at a “pivotal moment in history,” said MEA member Jeff Pietrowski, a 28-year middle school history teacher and union leader in Grandville who participated as a first-time delegate at the convention.

The candidates are unifying the party around a central theme of freedom as essential to the healthy functioning of a democracy, Pietrowski said. If the enthusiasm they generate

can spark strong voter turnout, that could help elect supportive candidates up and down the ballot.

With 33 U.S. Senate seats and all 435 House seats up for election nationally, control of Congress hangs in the balance, Pietrowski said, adding a Democratic trifecta would provide “immense opportunities” for Harris to achieve long-sought priorities, including public education advancements.

The same is true for local and state races on Michigan ballots. In the state House, Democrats are vying to keep or expand a 56-54 majority won in 2022. Other races include the state Supreme Court, Board of Education, and university governing boards at Michigan, Michigan State and Wayne State.

“Harris and Walz have infused us with renewed optimism about what’s possible this November,” Pietrowski said. “Now we must prioritize informing our members about what’s at stake and the critical

importance of this election. We must fight for democracy and seize the opportunities before us.”

State Rep. Matt Koleszar, a former teacher and MEA member who now chairs the House Education Committee, said volunteers will be needed right up to election day on Nov. 5. “We need to talk with every voter, and we’ve got a great message to share,” he said.

Since last year, the state Legislature has substantially increased school funding, restored bargaining rights taken away under Gov. Rick Snyder, and ensured new school employees default to a retirement plan that includes pension benefits, among other wins for public education.

“If we lose the majority, all of that grinds to a halt — so there’s a lot on the table for voters who value public schools,” he said.

That urgency shows in folks of all ages doing campaign work and volunteering in Michigan, said Robin Smith, the Lansing schools retiree.

“I spent my time on the train home processing all of the wonderful things I got to experience at the convention and just feeling blessed and grateful, forever grateful,” Smith said. “I could feel the magnitude of this moment, what it means for our nation and for me as a Black woman.”

Once home, Smith shared one message: “What steps can each of us take to make our nominee the next president of the United States?”

Over in Berrien County, Scrima was doing the same — motivating voters to recognize they can make a difference in a key swing state. She has seen it herself — having risen to leadership just a few years after first volunteering.

“We are Michigan; we know what this work looks like, and we know what it’s going to take to win,” Scrima said. “The whole world is counting on us to deliver for

Harris-Walz, and imagine what more we can do if we deliver the U.S. Senate and the state House, too.”

That describes another factor that gets human beings to do hard things, Scrima added: “It’s an exciting part of democracy and also super-motivating to know you’re part of something bigger than yourself.”

Once people see collective action leading toward change, they jump on board, she said. “That’s what our young people need to hear. Heck, sometimes all of us need someone to shine a light and give us hope. Then we can do anything, and that’s as good as it gets.” ▼

If you want to get involved to help elect friends of education up and down the ballot, go to meavotes.org and sign up.



MEA Election 2024 Pullout Voter Guide

This fall's election is critical for the future of public education. Keep this guide to help you remember how to win for public education, including voting for MEA-recommended candidates, volunteering and contributing to MEA-PAC.

NEW AND IMPROVED: Check out MEAVotes.org for all your Election 2024 needs

Visit MEAVotes.org to
do all this and more:

► Look up MEA Recommended Candidates for Your Area

Enter your address to get a customized list of candidates interviewed and recommended — by MEA members like you — based on responses to education and labor issues. These friends of public education deserve your vote, from the White House to the State Capitol to your local School Board.

► Vote From Home or Vote Early — Learn about your options

You can request a no-reason absentee ballot to safely and securely Vote From Home. Or new this year, there are expanded early, in-person voting options. Learn more at MEAVotes.org or on the back of this guide to help you make your voting plan.

MEAVotes.org



► Volunteer to Help Elect Friends of Public Education

Interested in volunteering to help win for our students and our profession? Fill out a form to let us know how you can help, from texting to phone calling to door knocking to talking with fellow MEA members about the election.

► Contribute to MEA-PAC Online

Make one-time or recurring contributions to MEA-PAC — these voluntary contributions are used to help friends of public education win elections (dues dollars cannot be and are not used for political candidate contributions).

Important dates:

Now through Election Day, Nov. 5: Register to vote! You can do so online until 14 days prior to Election Day (see MEAVotes.org for links) or anytime up until and on Election Day at your local clerk's office.

Now thru mid-October: Apply online or by mail to get a no-reason absentee ballot at home (during the last four weeks before Election Day, avoid mail delays by delivering your request directly to your clerk's office OR voting early in-person).

Week of Sept. 23: Absentee ballots will begin arriving in homes, continuing through October.

Starting Oct. 26 (or sooner): In-person early voting begins two Saturdays before Election Day, ending on Nov. 3. Some local communities have longer early voting windows — check MEAVotes.org to learn more.

Nov. 4: Make sure your absentee ballot is dropped off either at your local clerk's office or at a secure drop box location. You can vote absentee in person at your local clerk's office until 4 p.m. on the day before the election.

Nov. 5: Election Day! The polls are open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. local time. As long as you are in line to vote by 8 p.m., you'll be permitted to cast your ballot.



Elect Champions for Education —

MEA's Screening & Recommendation (S&R) Process places control of MEA political recommendations in the hands of MEA members from across the state from diverse backgrounds and roles within the public education community. The process is governed by the MEA Political Action Committee (MEA-PAC) Council, made up of local delegates from MEA's 60+ coordinating councils.

