

**MEA-MFT History –
significant achievements
as of December 2011 & growing**

1882

Seven years before statehood, teachers create Territorial Teachers' Association, later to call itself Montana Teachers' Association, & 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

1922 – 26

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

1945

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

1937

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

1972

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

Jim McGarvey begins 28 year career as MFT president &/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 & bargain collectively under Montana collective bargaining act (MEA & MFT actively lobby)

Great Falls Education Association (GFEA) & Billings Education Association (BEA) strike

1980

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

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 & licensed nontenured teachers (MEA plaintiff)

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

1985

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

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, & practices advisory council (CSPAC) (MEA bill)

Legislature mandates schools close for two pupil instruction related (PIR) days every year & further dictates that teachers must be paid those two days. (MEA-MFT 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, & SAM create Montana Unified Schools Trust

GFEA strikes a 2d time

1991

State employees strike

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

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

Laurel Unified Education Association strikes

1992

MFT & MPEA launch prebudget, state employee pay plan negotiations

1993-94

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

Missoula elementary & high school district classified MEA & MFT affiliates merge into Merged Missoula Classified Employees' Organization – the first MEA-MFT merged bargaining unit in Montana

1995

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

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

1996

MEA & 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 & Math Awards (2007)

Lame Deer Education Association strikes

Voters reject CI-66 & 67 – proposed constitutional amendments to require voter approval of tax increases & state spending (MEA & MFT primary opponents)

Voters defeat C-30 – proposed constitutional amendment to abolish board of regents (MEA & 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 & subsequent legislation prohibiting corporate & 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 & endorsed teachers, providing open student enrollment, & permitting collective bargaining (MEA proposal)

2000
 MEA-MFT Merge

MEA-MFT affiliates with AFL-CIO

Eric Feaver elected first MEA-MFT president & Jim McGarvey elected first MEA-MFT vice president.

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

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 & Office of Public Instruction collaborate on first mentorship institute

MEA-MFT creates professional development program to help paraprofessionals meet quality standards created by No Child Left Behind

2003-05

Prebudget negotiations & 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

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 & PERS unfunded liabilities & creates a significant ongoing infusion of state funding of TRS

2006

Montana supreme court (Roberts) affirms a school district must bargain terms & conditions of employment – including extra-contractual incentives or bonuses

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 & 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)

2008

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

MEA-MFT & Montana Nurses Association adopt joint agreement to work with each other in common defense, organizing,

membership growth, professional development, leadership training, & 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 & endorsed (MEA-MFT proposal)

2009

Pre-budget pay plan negotiations & 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 & now represents faculty at every public higher education institution in Montana

MEA-MFT creates member/leader program & policy councils

Board of public education adopts school accreditation standard - 10.57.437 – Class 8 teacher license enabling college &

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 & federal rules qualify state & university employee families for Healthy Montana Kids (MEA-MFT proposal)

2011

MEA-MFT sponsors ‘No Fooling with our Future’ rally

Members Jill Cohenour & Dani Tenneson first state employees to serve as delegates at NEA representative assembly

Governor Brian Schweitzer vetoes bill to terminate Teachers’ Retirement System defined benefit plan (MEA-MFT 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 & 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 & adjunct faculty

Over time (a representative list)

Bed Rock Defense of

Public programs & services

Work That Matters

Collective bargaining

Teacher tenure (due process/just cause)

Defined benefit retirement

School accreditation standards

Pupil instruction related days dedicated to teacher professional development

**Montana minimum wage
Group health insurance**

Teacher licensure

Board of public education & board of regents

Adequate & equitable property & income taxation

& Opposition to

Alternative teacher licensure

Tuition tax credits & pay vouchers

Private, unaccountable, tax-payer funded charter schools

Privatization of state programs & services

Right to work

Pay check protection

Caps on state expenditures

Members serving Montana (2011)

Board of Public Education

4 of 7 – Sharon Carroll, Doug Cordier,
Patty Myers, Bernie Olson

Board of Regents

1 of 7 – Angela McLean

TRS Board of Trustees

3 of 6 – Jeff Greenfield, Darrell Layman,
Kari Peiffer

CSPAC

4 of 7 – Sharon Applegate, Janice Bishop,
Patty Muir, Jon Runnells

Board of Personnel Appeals

Substitute labor member – Jerry Rukavina

Montana Digital Academy

1 of 6 - Teacher appointee – Barb Fettig

Cascade County Attorney

John Parker

2011 State Legislature

Rep. Elsie Arntzen	Billings
Rep. Dick Barrett	Missoula
Sen. Gary Branae	Billings
Rep. Robin Driscoll	Billings
Sen. Ron Erickson	Missoula
Sen. Tom Facey	Missoula
Rep. Edie McClafferty	Butte
Rep. Mary McNally	Billings
Rep. Bob Mehlhoff	Great Falls
Rep. Jean Price	Great Falls
Rep. Franke Wilmer	Bozeman

Secretary of State

Linda McCulloch

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Denise Juneau

AFL-CIO Board of Directors

Tammy Pilcher

Jerry Rukavina

MEA-MFT Officers

Eric Feaver - President

Jeff Greenfield – Vice President

Jill Cohenour – Secretary/Treasurer

Karin Stanford – NEA Director

MEA-MFT Executive Director

Erik Burke

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