

MFPE History & member/leader engagement

Significant achievements

December 2017

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).

1883

Congress passes the Pendleton Act professionalizing public employment at the federal level.

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 local in Montana, Local 119.

1920

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

1922 – 26

MSTA adopts new constitution and 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

Congress passes the National Labor Relations Act.

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 (TRS). (MEA and BTU proposal. (First cooperative venture of the two nascent unions?)

1945

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

Montana Public Employees Association (MPEA) created to establish retirement system for public employees.

1947

Legislature reduces vesting in the public employees' retirement system (PERS) from 20 to 10 years.

1955

Legislature raises PERS cash refund from 90 to 100%.

1956

Montana Federation of Labor and Montana State Industrial Union Council merge into the Montana AFL-CIO

Tom Schneider elected to MPEA board

1957

MPEA secures 5-day workweek for public employees

1962

President John F. Kennedy issues Executive Order #10988 allowing federal civilian employees to organize and collectively bargain.

1968

MPEA becomes member of AGE and WAGE (Assembly of Government Employees and Western Assembly of Government Employees).

1971

Legislature adopts state employee sick leave provision of 1 day/month and reimbursement of 25% upon retirement or termination.

Legislature orders unemployment benefits be made available to qualified public employees.

Tom Schneider becomes first full-time employee of MPEA and first executive director.

1972

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

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

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

1973

Legislature adopts public employee collective bargaining act, creates sheriffs' retirement system, and provides unemployment insurance for all public employees.

Pursuant to the new Montana Collective Bargaining Act, MPEA unionizes.

Legislature establishes board of personnel appeals (BOPA) to administer collective bargaining act for public employees.

1974

Legislature extends Montana collective bargaining act to public school employees. MEA and MFT unionize.

Legislature authorizes paid leave for Jury Duty

First MPEA strike – Butte/Silver Bow County employees chapter.

1975

Legislature reduces vesting period in PERS to 5 years, implement statewide classification and pay plan that provides for retroactive pay.

Great Falls Education Association (GFEA) and Billings Education Association (BEA) strike. First public-school strikes in MEA-MFT history.

1978

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

1979

MPEA negotiates an average state employee pay increase of 15%, an increase in state health insurance contribution, and kills "no strike" legislation.

1980

John Board elected 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) but adopt I-105 freezing property taxes at 1986 levels.

1987

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

MEA named plaintiff in school funding equity lawsuit, *Helena v. State of Montana*. MEA, MTSBA, and SAM create Montana Unified Schools Trust (MUST).

1988

Glasgow Education Association strikes.

MFT member Nancy Keenan elected superintendent of public instruction.

1989

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

GFEA strikes a 2d time.

Legislature repeals corporal punishment in Montana public schools. (MEA and MFT bill)

1990

MPEA members vote to retain independence from national union affiliation and create Morey/Bukvich Award in memory of a state and board member to honor exceptional MPEA members.

1991

“United in Common Cause” state employee unions (MPEA, MFT, and AFSCME) 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. MFT blocks affiliation of MPEA with SEIU and AFSCME

1993

MPEA and MFT sign first NO RAID agreement.

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

MPEA, MFT, and AFSCME agree to prebudget negotiations with governor's office.

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 affiliate in Montana.

1995

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

Prebudget negotiations produces new market based pay system with an average base pay increase of 6%.

MEA-MFT Educators' Conference features NEA President Keith Geiger and AFT President Al Shanker on the same stage at the same time. Unprecedented event never replicated.

1996

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

- Teacher of the Year (1996)
- Montana 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 leading opponents).

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

1997

Legislature amends teacher tenure statutes to mandate binding arbitration of disputed tenured 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 voter approved I-125 in 1996 and subsequent legislation in 1997 prohibiting corporate and union expenditures on ballot issues unconstitutional. (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 authority 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 professional 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.

MEA-MFT merger unites MPEA and MEA-MFT in the Montana Department of Revenue

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).

Legislature increases GABA for public employees (not teachers) to 3% after one year of retirement.

2002

BEA strikes a 2d time.

MEA-MFT launches two years of "Stand Up for Education" rallies in school communities across the state.

MPEA creates Thomas E. Schneider Award to honor longest active MPEA member in the region hosting the annual meeting.

MEA-MFT develops and delivers PASS or Paraprofessionals Achieving Standards Successfully to assist paraprofessionals meet NCLB requirements.

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 an 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).

Tom Schneider retires from executive director position at MPEA

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 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 (MNA) 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

In order to save state employee jobs, MPEA, MEA-MFT, and AFSCME prebudget negotiate no base pay increases for the 2011 biennium.

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

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

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

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 at the Capitol.

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).

Legislature fails to adopt a prebudget negotiated pay increase for the 2013 biennium.

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 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 Montana Public Education Center (MT-PEC) - strongest public education coalition in memory leading to historic school funding bill.

MEA-MFT and MT-PEC lobbying kills 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 4-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 creates a Hall of Fame and names Pat Williams, John Board, and Jim

McGarvey (posthumously) as first inductees.