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

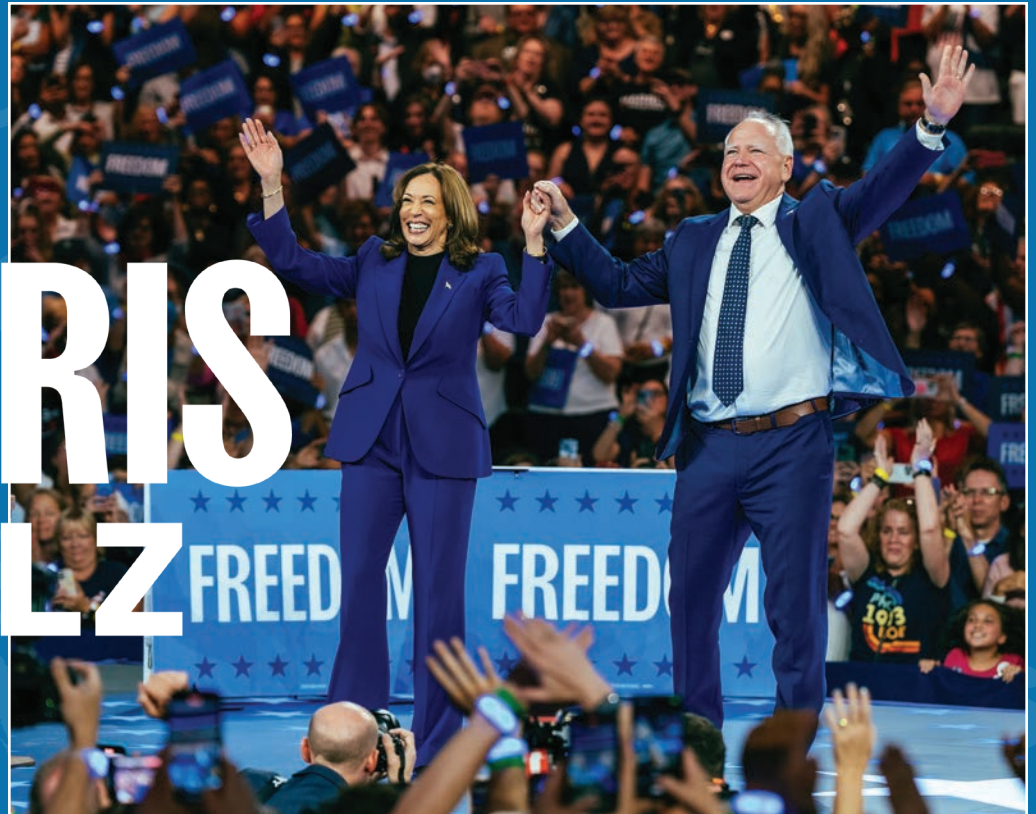
Recommendations at the state level are made by the Statewide S&R Committee, which is composed of elected members from various parts of the state and job classifications.

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

Recommendations for federal offices must also be confirmed by the board of the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education.

President & Vice President

HARRIS WALZ



**U.S. Senator
ELISSA SLOTKIN**

additional coverage pages 19-22

MEA Recommended Candidates

Statewide Recommendations:

Michigan Supreme Court

Kyra Harris Bolden & Kimberly Thomas

State Board of Education

Theodore Jones & Adam Zemke

Michigan State University Board of Trustees

Rebecca Bahar-Cook &

Thomas Stallworth III

University of Michigan Board of Regents

Denise Ilitch & Shauna Ryder Diggs

Wayne State University Board of Governors

Rasha Demashkieh & Mark Gaffney

U.S. Congress

- 1 • Callie Barr
- 2 • No recommendation
- 3 • Hillary Scholten
- 4 • Jessica Swartz
- 5 • No recommendation
- 6 • Debbie Dingell
- 7 • Curt Hertel
- 8 • Kristen McDonald Rivet
- 9 • Clint St. Mosley
- 10 • Carl Marlinga
- 11 • Haley Stevens
- 12 • Rashida Tlaib
- 13 • Shri Thanedar

