

MEA-MFT History & member/leader engagement

Significant achievements

As of July 2016

August 1, 1882

Seven years before statehood, teachers create Territorial Teachers' Association, later to call itself Montana Teachers' Association, and then Montana State Teachers' Association (MSTA).

1913

Montana state legislature grants tenure after election of a teacher for a second consecutive year.

1918

Professors at Montana State University (now University of Montana) establish first but short lived American Federation of Teachers (AFT) local affiliate in Montana.

1920

Missoula elementary teacher organize Missoula Elementary Grade Teachers Club/AFT Local 169.

1922 – 26

MSTA adopts new constitution, new name: Montana Education Association (MEA); locates permanent state office in Helena, selects first executive secretary; and incorporates.

1934

Butte teachers organize first k-12 AFT local affiliate in Montana, Butte Teachers Union (BTU).

1935

BTU negotiates first public employee labor agreement in America 40 years before the Montana collective bargaining act.

1937

Legislature creates mandatory teachers' defined benefit retirement system (MEA and BTU proposal).

1945

MEA officially affiliates with National Education Association (NEA) and adopts unified dues.

1972

Independent AFT local affiliates in Anaconda, Butte, and University of Montana establish Montana Federation of Teachers (MFT).

MEA members Chet Blaylock and Noel Furlong and MFT member Dan Harrington serve as delegates to the Montana Constitutional Convention.

Jim McGarvey begins 28 year career as MFT president and/or executive director.

1973

Legislature passes Montana collective bargaining act for public employees other than public school teachers.

1975

Legislature authorizes public school teachers to organize and bargain collectively under Montana collective bargaining act (MEA and MFT actively lobby).

Great Falls Education Association (GFEA) and Billings Education Association (BEA) strike.

1978

MFT member Pat Williams elected to first term in the U.S. Congress.

1980

John Board re-elected and becomes first full-time released MEA president.

Harlem Education Association strikes.

1981

Legislature provides "free" creditable TRS service for Vietnam era veterans (MEA bill).

MEA delegate assembly authorizes MEA to organize k-12 classified school employees.

Missoula County High School Education Association strikes.

1983

Legislature authorizes 25-year retirement in TRS without penalty (MEA bill).

1984

Eric Feaver elected MEA president.

Montana supreme court (Massey) rules school districts may not layoff tenured teachers while retaining similarly situated and licensed nontenured teachers (MEA plaintiff).

Montana supreme court (Savage) affirms that k-12 bargaining units may bargain and enforce job protections for nontenured teachers (MEA plaintiff).

1985

Montana supreme court (Forsyth) rules steps and lanes in school district contracts remain in effect even if negotiations for a successor agreement continue indefinitely (MEA plaintiff).

Pine Hills teachers stage one-day walkout.

1986

MEA member Chet Blaylock Democratic Party candidate for governor.

Voters reject CI-27 – proposed constitutional amendment to abolish all property taxes (MEA primary opponent).

1987

Legislature creates certification, standards, and practices advisory council (CSPAC) (MEA bill).

Legislature mandates schools close for two pupil instruction related (PIR) days every year and further dictates that teachers must be paid those two days. (MEA bill).

MEA named plaintiff in school funding equity lawsuit, Helena v. State of Montana.

1988

Glasgow Education Association strikes.

MFT member Nancy Keenan elected superintendent of public instruction.

1989

MEA, MTSBA, and SAM create Montana Unified Schools Trust.

GFEA strikes a 2d time.

1991

State employees strike.

Legislature mandates school employee preference for all available positions in event of school district consolidation (MEA and MFT bill).

Laurel Unified Education Association strikes.

1992

MFT and MPEA launch prebudget, state employee pay plan negotiations.

1993

Legislature mandates binding arbitration of public school employee grievances pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement (MEA bill).

1994

Voters adopt CI-25 – pension security act - now Article 8, Section 15 – Montana Constitution (MEA bill).

