

# MEA-MFT Legislative Program

As amended - April 2, 2016 – MEA-MFT Representative Assembly

## Quality Public Schools

MEA-MFT **supports** legislation to:

1. Adequately and equitably fund quality public pre-k, elementary, secondary, and university system education.
2. Qualify classified public school employees for unemployment compensation when not working.
3. Expand state-funded public education opportunities to all pre-k school age children.
4. Increase funding of adult basic education.
5. Fund implementation of mutually developed and implemented supervision and evaluation systems that include peer mentorship and peer review.
6. Increase state funded stipend for teachers who earn National Board Certification.
7. Increase and sustain affordable student access to higher education through state-based college scholarship funds and need-based aid.
8. Maintain full state funding of the Montana Digital Academy.
9. Fund incentives for Montana licensed teachers who provide dual enrollment instruction through Montana's postsecondary institutions.
10. Mandate compulsory enrollment from age 6 to age 18 or completion of high school diploma or equivalent.
11. Maintain gun free schools and campuses.

MEA-MFT **opposes** legislation to:

12. Amend or repeal Article X, Education and Public Lands, Montana State Constitution.\*

- Article X, among other things:
- guarantees equality of educational opportunity, free quality public elementary and secondary schools, public school funding equity;
- recognizes and promises to preserve the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians;
- creates an inviolate public school fund, a board of land commissioners to

administer state school lands, and dedicates revenue from the school fund to public education;

- prohibits public aid to sectarian schools;
- prohibits the teaching of sectarian tenants in public schools;
- creates and empowers a state board of education, board of regents, and a board of public education;
- empowers elected local boards of trustees with supervision and control of the schools in their districts.

13. Invest public revenues in private and/or sectarian schools, including charter and home schools.
14. Establish alternatives within the k-12 public school system, including "charter schools", that do not guarantee equitable student access, teacher licensure and endorsement, employee collective bargaining, and local school district accountability and control.
15. Abolish compulsory school enrollment.
16. Dictate school accreditation and teacher licensure standards, curricula, and methods of instruction.
17. Authorize school districts to license who shall teach.
18. Permit school districts to employ non-licensed persons as professional educators.
19. Diminish or abolish Montana tenure protection.
20. Legislation that would disaggregate an existing school district into constituent parts or otherwise compromise the governance and administrative integrity thereof.

## Quality Public Programs & Services

MEA-MFT supports legislation to:

21. Adequately fund quality public programs and services.
22. Require adequate staffing ratios at public health care facilities, schools, corrections, and other public services.
23. Prevent degradation of the quality of public programs and services through vacancy savings, temporary employees, unlicensed personnel, emergency hires, and modified positions.
24. Fund state agency budgets formulated as a result of employee contract negotiations.
25. Fund and implement a state employee pay plan that is collectively bargained.

26. Encourage and invest in quality public services through career ladders and educational opportunities.
27. Provide employer reimbursement to public employees for costs associated with education, licensure, or certification associated with employment.
28. Reimburse state employees reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred while on state business or at mandated state professional development.
29. Prohibit vacancy savings in 24/7 institutions and limit vacancy savings to more than 3% at state agencies with 100 or fewer full-time employees.

MEA-MFT **opposes** legislation to:

30. Privatize public programs and services.
31. Limit or deny opportunities for public employees to serve in public office.
32. Cap state employee salaries and/or benefits.

## Public Services/Private Contractors

MEA-MFT **supports** legislation to

33. Hold private contractors of public funds to the same standards and accountability established for public entities.
34. Require adequate staffing ratios at private residential treatment facilities and privately operated, publicly funded facilities.
35. Provide for increased Medicaid reimbursements for services provided at privately administered unionized facilities.

## Head Start

MEA-MFT **supports** legislation to

36. Initiate sustainable state funding of public Head Start programs.

## Union Rights

MEA-MFT **supports** legislation to:

37. Adopt a Montana specific "employee free choice act."
38. Require neutrality agreements whenever the state or local governments, including school districts privatize a public program or service.

MEA-MFT **opposes** legislation to:

39. Diminish the right and opportunity of all public and private sector employees to organize and bargain collectively.
40. Establish "right-to-work" or diminish or restrict what it means to be the exclusive bargaining agent empowered to negotiate fair share, representation fee, or agency fee.
41. Prohibit payroll deduction of union dues and fees.

## Taxation

MEA-MFT **supports** legislation to:

42. Create and maintain a state tax system that is adequate, equitable, balanced, simple, progressive, and universal.

MEA-MFT **opposes** legislation to:

43. Eliminate property taxes or income taxes.

MEA-MFT supports legislation to:

44. Provide funding to build, maintain, and improve public schools and public facilities in Montana.

## Retirement

MEA-MFT **supports** legislation to:

45. Share equitably between employer and employee increases in contributions necessary to actuarially fund the Teachers' and Public Employees' Retirement systems.
46. Increase state funding of the Montana University System Retirement Plan.

MEA-MFT **opposes** legislation to:

47. Amend or repeal Article II, Declaration of Rights, Section 31. Ex post facto,

obligation of contracts, and irrevocable privileges, that states:

No ex post facto law nor any law impairing the obligation of contracts, or making any irrevocable grant of special privileges, franchise, or immunities, shall be passed by the legislature.

48. Amend or repeal Article VIII, Revenue & Finance, Section 15, Public Retirement System Assets, that states in part:

{1} Public retirement systems shall be funded on an actuarially sound basis. Public retirement system assets, including income and actuarially required contributions, shall not be encumbered, diverted, reduced, or terminated and shall be held in trust to provide benefits to participants and their beneficiaries and to defray administrative expenses.

49. Eliminate public employee defined benefit retirement plans.
50. Reduce or eliminate guaranteed annual benefit adjustments in the Teachers' and Public Employees' Retirement Systems.

## Health Care

MEA-MFT **supports** legislation to:

51. Expand Medicaid to all eligible Montana citizens.
52. Create a mandatory statewide school employee health care insurance risk pool.
53. Promote and expand health care cooperatives and clinics.
54. Establish a state funded incentive for school employee insurance plans that provide coverage for all school employees working 20 hours or more per week.
55. Create a state-based single payer health care delivery system.

MEA-MFT **opposes** legislation to:

56. Restrict or eliminate public employee access to state employee health care clinics.

## Employment Rights

MEA-MFT **supports** legislation to:

57. Prohibit workplace discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity, economic status, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, or any other differentiating or minority characteristic.

## Voter Rights

MEA-MFT **supports** legislation to:

58. Promote and support the right and responsibility to vote by improving access to and ease of the voting process.

MEA-MFT **opposes** legislation to:

59. Diminish any person's ability to vote.

## Public Lands

MEA-MFT **opposes** legislation to:

60. Transfer ownership of federal public property to state ownership or reduce or eliminate public access to state and federal land and water.