Michigan State House

- | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------|
| 1 • Tyrone Carter | 37 • No Recommendation | 73 • Julie Brixie |
| 2 • Tullio Liberati, Jr. | 38 • Joey Andrews | 74 • Kara Hope |
| 3 • Alabas Farhat | 39 • No Recommendation | 75 • Penelope Tsernoglou |
| 4 • No recommendation | 40 • Matt Longjohn | 76 • Angela Witwer |
| 5 • Regina Weiss | 41 • Julie Rogers | 77 • Emily Dievendorf |
| 6 • Natalie Price | 42 • Austin Marsman | 78 • No Recommendation |
| 7 • Tonya Myers Phillips | 43 • Danene Shumaker | 79 • No Recommendation |
| 8 • Helena Scott | 44 • Jim Haadsma | 80 • Phil Skaggs |
| 9 • Joe Tate | 45 • Doug Murch | 81 • Stephen Wooden |
| 10 • Veronica Paiz | 46 • Daniel Mahoney | 82 • Kristian Grant |
| 11 • Donovan McKinney | 47 • Carrie Rheingans | 83 • John Fitzgerald |
| 12 • Kimberly Edwards | 48 • Jennifer Conlin | 84 • Carol Glanville |
| 13 • Mai Xiong | 49 • No Recommendation | 85 • No Recommendation |
| 14 • Mike McFall | 50 • No Recommendation | 86 • Abby Klomparens |
| 15 • Erin Byrnes | 51 • No Recommendation | 87 • Will Snyder |
| 16 • Stephanie Young | 52 • No Recommendation | 88 • Tim Meyer |
| 17 • Laurie Pohutsky | 53 • Brenda Carter | 89 • No Recommendation |
| 18 • Jason Hoskins | 54 • Shadia Martini | 90 • No Recommendation |
| 19 • Samantha Steckloff | 55 • Trevis Harrold | 91 • No Recommendation |
| 20 • Noah Arbit | 56 • Sharon MacDonell | 92 • No Recommendation |
| 21 • Kelly Breen | 57 • Aisha Farooqi | 93 • No Recommendation |
| 22 • Matt Koleszar
<i>(MEA Member)</i> | 58 • Nate Shannon
<i>(MEA Member)</i> | 94 • Amos O'Neal |
| 23 • Jason Morgan
<i>(MEA Member)</i> | 59 • No Recommendation | 95 • No Recommendation |
| 24 • Ranjeev Puri | 60 • No Recommendation | 96 • Rudy Howard, Jr. |
| 25 • Peter Herzberg | 61 • Denise Mentzer | 97 • No Recommendation |
| 26 • Dylan Wegela | 62 • Michelle Levine-Woodman
<i>(MEA Member)</i> | 98 • No Recommendation |
| 27 • Jaime Churches
<i>(MEA Member)</i> | 63 • No Recommendation | 99 • No Recommendation |
| 28 • Janise O'Neil Robinson | 64 • John Anter | 100 • No Recommendation |
| 29 • Kyle Wright | 65 • No Recommendation | 101 • No Recommendation |
| 30 • No Recommendation | 66 • Check MEAVotes.org
for update | 102 • Kathy Pelleran-Mahoney |
| 31 • Reggie Miller | 67 • No Recommendation | 103 • Betsy Coffia |
| 32 • Jimmie Wilson, Jr. | 68 • Matt Schlinker | 104 • No Recommendation |
| 33 • Morgan Foreman | 69 • Jasper Ryan Martus | 105 • No Recommendation |
| 34 • No Recommendation | 70 • Cynthia Neeley | 106 • Trina Borenstein |
| 35 • Don Hicks
<i>(MEA Member)</i> | 71 • Mark Zacharda | 107 • Jodi Decker |
| 36 • No Recommendation | 72 • No Recommendation | 108 • No Recommendation |
| | | 109 • Jenn Hill |
| | | 110 • No Recommendation |

DON'T FORGET

Your local races are critical for students and school employees alike. Find MEA recommendations for school board, community college board, judicial races and more at [MEAVotes.org](https://www.meadvotes.org).

NOTE: All recommendations are as of publication date, Sept. 12. For updates, visit [MEAVotes.org](https://www.meadvotes.org).

MEA Election 2024 Pullout Voter Guide

Absentee, Early or on Election Day — you have options to make your voice heard

Thanks to recent ballot measures that improved access to voting, you now have more options available to make your voice heard in Election 2024, including voting from home, early in-person voting, and traditional voting at polling places on Election Day.

Regardless of how you vote, it's important to make a plan to ensure your vote is counted — and [MEAVotes.org](https://meavotes.org) is there to help.

Vote From Home

Thanks to no-reason absentee voting, you can vote from the comfort of home, where you can research the candidates and cast your ballot with confidence. You can request a ballot online, via mail or in-person at your local clerk's office — visit [MEAVotes.org/vote-from-home](https://meavotes.org/vote-from-home) for links.

When you finish your ballot, seal it in the included envelope and sign the back. Mail it to your clerk by two weeks prior to Election Day — after then, to make sure your ballot is received by Election Day, drop it off at a secure dropbox or your clerk's office.

Early Voting

Under new rules adopted by voters in 2022, you can now vote in-person at an early voting location for a minimum of nine days before the election, this fall from Saturday, Oct. 26, until Sunday, Nov. 3. The experience is similar to voting in-person on Election Day, including getting to put your ballot directly into a tabulator. In addition, communities can decide to offer up to 28 total days of early voting. To learn more, including early voting sites and your community's early voting window, visit [MEAVotes.org/plan-to-vote](https://meavotes.org/plan-to-vote).

Voting at the Polls on Election Day

At [MEAVotes.org](https://meavotes.org), you can look up your polling place (keeping in mind it could have changed since the last time you voted). The polls are open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. local time. As long as you are in line to vote by 8 p.m., you'll be permitted to cast your ballot.

Know Your Rights!

Visit MichiganVoting.org to get answers about timelines, student voting rules, ID requirements, what to do if you feel your voting rights are challenged, and more.

Still have questions? Need to report a problem? Call the nonpartisan Election Protection Hotline at **(866) OUR-VOTE** or (866) 687-8683.

Support Friends of Public Education

Absentee, early or at the polls, when you vote, make sure to research who the friends of public education are on your ballot. Check out our new and improved Online Voter Guide at [MEAVotes.org](https://meavotes.org) to get a list of MEA recommended candidates in your area.

In U.S. Senate race, straight-talking Slotkin is mission-driven

By *Brenda Ortega*
MEA Voice Editor

Democracy relies on active-duty armed forces to be guided by a non-partisan ethos. For that reason Elissa Slotkin remained apolitical across her high-level career in national security and three tours of duty in Iraq alongside the U.S. military.