Missoula elementary and high school district classified MEA and MFT affiliates merge into Merged Missoula Classified Employees' Organization – the first MEA-MFT merged local affiliate in Montana.

1995

Governor Marc Racicot vetoes MTSBA sponsored bill empowering school districts to unilaterally abrogate contractual steps and lanes (MEA veto request).

MEA-MFT Educators' Conference features NEA President Keith Geiger and AFT President Al Shanker on the same stage at the same time.

1996

MEA and MFT establish Montana Professional Teaching Foundation (MPTF).

Teacher of the Year (1996)
 Educator Forum (1996)
 National Board Certification (1997)
 Karen Cox Memorial Grants (2006)
 Presidential Science and Math Awards (2007)
 Jim McGarvey Program and Scholarships (2008)
 Professional Leadership Scholarship (2016)

Lame Deer Education Association strikes.

Voters reject CI-66 and 67 – proposed constitutional amendments to require voter

approval of tax increases and state spending (MEA and MFT primary opponents).

Voters defeat C-30 – proposed constitutional amendment to abolish board of regents (MEA and MFT primary opponents).

1997

Legislature mandates binding arbitration of disputed teacher terminations (MEA bill).

Legislature creates guaranteed annual benefit adjustment in the Public Employees' Retirement System - PERS GABA (MEA, MFT, MPEA bill).

Federal court rules unconstitutional I-125 and subsequent legislation prohibiting corporate and union expenditures on ballot issues (MEA plaintiff).

1998

Montana supreme court voids voter approved CI-75 – proposed constitutional amendment to require a vote of the people on any new tax or fee (MEA plaintiff).

1999

Legislature creates guaranteed annual benefit adjustment in the Teachers Retirement System - TRS GABA (MEA bill).

Board of public education adopts school accreditation standard – 10.57.604 - authorizing charter schools operating under the control of local school districts, employing licensed and endorsed teachers, providing open student enrollment, and permitting collective bargaining (MEA proposal).

MSU Bozeman awards President Eric Feaver an Honorary Doctorate of Education

for MEA's advocacy of and commitment to quality public education and classroom instruction.

September 2000
MEA-MFT Merge

MEA-MFT
affiliates
with AFL-CIO

Eric Feaver elected first MEA-MFT president; Jim McGarvey elected first vice president; and Marilyn Ryan elected first secretary-treasurer.

Member Linda McCulloch elected superintendent of public instruction.

Member Bob Brown elected secretary of state.

2001
Huge MEA-MFT sponsored Capitol rally for public education.

MEA-MFT sponsors 'Stand Up for Education' rallies in school communities across the state.

Legislature adopts state funded stipend for national board certified teachers (MEA-MFT bill).

2002
BEA strikes a 2d time.

MEA-MFT launches PASS or Paraprofessionals Achieving Standards Successfully to assist paraprofessionals meet NCLB requirements. PASS remains a vital MEA-MFT program today.

2003
Legislature authorizes correctional officers to join Game Wardens' Retirement System (MEA-MFT bill).

MEA-MFT named plaintiff in school funding adequacy lawsuit, Columbia Falls v. State of Montana.

MEA-MFT and Office of Public Instruction collaborate on first mentorship institute.

2003-05
Prebudget negotiations and legislature secure two consecutive biennial state employee pay plan increases.

2004
Member Bob Brown Republican Party candidate for governor.

Jim McGarvey elected Montana AFL-CIO executive secretary.

Montana supreme court (Snetzinger) rules under Montana's constitution, same sex domestic partners enjoy equality in employer provided benefits. (MEA-MFT amicus).

MEA-MFT launches 'Work that Matters' program to highlight contributions of Montana's public employees.

2005
Legislature adopts quality educator payment (MEA-MFT bill).

Legislator adopts state government privatization process (MEA-MFT bill).

2005-07
Legislature reduces TRS and PERS unfunded liabilities and creates a significant ongoing infusion of state funding of TRS.

