



Leading the Way to Great Public Schools for Every Maine Student

Information about the Maine Education Association for the
2021 Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

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MEA VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

We, the members of the Maine Education Association, are the voice of education professionals in Maine. Our work is fundamental to the state, and we accept the profound trust placed in us.

Our Vision: *A great public school for every Maine student.*

Our Mission: *To advocate for education professionals and to unite our members and the people of Maine to fulfill the promise of public education to prepare every student to succeed.*

MEA Core Values: These principles guide our work and define our mission:

Equal Opportunity: We believe public education is the gateway to opportunity. All students have the human and civil right to a quality public education that develops their potential, independence, and character.

A Just Society: We believe public education is vital to building respect for the worth, dignity, and equality of every individual in our diverse society.

Democracy: We believe public education is the cornerstone of our state. Public education provides individuals with the skills to be involved, informed, and engaged in our representative democracy.

Professionalism: We believe the expertise and judgment of all education professionals are critical to student success. We maintain the highest professional standards, and we expect the status, compensation, and respect due all professionals.

Partnership: We believe partnerships with parents, families, communities, and other stakeholders are essential to quality public education and student success.

Collective Action: We believe individuals are strengthened when they work together for the common good. As education professionals, we improve both our professional status and the quality of public education when we unite and advocate collectively.

MEA has nearly 24,000 members—including teachers, counselors, librarians, social workers, nurses, educational technicians, custodians, bus drivers, secretaries, food service, and administrators in Maine’s pre-K—12 public schools, faculty, professional and support staff in our public universities and community colleges, as well as retired educators.

The **MEA Priorities** for this legislative session include the following:

State Funding

Educational Policy

Improving communication and collaboration between School Boards and Educators

Health and Safety Committees

Addressing issues related to remote instruction and working and educating during the pandemic

Challenges our educators have been facing and coping with during the pandemic:

Full compliance by all with the safety requirements;

Adequate ventilation and space;

Inequities—especially the ‘digital divide’;

Shortages—vacancies, lack of substitutes, PPE

Stress—worrying about students, about their families, about their health; the ‘chronic uncertainty’;

Lack of childcare;

Possible loss of income—need for paid leaves;

Concerns about loss of programs (especially the visual and performing arts);

WORKLOAD—so many more demands on their time—working ‘above and beyond their usual above and beyond’.

What would help:

Collaboration—a voice in decisions

Resources

Full compliance with safety requirements

Removal of tasks not critical to teaching and learning

Leaves similar to those that were provided until Dec. 31st

Testing for COVID-19

Earlier access to vaccinations for those who want them

Concerns in the immediate future:

Shortages in all areas—“There is no shortage of shortages!”—issues both of recruitment and of retention;

Continued concerns for safety—the need to continue to require the safety measures;

Adequate resources and funding—the greater needs our students will have going forward, additional supports, additional staffing—all needed but also must maintain well-rounded programs!