She served under presidents from both parties: in the National Security Council under George W. Bush and as an acting Assistant Secretary of Defense under Barack Obama.

But like others with accomplished military and public service records who would later step up to run for public office — including educators in Michigan and elsewhere — Slotkin says her focus shifted as a civilian deciding how to respond after Donald Trump assumed the presidency.

“I remember watching in outrage as my then-congressman smiled and celebrated, right next to Donald Trump, as they attempted to overturn the Affordable Care Act,” Slotkin says now. “Their behavior — ignoring constituents and voting against their interests — was what we (in national security forces) call a dereliction of duty, and it’s a fireable offense.

“So I ran against that congressman and won. We fired him and flipped a battleground House district from red to blue.”

In 2018 Slotkin ousted incumbent Rep. Mike Bishop from the 7th District U.S. House seat by appealing to voters as a commonsense, straight-talking, patriotic American who possessed a clear vision for the future and the experience, empathy, smarts and grit to get things done.

Now a third-term Congresswoman representing a district stretching from

Lansing to East Lansing, Brighton and Howell — which mirrors the state as a whole in its mixed partisan makeup — Slotkin seeks to replace long-serving Debbie Stabenow who is stepping down from the U.S. Senate.

communities she represents,” knows how to be an effective legislator, and dedicated to making a better life for families in her district.

“Elissa understands the skills you need in the Senate — not just to give



“I’m running to ensure everybody has the opportunity to live the middle-class life in the state that invented the middle class,” Slotkin says. “I’m running to preserve our rights and our democracy — so that our kids can live their version of the American Dream.”

Stabenow will retire in January after a long career in elected offices — from Ingham County to both houses in Congress — as the third-ranking Democrat in the Senate and the first woman from Michigan ever elected to the upper chamber in 2000. She has endorsed Slotkin in the statewide race.

Stabenow says it’s not enough to be the first if there’s not a second and third, so she’s excited to pass the torch to Slotkin who is “grounded in the

speeches — but to actually get things done,” Stabenow said in her endorsement. “From her leadership on the House Agriculture Committee during Farm Bill negotiations to securing millions of dollars for affordable child care, I’ve seen her in action.

“I’ve seen firsthand how engaged, accessible and present she is across her district.”

Slotkin has garnered endorsements from more than 200 community leaders and elected officials in Michigan and from labor unions representing 600,000 Michiganders, including by MEA’s Statewide Screening & Recommending committee — a diverse group of members from across the state.



“Throughout her time in Congress, Elissa Slotkin has been an amazing advocate for everyday teachers, school support staff and higher education employees across Michigan,” MEA President Chandra Madafferri said.

“Educators, parents and students need a champion on their side, and that’s why the MEA is proud to recommend Elissa Slotkin for the U.S. Senate.”

Public education builds the future for our young people, state and nation, Slotkin said in a Zoom interview. “Most people understand that public schools and access to good education is a key to the middle class.

“It’s how people go from struggling and living hand-to-mouth to secure jobs and lives.”

Knowing the vital role schools play in their communities, she supports fully funding special education and last year fought back against Republicans’ effort in Congress to gut 80% of Title I funding for schools in high-poverty neighborhoods.

“There is no more central institution to our communities than our public schools,” she said. “They are the glue within a community that brings people together and unifies them.”

Slotkin groups educators with nurses, doctors, firefighters, police officers, and first responders as “the professions that keep society going.” To address workforce shortages in those areas, she wants to work with state partners to fund free college for those who sign a continuing service agreement.

“In the military, if you’re going to be an officer and you get into one of the academies, everything is free if you agree to five years of service after you graduate. And if you don’t complete it, then you owe a pro-rated amount of money back. I want to do something like that for teaching in Michigan.”

For many in the education world, Slotkin emerged as a public face of outrage over gun violence in schools when she became the first member of Congress to have two deadly school shootings in her district — at Oxford High in late 2021 and Michigan State University in early 2023.

At news conferences in the immediate aftermaths, Slotkin spoke powerfully

of the devastation those communities experienced. She has since made commonsense gun safety legislation a cornerstone of her campaign — at times against political advice, she said.

“How sick is it that I was having to call parents who had one child at Oxford High School and another child at MSU — sometimes the same child as a senior and then a freshman — and what’s more universal than wanting to protect our kids?”

Slotkin met with Oxford students in the weeks after a 15-year-old classmate used a gun bought for him by his parents to kill four students and injure others. The survivors described feeling stressed, jittery, agitated, and hyper-aware of surroundings, she said — all signs of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

“It was exactly the reaction I had after coming home from a tour in Iraq, and I had to give those 14- and 15-year-olds the PTSD talk that was given to me as a CIA officer coming out of a war zone: ‘Your brain has been temporarily rewired because of trauma, because of that intense fear.

“Your decision-making abilities are terrible right now, so make no big decisions for six months, OK?’ I didn’t plan on it, but I gave them that talk.”

Slotkin introduced legislation to require safe storage of firearms in homes with children and won bipartisan passage in the House. She also supported gun laws requiring universal background checks and extreme risk protection orders.

Growing up on her family’s farm in Holly, Slotkin learned to shoot guns. In Iraq, she carried a Glock and M4 semi-automatic. But she and most Americans refuse to accept that gun violence has become the number-one killer of children in the U.S.

Protecting kids, responsible gun ownership — those shouldn’t be political or divisive, she said.