2006
Montana supreme court (Roberts) affirms a school district must bargain terms and conditions of employment – including extra-contractual incentives or bonuses (MEA-MFT plaintiff).

Voters approve I-151 to create a Montana minimum wage with built-in inflation factor (MEA-MFT prime mover).

Montana supreme court invalidates CI-97 – proposed constitutional amendment to cap state expenditures (also CI-98 – judicial recall and I-154 – eminent domain) (MEA-MFT plaintiff).

2007

Legislature establishes state funded full-time kindergarten (MEA-MFT bill).

Legislature increases state funding of university faculty optional retirement plan (MEA-MFT bill).

Legislature creates education loan repayment program for teachers taking high demand/low supply positions (MEA-MFT bill).

Legislature protects assets of school district self-funded health care plans for the purposes for which they were intended (MEA-MFT bill).

Montana Trial Lawyers Association awards President Eric Feaver its 2007 Citizens Award for MEA-MFT's successful opposition to CI-97, CI-98, and I-154.

2008

Montana supreme court (Bonner) affirms right of bargaining units to demand to bargain impacts of management rights decisions (MEA-MFT plaintiff).

MEA-MFT and Montana Nurses Association adopt joint agreement to work with each other in common defense, organizing, membership growth, professional development, leadership training, and lobbying.

Four members run for Democratic Party primary nomination for superintendent of public instruction; one member candidate runs for attorney general nomination; another runs for secretary of state.

Member Denise Juneau elected superintendent of public instruction.

Member Linda McCulloch elected secretary of state.

24 members run in legislative primaries; 19 members run in general election; 17 members elected to state legislature.

Board of public education adopts school accreditation standard – 10.55.907 – requiring distance learning teachers be licensed and endorsed (MEA-MFT proposal).

2009

Pre-budget pay plan negotiations and legislature “save” state employee jobs.

Legislature creates state funded digital academy (MEA-MFT bill).

Legislature prohibits vacancy savings in 24/7 institutions (MEA-MFT proposal).

MEA-MFT organizes faculty at MSU/Bozeman and now represents faculty at every public higher education institution in Montana.

MEA-MFT creates member/leader program and policy councils.

Board of public education adopts school accreditation standard - 10.57.437 – Class 8 teacher license enabling college and university faculty to provide dual credit to high school students (MEA-MFT proposal).

2010

NEA RA adopts 'Gateway' amendment to NEA constitution recognizing all MEA-MFT members as NEA members (AFT recognized all MEA-MFT members from the time of merger).

[State and federal rules qualify state and university employee families for Healthy Montana Kids \(MEA-MFT proposal\).](#)

2011

MEA-MFT sponsors 'No Fooling with our Future' rally.

[Members Jill Cohenour and Dani Tenneson first state employees to serve as delegates to NEA representative assembly.](#)

Governor Brian Schweitzer vetoes bill to terminate Teachers' Retirement System defined benefit plan (MEA-MFT veto request).

[Governor Schweitzer orders one-year freeze in state employee health insurance costs \(MEA-MFT/MPEA/AFSCME request\).](#)

MEA-MFT, MPEA, AFSCME file unfair labor practice against the state of Montana and demand to bargain in a two-pronged attempt to secure base pay increases for state employees.

[MEA-MFT, MPEA, AFSCME, AFL-CIO file constitutional challenge against LR 123 - a legislative referendum meant to cap state expenditures.](#)

Associated Faculty Montana State University (AFMSU) ratify historic bargained agreements for tenured and adjunct faculty.

2012

[Board of Personnel Appeals affirms MEA-MFT ULP against the Department of Corrections extending Forsyth protections to include already bargained state employee pay progressions.](#)

Montana Supreme Court rules LR 123 - legislative referendum to prioritize tax refunds over state funding of public programs and services - unconstitutional and off the November 2012 ballot (MEA-MFT plaintiff).

