



The Catalyst



Montgomery County Education Association

Member Newsletter

Vol. 3

Summer 2019

SPECIAL BARGAINING EDITION

Meet your MCEA Bargaining Team Leaders

As we prepare to negotiate our full contract later this year, it is the goal of MCEA to create and support the best member-led bargaining team possible. Bargaining is a tricky art. It requires the ability to listen carefully and engage with meaning, never losing sight of the goal. That goal is getting guaranteed contractual respect for our work as education professionals. The team will make sure our working conditions are commensurate with the high effort we put in each day. Leading that charge will be Kember Kane, Glenn Miller, and Lisa Adkins.



Kember Kane is a fourth-generation teacher and a proud parent of former MCPS students. Kember is currently teaching at Roscoe Nix ES and has also worked at Broad Acres ES. She has experience in Pennsylvania, Arizona, and Maryland teaching in a variety of roles - including substitute teaching and teaching at Title 1 schools. She has worked in staff development and has experience supervising all levels of elementary instruction. Kember is fully committed to union work and to ensuring that teachers have the materials, time, and training we need to do the job we work hard at doing.



Glenn Miller is an educator who has worked at Wheaton HS and Sherwood HS for the past 20 years. Glenn has served on the Council of Teaching and Learning and has been on the MCEA Board of Directors. He has prior experience serving on the MCEA contract bargaining team, impact bargaining, and the contract maintenance team. Glenn is a proud parent of two current MCPS students. He knows that the contract we negotiate will serve to ensure that his children have the best compensated and respected teaching staff possible.



Lisa Adkins will be serving to assist Kember and Glenn in a “Bargaining Chair Emeritus” role. Lisa has been at the negotiation table several times for MCEA. Her vast institutional knowledge of the process and people involved will help move our voice and work forward. Lisa is a former Elementary Chair of the Council of Teaching and Learning and currently sits on CTL as a grade 3 representative. She has worked on many issues surrounding curriculum and professional development at MCPS as an MCEA representative. Lisa is another member of our team who also understands the impact of our union work for her children, who are MCPS students.

Bargaining team work requires a great deal of time and engagement. The work is not easy – even under the best of circumstances. MCEA is proud to have these member leaders at the table for us.

Stay tuned for the announcement of the full bargaining team at the beginning of the school year.

Collective Bargaining: *What It Is and How It Works*

Adapted from “Collective Bargaining,” published by the NEA

Collective bargaining—a mutual exchange of positions followed by agreement—enables a group of employees with a “community of interest” to negotiate a binding written contract with an employer. It gives workers a voice in their workplace and has become a respected approach, valued by employees and employers in the private sector and throughout various levels of government.

Effective bargaining is based on ideals that resonate with both workers and employers, such as working together to solve problems and treating each other with respect. Parties can exchange the frank views of their constituents as they explore and resolve the issues being bargained. When labor and management can come to agreement on salary and benefits while also improving teaching and learning conditions, everyone benefits.

In a non-bargaining environment, workers can only preserve agreements on wages, hours, and working conditions through relationships with managers, legislative lobbying, or employer-written policies and handbooks. Through collective bargaining, however, such arrangements are written into a binding contract, outlasting union and management turnover.

A negotiated union contract is not a set of permanent work rules carved in stone. Any section can, by mutual agreement, be discarded or revised during the talks over a successor contract. And in the healthiest education environments, good union-management relations is a continuous process—often carried out monthly through a joint labor-management committee.

Public education bargaining is constituent driven. On the labor side, union members and their elected leaders steer union decision making. Members determine union bargaining proposals and participate in a democratic, contract ratification vote.

Collective bargaining is a process through which employee union and employer representatives exchange positions, mutually solve problems, and reach a written agreement. That approved contract binds both groups.



I'm union strong because I believe our kids and our teachers deserve the BEST!
–Danillya Wilson, Wheaton Woods ES



I'm union strong because all voices need to be heard.
–Dr. Keith Adams, Gaithersburg HS



I'm union strong because I want what is best for our students.
–Christy D'Angelo, Wheaton HS

Bargaining Survey Results

As we prepare for an activated year of union strength, we want to share with you some of the preliminary results of the bargaining survey that you completed this spring. The top ranked issue for our membership? **Meeting the Needs of Each Learner.** It will not be a surprise to most of you that our members see the importance of providing increased instructional preparation time and giving our teachers the discretion in what, how, and when they plan to be critical in meeting the needs of *all of our individual students.*

Our bargaining will also naturally involve issues such as wages, benefits, and working conditions, but our members have made it clear that what they care about most – why they have chosen this critical profession – is the students that we work with every single day.

What are some of the other top issues voted by our members? Among the most important are:

- **Assessments & Testing**, giving teachers discretion in the assessments that we give in our classrooms that aren't mandated by law;
- **Student Physical, Social, and Psychological Well-being**, ensuring that the programs, services, and staffing meet the mental health and social needs – as well as the academic needs – of the students;
- **Staffing/Ratios**, increasing the transparency and oversight of the actual staffing ratios in classrooms;
- **Special Education**, supporting students with special needs by increasing special education staffing and reducing caseloads and non-mandated paperwork;
- **Salary Scale Reorganization**, improving the salary scale so that members can reach the top step sooner; and
- **Student Discipline**, increasing support for school-wide discipline plans, including restorative practices.

The bargaining team will use our members' responses (and dig further into those responses) in order to represent all of you and what you have declared as your priorities when advocating on your behalf in bargaining next school year.



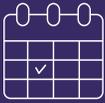
I'm union strong because there is power in numbers!
–Anjali Wells, Briggs Chaney MS



I'm union strong because I am involved in meeting all the needs of all stakeholders.
–Java Robinson, Greenwood ES



I'm union strong because united we win for our students.
–José J. Rodriguez, Parkland MS



UPCOMING EVENTS

MCEA Union Summer Program

Monday, July 8–
Friday, August 23

New Educator Orientation

Tuesday, August 20–
Friday, August 23

Pre-service

Monday, August 26–
Friday, August 30

First Day of School

Tuesday, September 3



Are you interested in learning more about how we build our union and improve our working conditions and our kids' learning conditions? Apply to our MCEA Union Summer Program! We have already received over 200 applicants, and MCEA will be conducting interviews the week of June 10.

This summer, we will spend time engaging with MCEA members and new educators on issues important to them and actions they can take to build a powerful union and stronger contract. The program will launch with two full days of training on July 8 and 9. This opportunity comes with a paid stipend. (This is an NEA grant funded program and we have limited funds available for participants.)

When: July 8-August 23

**Where: Montgomery County Education Association
12 Taft Court Rockville, MD 20850**

For more information, please reach out to your UniServ Director.



I'm union strong because without my MCEA peers, I could not stand alone.
–Kim Moore, Clarksburg HS



I'm union strong because I'm a team player!
–Tim Shaffer, White Oak MS

ABOUT MCEA

MCEA is one of the largest local affiliates of the National Education Association (NEA). MCEA is a leader in efforts to build a new kind of teachers union that responds to the needs of today's educators. We are more than 14,000 classroom teachers, guidance counselors, speech pathologists, media specialists, and other non-supervisory certified educators in the Montgomery County (Maryland) Public Schools system. We work in a rapidly urbanizing suburban district with a growing divide between haves and have-nots.

For more information, please email helpdesk@mceanea.org.

mceanea.org

 [@mceanea](https://twitter.com/mceanea)

 [/montgomeryteachers](https://www.facebook.com/montgomeryteachers)