“The number-one killer of children when I was growing up was car accidents because no one wore seat belts. What did we do? We passed federal legislation mandating seat belts and car seats. We changed regulations for the car industry. It was controversial at the time, but it’s no longer the number-one killer of children.”



“What’s more universal than wanting to protect our kids?”



(Counter clockwise, from upper left): A public face of outrage over gun violence in schools, Slotkin is pictured at a March 2023 rally in Lansing speaking and standing alongside Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Gabby Giffords, the former Congresswoman-turned-activist who survived a near-fatal shooting. The Michigan Legislature soon passed—and Whitmer signed into law—gun safety bills requiring universal background checks for gun purchases and safe weapon storage and allowing extreme risk protection orders.

(Lower left and upper right): Slotkin appeared at a meet-and-greet in Sterling Heights, pictured speaking with local leaders Deborah Robertson and Monique Lake from Harper Woods.

(Lower right and page 19): Slotkin spoke and met with members at the MEA Summer Conference in Grand Rapids.



Local leader Andrea Jegier from South Haven met Rep. Slotkin, gathered inspiration, and grabbed a yard sign at the MEA Summer Conference.

A tireless campaigner, Slotkin carries a resonant message of restoring Michigan-based manufacturing, creating middle-class jobs, supporting labor rights, and tackling costs of health care, prescription drugs, housing, post-secondary education, and child care.

She has always admired educators, but her respect deepened witnessing their work on the front-lines of COVID-19 while coping with their own personal lives and dealing with angry, misguided people directing vitriol at schools amid the crisis.

At MEA's Summer Conference in Grand Rapids in July, Slotkin shared her appreciation. "You are at the crossroads of so many societal issues going on right now, and I want to thank you," she told members at an MEA-PAC event. "Thank you for protecting children in more ways than I can count."

MEA member Andrea Jegier, president of the South Haven Education Association, attended the event to hear Slotkin and other candidates

speak and to grab a yard sign along with inspiration to keep fighting the good fight.

"I donate to MEA-PAC, and I sit on a lot of screening and recommendations in my county," Jegier said. "This is such an important election, and we need friends of education in office from the school board up. I want everybody to vote for Elissa Slotkin."

Among the most-watched U.S. Senate races this year, the Michigan matchup — which could determine control of the chamber — is a tossup. And Slotkin notes that a familiar figure hopes to influence the outcome.

Betsy DeVos and her extended family of wealthy GOP donors are some of the top supporters of Slotkin's opponent, Mike Rogers, a former Congressman endorsed by Donald Trump, according to campaign finance reports.

Trump's former U.S. Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos has maxed out campaign contributions to Rogers, who supported DeVos's voucher scheme to funnel public money to private religious schools. The voucher plan has twice failed to get past voters in ballot initiatives she bankrolled.

In recent months, DeVos has been making campaign appearances with Rogers.

"As Michiganders know, for decades the DeVos family's #1 issue has been weakening Michigan's, and the country's, public education system," a Slotkin campaign mailer warned. "Betsy DeVos used Michigan as her petri dish before becoming Trump's Secretary of Education..."

"Betsy DeVos is now back — and willing to serve in a second Trump administration. So what does that mean? As if there weren't a million

reasons to defeat Donald Trump, there's now one more: keeping Betsy DeVos out of any role of prominence in Washington, D.C."

A third-generation Michigander, Slotkin takes pride in the family business her great-grandfather built, Hygrade Foods, a Detroit company that created iconic Ballpark Franks and she says instilled in her the values of integrity, decency and hard work as she grew up.

After earning bachelor's and master's degrees from Cornell and Columbia universities, Slotkin embarked on a career path she chose at a turning point in American history, which she explained in a speech on Aug. 22 at the final night of the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

"My life in service began in New York City on September 11th," she said in a self-introduction before convention delegates from across the country. "As the smoke cleared, I knew my future career would be spent protecting the country we all love."

Slotkin told cheering delegates — and a national audience watching on television and online — to choose Kamala Harris as the next Commander-in-Chief whose vision "is based on the values that took us to the shores of Normandy and helped us win the Cold War."