[Jim McGarvey - MFT president and executive director, MEA-MFT vice president, AFL-CIO president and executive secretary - dies.](#)

[Member Denise Juneau reelected superintendent of public instruction](#)

Member Linda McCulloch reelected secretary of state.

[14 members elected or reelected to the state legislature.](#)

MEA-MFT organizes first bargaining unit of graduate employees at MSU/Bozeman, Graduate Employees Organization.

2013

[MEA-MFT, MTSBA, SAM, MREA, and MQEC create strongest public education coalition in memory leading to historic school funding bill.](#)

MEA-MFT and the education coalition kill six public school privatization bills - three pay voucher bills, two charter school bills, and one tax credit bill.

[Governor Steve Bullock vetoes tax credit for student scholarships bill. \(MEA-MFT veto request\).](#)

MEA-MFT, AFL-CIO, AFSCME, and Firefighters organize Montana's Promise, a coalition of unions, retirement system bureaucrats, and legislators that successfully lobbies bills through the legislature to amortize and save Montana's largest public employee retirement pension plans - TRS and PERS.

After a 5-year freeze in base pay, MEA-MFT, AFSCME, and MPEA lobby through the legislature and bargain with the governor the largest increase in state employee pay in 20 years! 3 & 5% base pay increases over the 2015 biennium.

MEA-MFT files lawsuits to preserve guaranteed annual benefit adjustments (GABAs) in PERS and TRS unconstitutionally abridged by the 2013 legislature.

MEA-MFT joins "Free and Fair" to contest legislative referenda 126 and 127 that eliminate election day registration and primary election of party nominees for November general elections.

MEA-MFT organizes and files petitions challenging legal sufficiency of LR 126 (eliminating election-day registration) and LR 127 (open primary & top two candidates move onto the general).

2014

MEA-MFT creates a Hall of Fame and names Pat Williams, John Board, and Jim McGarvey (posthumously) as its first inductees.

Governor Steve Bullock appoints Angela McLean lieutenant governor - first teacher, first member to serve in that position.

20 members run for election or re-election to state legislature.

Montana Supreme Court concurs with MEA-MFT's legal challenge of LR 127 and tosses it from the ballot.

Eric Feaver re-elected to his 16th term as MEA and MEA-MFT president; Melanie Charlson elected vice president; Rich Aarstad re-elected secretary-treasurer; and Amanda Curtis elected NEA director.

MEA-MFT files a legal challenge to Charter Corporation proposed I-172 asserting the ballot statement is argumentative, 172 is special legislation benefiting only one entity, and if adopted would require an appropriation.

Montana State AFL-CIO awards MEA-MFT President Eric Feaver its Lifetime Achievement Award . . . and Montana Nurses Association names Feaver its 2014 "Friend of Nursing."

MEA-MFT defeats LR 126 to end election-day registration.

In concert with Montana Trial Lawyers, MEA-MFT elects Mike Wheat to Montana Supreme Court beating back a serious dark money funded stealth candidate.

10 members elected or reelected to state legislature.

Member Amanda Curtis runs for U.S. Senate.

2015

Dick Barrett, David Smith, and Marilyn Ryan inducted into MEA-MFT Hall of Fame.

MEA-MFT legislative lobbying produces early adoption of k-12 school funding and belated adoption of state employee pay plan.

Member Melissa Romano announces candidacy for Superintendent of Public Instruction.

After losing three-times in district court, State of Montana surrenders to MEA-MFT's litigation protecting guaranteed annual benefit adjustments for all persons enrolled in PERS and TRS on or before July 1, 2013.

Member Denise Juneau announces candidacy for U.S. Congress.

2016

Joe Brookshier, Nancy Keenan, and Patty Myers inducted into MEA-MFT Hall of Fame.

14 members file for election or reelection to state legislature. 4 member hold-over senators.