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 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

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 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 Lifetime Achievement Award . . . and Montana Nurses Association names Feaver its 2014 "Friend of Nursing."

Montana voters reject LR 126 to end election-day registration. (MEA-MFT leading opponent)

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 nominated for U.S. Senate in special nominating Democratic Party convention.

Working in concert with MEA-MFT, MPEA directly affiliates with the Montana State AFL-CIO.

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.

MEA-MFT field consultant Tammy Harris first elected president of the Montana AFL-CIO.

MPEA executive director Quinton Nyman elected vice president of the Montana State AFL-CIO.

2016

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

MEA-MFT defeats I-181 crippling the state's bonding capacity for special private interests outside the control of the state.

12 members elected or reelected to state legislature. Counting 2 hold-over Senators, 14 members serve in the 2017 legislature.

MEA-MFT human and financial resources re-elect Steve Bullock governor, elect Dirk Sandefur supreme court justice, and help re-elect Tim Fox, state attorney general.

MPEA and MEA-MFT adopt resolution to explore merger potential

2017

Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Bock unexpectedly passes away. Rich Aarstad elected to complete Kevin's unexpired term.

Tom Gigstad, Wanda Grinde, and Linda McCulloch inducted into MEA-MFT Hall of Fame.

Governor vetoes bills authorizing guns in schools and the state Capitol and a charter school bill. (MEA-MFT veto requests)

Delegates to annual meetings of MEA-MFT and MPEA direct the two unions to merge by mid-summer 2018.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Elsie Arntzen unilaterally seizes control of the Montana Teacher of the Year Program.

MEA-MFT member and state legislator Tom Woods announces candidacy for Congress.

2018 (projecting forward)

January - at a one day simultaneous annual meeting members of MPEA and MEA-MFT vote to merge, adopting constitution for the Montana Federation of Public Employees

April - at the first annual conference of MFPE delegates elect state-wide officers and board of directors

September - MFPE formally replaces MPEA and MEA-MFT, ONE BIG UNION

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 (2017)

Democratic Party Executive Director
Nancy Keenan

Board of Public Education
4 of 7 – Jesse Barnhart, Mary Jo Bremner, Sharon Carroll (ch), Anne Keith

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

Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education
Georgia Gourneau

Variance to Standards Review Board
John Fleming, Kelly Haverlandt, Matt Bell

Montana Board of Investments
Quinton Nyman

Inter-University Benefits Council (IUBC)
Diane Fladmo, David Shively, Quinton Nyman

State Employee Group Benefits Advisory Council (SEGBAC)
Diane Fladmo, Quinton Nyman

TRS Board of Trustees
3 of 6 – Jeff Greenfield, Janice Muller, Kari Peiffer

MPERA Board of Trustees
1 of 9 – Julie McKenna

Montana Digital Academy
1 of 6 – Anthony Lapke

Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission
1 of 5 – Logan Brower

Employee Investment Advisory Council
Diane Fladmo, Trish Klock

Board of Labor Appeals
Sara Novak

Board of Personnel Appeals
Quinton Nyman, Dave Severson (alt)

Judicial Nominations Commission
Janice Bishop

Montana Workforce Investment Board
Rich Aarstad

National Board for Professional Teaching
Standards
Kelly Elder

NEA Master Teacher Program (Better
Lesson)
Jessica Anderson

AFT Executive Council
Eric Feaver, Vice President

AFT Retirement Committee
Eric Feaver (chair)

AFT Women's Issues
Jennifer Wasson

AFT Program & Policy Councils
Vacant - Higher Education PPC
Jill Cohenour (ch) - Public Employee PPC
Melanie Charlson - K-12 Certified PPC
Scott Proctor - PSRP PPC

AFL-CIO Board of Directors
Tammy Pilcher (President)
Quinton Nyman (Vice President)
Brian Murphy

Rich Aarstad

State Legislators – 2017

Sen. Dick Barrett	Missoula
Sen. Jill Cohenour	Helena
Sen. Tom Facey	Missoula
Sen. Edie McClafferty	
Butte	
Sen. Mary McNally	Billings
Sen. Mary Moe	Great Falls
Rep. Jacob Bachmeier	Havre
Rep. Willis Curdy	Missoula
Rep. Amanda Curtis	Butte
Rep. John Fleming	St. Ignatius
Rep. Moffie Funk	Helena
Rep. Jean Price	Great Falls
Rep. Casey Schreiner	Great Falls
Rep. Marilyn Ryan	Missoula
Rep. Tom Woods	Bozeman

MEA-MFT Executive Director

Erik Burke

MEA-MFT Officers

Eric Feaver - President
Melanie Charlson – Vice President
Rich Aarstad – Secretary/Treasurer
Amanda Curtis - NEA Director

MPEA Executive Director

Quinton Nyman

MPEA Officers

Pam Burgess-Hayes – President
DeeDe Baker – 1st Vice President
Lisa Sheehan – 2nd Vice President
Brian Murphy – 3rd Vice President
Bill Dwyer – 4th Vice President
Crystal Murphy – Secretary/Treasurer
Steve Allen – Retiree Appointee