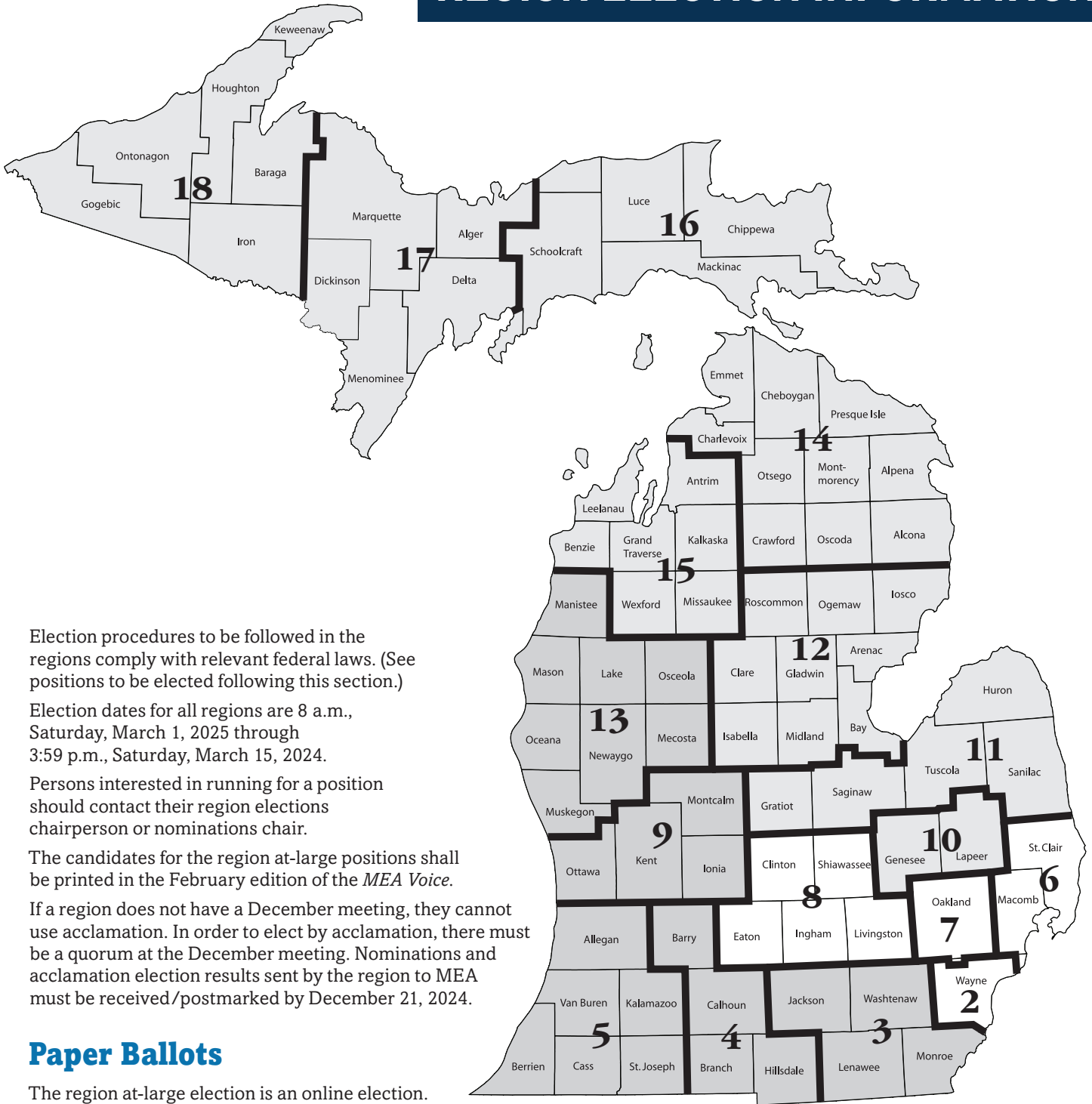
In contrast, she said, Donald Trump admires autocratic leaders around the world and "treats our friends as adversaries and our adversaries as friends."

America should lead not just with a strong military but by working with allies to solve global challenges, she added. "Vice President Harris understands our strength abroad is inextricably linked to our strength here at home: our schools, a strong middle class, the health of our democracy."

Slotkin urged the crowd to proudly claim their patriotism.

"You are here because you love your country. Do not give an inch to pretenders who wrap themselves in the flag but spit in the face of freedoms it represents! This November let's elect a president who will lean forward to embrace the future." ♡

REGION ELECTION INFORMATION



Election procedures to be followed in the regions comply with relevant federal laws. (See positions to be elected following this section.)

Election dates for all regions are 8 a.m., Saturday, March 1, 2025 through 3:59 p.m., Saturday, 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 December 21, 2024.

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 ernst@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, 2025.

ATTENTION ESP MEMBERS

2025 Region 50 Statewide Election (ESP Only)

ESP members of MEA are entitled to send delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly (NEA RA). The NEA RA will be held in Portland, Ore. July 2–6, 2025. Expenses to attend the NEA RA are reimbursed according to the adopted state delegate expense policy for Region 50.

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 these statewide delegates and alternates to be elected by secret ballot. Elections for Region 50 will be conducted in accordance with the 2025 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. Candidate must give consent before any name is printed on the ballot by completing the Nominee Consent Form. Forms may be obtained from your region president or region election chairperson or at mea.org/governance under the Forms section.

Each nominated candidate may submit a biographical statement of no more than 150 words to be included with the online ballots. Statement must be in paragraph form and will be printed as received. Pictures can also be submitted with the biographical statement.

Bio forms can be obtained from the elections chair or found at mea.org/governance. Bio forms and pictures must be received by December 31, 2024 and can be emailed to ernst@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 December 31, 2024. Nominations received after December 31, 2024 will not be accepted. Names of nominees will be placed on the ballot distributed to all ESP locals through the region at-large online elections process.

For questions, contact your region elections chairperson; for further clarification, email Rebecca Ernst at ernst@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 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: 1 position, immediate through 8/31/25
- ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate: 1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, same seat as above
- ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g): 2 positions, immediate through 8/31/26
- ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g): 1 position, immediate through 8/31/25
- ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate-Representing Minority 3-1(g): 1 position, 3-yr. term, beginning 9/1/25, same seat as above

Nomination form must be received no later than December 31, 2024.

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

Nomination forms received after December 31, 2024 will not be accepted.