MEA-MFT RA reduces the size of board of directors, organizes all local affiliates into districts, and requires all directors to be elected at the RA itself.

Eric Feaver re-elected to his 17th term as MEA and MEA-MFT president; Melanie Charlson re-elected vice president; and Kevin Bock elected secretary-treasurer.

Over time (representative list only)

Bed Rock Promotion & Defense of

- Public programs and services
- "Work That Matters"
- Collective bargaining
- Teacher tenure
- Public employee pensions
- School accreditation standards
- Pupil instruction related days and professional development
- Montana minimum wage
- Group health insurance
- Teacher licensure and endorsement

- Constitutional authority of the board of public education and board of regents
- Adequate and equitable property and income taxation
- Voter rights

and Opposition to

- "Anybody can teach"
- Tuition tax credits and pay vouchers
- Private, unaccountable, taxpayer funded charter schools
- Privatization of state programs and services
- "Right to work"
- "Pay check protection"
- Arbitrary caps on state taxation and expenditures
- Attacks on public employee pensions
- Guns in public schools

Member/Leaders in Montana (2016)

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Denise Juneau

Secretary of State

Linda McCulloch

Democratic Party Executive Director

Nancy Keenan

Cascade County Attorney

John Parker

Board of Public Education

4 of 7 – Paul Andersen, Jesse Barnhart, Mary Jo Bremner, Sharon Carroll (ch)

CSPAC

4 of 7 – Kelly Elder, Debbie Hendricks, Noreen Burris, LeeAnne Yenny

Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education

Georgia Gourneau

Montana College & Career Ready Standards Commission

Anne Keith

Variance to Standards Review Board

John Fleming, Anne Keith, Wendy Maratita

Inter-University Benefits Council (IUBC)

Tammy Pilcher, David Shively

State Employee Group Benefits Advisory Council (SEGBAC)

Brian Ehli

TRS Board of Trustees

3 of 6 – Janice Muller, Kari Peiffer, Marilyn Ryan

Montana Board of Investments

1 of 9 - Marilyn Ryan

MPERA Board of Trustees

1 of 9 – Julie McKenna

Montana Digital Academy

1 of 6 – Anthony Lapke

Employee Investment Advisory Council

Diane Fladmo

Board of Labor Appeals

Sara Novak

Judicial Nominations Commission

Janice Bishop

Education Commission of the States

Mike Thiel

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

Steve Gardiner

NEA Legislative Committee

Amanda Curtis (ch)

Montana Workforce Investment Board

Rich Aarstad

NEA Master Teacher Program (Better Lesson)

Kara Nelson, Melissa Romano

AFT Program & Policy Councils

David Shively - Higher Education
Jill Cohenour (ch) - Public Employee
Melanie Charlson - K-12 Certified

AFT Women's Issues

Jennifer Wasson

AFT Early Childhood Education Cadre

Catherine Carraciolo

AFT Executive Council

Eric Feaver, AFT Vice President

AFL-CIO Board of Directors

Tammy Pilcher (President)
Jerry Rukavina

State Legislators

Sen. Jill Cohenour	Helena
Sen. Dick Barrett	Missoula
Sen. Robin Driscoll	Billings
Sen. Tom Facey	Missoula
Sen. Mary McNally	Billings
Sen. Mary Moe	Great Falls
Rep. Moffie Funk	Helena
Rep. Edie McClafferty	Butte
Rep. Mary McNally	Billings
Rep. Bob Mehlhoff	Great Falls
Rep. Jean Price	Great Falls
Rep. Casey Schreiner	Great Falls
Rep. Tom Woods	Bozeman

MEA-MFT Executive Director

Erik Burke

MEA-MFT Officers

Eric Feaver - President
Melanie Charlson – Vice President

Kevin Bock – Secretary/Treasurer
Amanda Curtis - NEA Director

The next time anyone asks 'What
has my union done for me lately?' . .
. give them this.

For more go here -
<http://bit.ly/1CA4fqf>