

MSTA: An Overview

How MSTA Works for You

MSTA is the 70,000-member Maryland affiliate of the National Education Association (NEA), which represents over 3.2 million education employees across the country. MSTA is the state's largest professional employee organization and represents elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support personnel, paraprofessionals, school administrators, retired educators, and students preparing to become teachers. MSTA represents 40 local affiliated associations throughout Maryland.

MSTA is the voice of the education profession in Maryland—the one organization whose sole purpose is to look after the interests of public school employees throughout the state. MSTA not only works to improve the salaries and benefits of public school employees, but the teaching and learning conditions in Maryland public schools as well. At all levels—national, state and local—the Association is dedicated to improved academic achievement for all students, better compensation and working conditions for public school employees, enhanced education funding, and the protection of human and professional rights.

Executive Office

The executive director supervises, oversees, and coordinates the work of the MSTA staff and program divisions. The executive director and the executive office staff fulfill the corporate responsibilities of the Association, perform its administrative duties, and provide staff support for the president, vice president, treasurer, the Board of Directors and the Representative Assembly.

Center for Affiliates and Advocacy

The Center for Affiliates and Advocacy assists the Association and its members in multiple ways. Field staff, or UniServ representatives, assist local affiliates in contract negotiations. After collective bargaining agreements are reached, many of their responsibilities are in contract enforcement—making sure that school boards live up to the letter and the spirit of the negotiated agreements. In this capacity, UniServ staff work closely with the MSTA Center for Legal Affairs and serve as advocates for education employees threatened with lawsuits or unjust administrative actions. UniServ staff increasingly act as consultants to faculties and staff in organizing Local Associations and recruiting members.

School Quality staff works with members and local affiliates to deliver high-quality professional development. The training and workshops offered by School Quality provide members with best practices, as well as strategies and techniques to handle the challenges that they face daily in the workplace.

Staff also provides information and support to teachers about the National Board Certification process; monitors and reports on the actions of the Maryland State Board of Education and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board and its various committees; and offers expert advice on education issues to MSTA officers, staff, and members. School Quality coordinates a variety of workshops offered during the MSTA Convention.

MSTA is focusing its attention and resources on Closing the Achievement Gaps and building Great Public Schools for Every Child.

Center for Legal Affairs

MSTA attorneys provide legal services and advice to members, to MSTA governing bodies, and to Local Associations. The center provides advice and services on matters pertaining to collective bargaining, business operations, and internal elections. It provides members with legal representation in grievances before arbitrators, boards of education, and the courts. The office also provides legal advice and assistance to members on civil and criminal matters arising out of education employment-related activities.

Government Relations

Government Relations staff assist in developing MSTA's legislative program and work to get it through the General Assembly in Annapolis. They coordinate lobbying activities in Annapolis and distribute relevant legislative information to local associations and members. They serve as the day-to-day MSTA representatives before the legislature, the governor's office and state agencies.

Government Relations staff also direct, coordinate, and assist in political campaigns, fundraising, and training throughout the state. Together with NEA, they provide political expertise, campaign materials, and targeted data for developing election strategy locally and statewide.

Center for Public Affairs

Communications staff provide member, public, and media relations programs to help inform, educate, and advocate on behalf of public schools, students, and employees. MSTAs communications efforts support ongoing campaigns to enhance the public perception of public employees and rally member and public support for increased public education funding, elimination of the achievement gaps, and enhanced compensation and status for education employees.

Research

Research staff gather, generate, and analyze data for all areas of MSTA activities: collective bargaining, lobbying, political action, communications and public relations. Among their activities is analysis of government revenues and budgets for use by Association negotiators and lobbyists. They also maintain county-by-county data on salaries, fringe benefits, cost-of-living comparisons, student enrollment, and staffing. NEA's Research Division provides immediate access to a massive computerized data bank containing information gathered from around the nation.

Information Technology/Membership

The membership and technology staff maintain the statewide technological infrastructure for governance and staff and the extensive database of membership information. With input from NEA, MSTA staff manage daily updates to the members and potential members database and implement efficiencies in technology across the state. The staff support the Association network and create new initiatives to communicate electronically with members, officers, and staff.

How MSTA is Governed

Officers and Board

MSTA officers and the Board of Directors are elected by the membership. The president, vice president and treasurer are elected for three-year terms. They are ex officio members of the Board of Directors. In addition, eight directors—four every year—are elected for three-year terms. All officers and board members are limited to two consecutive terms.

Maryland has four NEA directors who are also elected by the MSTA membership. They serve ex officio on the MSTA Board of Directors.

The president is a full-time officer of MSTA and serves as the presiding officer of the Board of Directors and other

governing and policy-making bodies. The president is the chief spokesperson and representative of MSTA.

The Board of Directors is responsible for the fiscal affairs and general management of the Association and interprets and implements Association policies.

Representative Assembly

The MSTA Representative Assembly, which includes members from every local affiliate in proportion to membership, is MSTA's policy-making body. The Representative Assembly meets annually at the time of the MSTA Convention to approve MSTA's legislative program, establish MSTA policy through resolutions, and direct officers and staff through business items it enacts. The body also has the power to amend MSTA bylaws.

MSTA Committees

MSTA committees, working with MSTA officers and staff, initiate, plan, and organize many of the Association's programs. Committee members are appointed by the president and subject to the approval of the Board of Directors. In addition to committees, special work groups are appointed to perform specific tasks, which lie outside the purview of existing standing or special committees.

An important function of committees and workgroups is to get broad participation in MSTA activities and to utilize the expertise, talent, creativity, and leadership ability of MSTA membership.