Positions to be Elected

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

\$ is used to represent MEA funded seats

REGION 2

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

1 position, 3-yr. term begins 7/15/25

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, 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 8/31/27

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/27

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 8/31/27

Position 13 – EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate

1 position, immed. through 3/31/27

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: Steve Conn,
swconn80@hotmail.com

REGION 3

Position 8 – EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

3 positions, immed. through 8/31/26

1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/27

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 8/31/26

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

5 positions, immed. through 8/31/26

3 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

3 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

Elections Chair: Jim Brousseau,
jbrousseau@mea.org

REGION 4

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

1 position, immediate through 7/14/27

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

1 position, immed. through 8/31/25

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 \$

1 position, immed. through 8/31/27

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

1 position, immed. through 8/31/27

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 8/31/27

Position 15 – ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Elections Chair: Lance Hawblitz,
lancehawblitz@yahoo.com

REGION 5

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

1 position, 3-yr. term begins 7/15/25

Position 3 – MEA 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 9/1/25

1 position*, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25

1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

1 position, immed. through 8/31/27

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, immed. through 8/31/25

1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, same seat as above

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

1 position*, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, 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

4 positions, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25

2 positions, immed. through 8/31/25

2 positions, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, same seat as above

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

1 position*, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, same seat as above

2 positions*, immed. through 8/31/27

1 position, immed. through 8/31/27

Position 13 – EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate

4 positions, immed. through 3/31/25

4 positions, 3-yr. term begins 4/1/25, same seat as above

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

1 position*, 3-yr. term begins 4/1/25, same seat as above

Position 14 – ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25

1 position, immed. through 8/31/25

1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, same seat as above
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/25
1 position*, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, same seat as above

Position 15 – ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
2 positions, immed. through 3/31/25
2 positions, 3-yr. term begins 4/1/25, same seat as above
1 position*, immed. through 3/31/25
1 position*, 3-yr. term begins 4/1/25, same seat as above

Elections Chair: Mary Cooper,
coopermary29@gmail.com

REGION 6

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

1 position, 3-yr. term begins 7/15/25

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) \$

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

Position 8 – EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25

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 9/1/25

1 position, immed. through 8/31/25

1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, same seat as above

Position 11 – ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

3 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 12 – NEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

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

Position 14 – ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25

Position 15 – ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate

1 position, immed. through 3/31/25

1 position, 3-yr. term begins 4/1/25, same seat as above

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 \$

1 position, 3-yr. term begins 7/15/25

1 position, immediate through 7/14/27

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

5 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 \$

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

2 positions, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, same seat as above

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

1 position*, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, same seat as above

1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

1 position, immed. through 8/31/27

Position 11 – ESP MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

3 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: Kecia Jones,

jaxjokeci@gmail.com

REGION 8

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

1 position, 3-yr. term begins 7/15/25

Position 8 – EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25

1 position, immed. through 8/31/27

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/27

Position 9 – EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/27

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

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

Position 12 – EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate

1 position, immed. through 8/31/27

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

1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/27

Position 15 – ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate

4 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

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

Elections Chair: Jeffry Wilson,
parliamentdestruction@gmail.com

REGION 9

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

1 position, 3-yr. term begins 7/15/25

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

1 position, 3-yr. term begins 7/15/25

Position 4 – MEA 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 8/31/27

Position 9 – EA MEA RA Cluster Alternate \$

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 10 – ESP MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$

4 positions, immed. through 8/31/27

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/27

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 8/31/27

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/27

Position 13 – EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate

2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26

Position 14 – ESP NEA RA Cluster Delegate

4 positions, immed. through 8/31/27

1 position, immed. through 8/31/26

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/27

Position 15 – ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate

5 positions, immed. through 8/31/27

1 position*, immed. through 8/31/27

Elections Chair: Wendy Winston,
wendy.winston@att.net

REGION 10

- 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 \$
2 positions, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25
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 8/31/27
- 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 8/31/27
- 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 8/31/27
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/25
1 position*, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, same seat as above
- Position 15** – ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
2 positions, immed. through 3/31/26
- Elections Chair:** Stacey Hittle,
kamandkara@me.com

REGION 11

- 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) \$
4 positions*, immed. through 3/31/26
- Position 7** – EA/ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate \$
1 position, immed. through 8/31/26
1 position, immed. through 8/31/25
1 position, immed. through 8/31/27
- Position 8** – EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25
1 position, 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, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25
1 position, immed. through 8/31/25
1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, 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 8/31/27
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/27
- 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*, immed. through 8/31/26
- Position 15** – ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
2 positions, immed. through 8/31/26
- Elections Chair:** Jennifer Shelito,
jshelito@mymea.org

REGION 12

- Position 7** – EA/ESP NEA RA At-Large Delegate \$
1 position, immed. through 8/31/26
- Position 8** – EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
1 position, immed. through 8/31/25
1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, 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 \$
2 positions, immed. through 8/31/25
2 positions, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, 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
2 positions, immed. through 8/31/26
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/25
1 position*, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, 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
2 positions, immed. through 8/31/27
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/27
- 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 7/15/25
- 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, 3-yr. term begins 4/1/25
1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26
- Position 8** – EA MEA RA Cluster Delegate \$
2 positions, immed. through 8/31/27
1 position, immed. through 8/31/26
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/25
1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, same seat as above
- 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, immed. through 8/31/27
- 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 8/31/27
1 position*, immed. through 8/31/25
1 position*, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, 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
2 positions, immed. through 8/31/27
1 position, immed. through 8/31/25
1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, same seat as above
1 position*, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25
- Position 15** – ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate
3 positions, immed. through 3/31/26
1 position*, immed. through 3/31/26
- Elections Chair:** Sue Federico,
suefederico@yahoo.com

REGION 14

- Position 1** – MEA Board of Directors/NEA RA Delegate \$
1 position, 3-yr. term begins 7/15/25
- 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
 1 position, immed. through 8/31/27
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 8/31/27
 1 position, immed. through 8/31/25
 1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, same
 seat as above
 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 MEA RA Cluster
 Delegate \$
 1 position, immed. through 8/31/26
Region 14 MAHE – EA MEA RA Cluster
 Alternate \$
 1 position, immed. through 3/31/26
Elections Chair: Greta Brock,
gbrock@mea.org

REGION 15

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 7 – EA/ESP NEA RA At-Large
 Delegate \$
 1 position, immed. through 8/31/27
Position 8 – EA MEA RA Cluster
 Delegate \$
 3 positions, immed. through 8/31/27
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 8/31/26
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 8/31/27
 1 position*, immed. through 8/31/25
 1 position*, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, 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
 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 3 – MEA 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 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 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 1 – MEA Board of Directors/NEA
 RA Delegate \$
 1 position, 3-yr. term begins 7/15/25
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 8/31/26
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
 1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25
 1 position*, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25
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
Elections Chair: Paulette Pepin,
paulettelarson@chartermi.net

REGION 18

Position 8 – EA MEA RA Cluster
 Delegate \$
 1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25
 1 position, immed. through 3/31/26
Position 9 – EA MEA RA Cluster
 Alternate \$
 1 position, immed. through 3/31/26
Position 12 – EA NEA RA Cluster Delegate
 1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25
Position 13 – EA NEA RA Cluster Alternate
 1 position, immed. through 3/31/26
 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 8/31/25
 1 position, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, same
 seat as above
 1 position, immed. through 8/31/26
Region 50 – ESP NEA RA At-Large
 Delegate – Representing Minority 3-1(g) \$
 2 positions*, immed. through 8/31/26
 1 position*, immed. through 8/31/25
 1 position*, 3-yr. term begins 9/1/25, same
 seat as above

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

\$ is used to represent MEA funded seats

You can count on MESSA

The new school year is in full swing across the state. There's nothing like the hallways buzzing with laughter, teachers giving out high fives to eager students and hearing the sheer joy in little voices on the playground during recess.

Just like your students rely on your leadership and tutelage, we know that you count on MESSA for health benefits you can trust.

MESSA offers a solid roster of health plans and prescription plans that fit the needs of you and your family.

Our newest health plan is MESSA Balance+, which features a health savings account (HSA) and the bundle of MESSA supplemental plans. Our popular MESSA ABC plans also feature an HSA, which is a great tool for paying medical expenses. MESSA Choices offers a

range of deductible and coinsurance options. Essentials by MESSA features a low premium paired with coinsurance on most services.

Be sure to check out all the plan combinations available to you during open enrollment.

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*By Ross Wilson,
MESSA Executive Director*



Member Portal Contest

Update info before Nov. 30 to win up to

\$500

Members who log in to the MEA Member Portal by Nov. 30 to update or confirm their contact information will be entered into a drawing to win one of 16 prizes up to \$500!

For more information or help logging in, contact the MEA Help Center at 866-MEA-HELP (866-632-4357) or help@mea.org

TO ENTER:

- ▶ Go to mea.org
- ▶ Choose LOG IN/HOME from the MEMBERS ONLY menu
- ▶ Log in to your existing account OR create a new account
- ▶ Click on **MEA Member Portal**
- ▶ Verify your contact information

Educator housing initiative launches



L-R Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, Traverse City Education Association President Chandra Fles, and Genevieve Minor, teacher-librarian at Traverse City West High School.

As a housing shortage hampers Northern Michigan school districts' ability to recruit and retain educators, a new group has emerged to tackle the issue head-on.

Grand Traverse Housing for Educators, a newly formed consortium that includes Northwest Educator Services, Traverse City Area Public Schools, Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools and Interlochen Center for the Arts, aims to provide affordable housing options for preK-12 educators and support staff across a five-county region in northwest Michigan.

The housing initiative's first phase will provide 90 affordable units next to Blair Elementary School in Blair Township, about 10 miles south of Traverse City. The consortium hopes to have shovels in the ground within the next year and a half.

"We need to make sure our dedicated public servants, who make so many sacrifices on all our behalf, can have access to a good quality of life in the places in which they work," said Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, who was in Traverse City in August to express support for the innovative project.

The state of Michigan's Office of Rural Prosperity has provided funding for a portion of the initiative.

Chandra Fles, an elementary teacher and president of the Traverse City Education Association, said she understands housing challenges facing educators. Many quality educators want to "start and continue their careers in education but face difficulties in obtaining and keeping affordable housing."

Ultimately, this negatively impacts students, schools and the community

by depriving them of trained, qualified educators, Fles said.

"Housing is a real crisis in our area," said MEA member Genevieve Minor, a teacher-librarian at Traverse City West Senior High School. "Being able to offer educators affordable housing gives the assistance they need to move to the area and work in our schools."

John VanWagoner, superintendent of Traverse City Area Public Schools, said the consortium's efforts will help TCAPS address ongoing educator shortages. "We've had teachers apply and get hired, then call us back three weeks later and say they can't afford to live in the area," Van Wagoner said.

"This is a major issue for our area," said state Rep. Betsy Coffia, D-Traverse City. "It is important for educators and staff to be able to move here, and it's important to invest in affordable housing in this region." ▼



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