

# 2009 MSTTA LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



## STATE ISSUES

### Funding

MSTA supports full finding of the foundation formula. Increases in general revenue should go first toward the school foundation formula program and second to categorical programs.

### Proposition A

MSTA believes that changes must be made to the voter-approved Proposition A. All money from this measure must go to education, but the state should not use the flawed method of adjusting the adequacy target in the foundation formula. MSTTA believes this money should be used to increase teacher salaries, to increase transportation funding for districts, and to improve and expand early childhood programs.

### Professional Negotiations

MSTA supports local boards of education adopting a policy that outlines a process for input and feedback from school employees at all levels regarding salary, working conditions, employment-benefit issues, personnel policies and appropriate student-related issues. The process should result in written agreements and written statements of unresolved issues.

Any proposed legislation should require local board policy to provide for representation by one or more organizations. In addition, such legislation should stipulate that at no time shall membership in any organization be a condition of employment or continued employment, nor may any fee for representation be required of an employee.

### Retirement

MSTA supports the use of an earnings limit instead of a limit on the num-

ber of hours a retiree may work while receiving Public School Retirement System and Public Education Employee Retirement System retirement benefits.

MSTA supports the repeal of the 10-percent cap on salary increases during the final average-salary period for purposes of determining retirement benefits.

## FEDERAL ISSUES

### Retirement and Social Security Benefits

MSTA strongly opposes the recent change in position by the Social Security Administration that only those positions that were included in PSRS at the time the school district entered into a "Section 218 Agreement" are excluded from Social Security. MSTTA believes that all personnel working for a school district and who hold a teaching certificate should be included in PSRS and excluded from Social Security.

MSTA opposes any state or federal proposals to group the teachers' retirement system funds with Social Security. In addition, the association opposes provisions that deprive teachers of their earned benefits accrued by participation in the Social Security system, including the offset provision and the windfall-benefits law.

### Federal Influence in Education

MSTA opposes federal supersession, including No Child Left Behind, over state and local responsibility for public education, including assessments that set standards and drive curriculum.

MSTA encourages the federal government to implement an accountability system that gives credit for progress and/or proficiency.

MSTA encourages the federal government to create Adequate Yearly

Progress (AYP) levels that distinguish struggling schools from those needing limited assistance.

MSTA supports allowing more than one year to implement plans before subjecting schools or districts to additional sanctions. School or districts should be identified as "In Need of Improvement" only when the same subgroup of students fails to make AYP in the same subject for at least two consecutive years.

MSTA supports allowing states flexibility in which to design accountability systems that go beyond scores on statewide assessments. Systems could include local assessments, teacher-designed classroom assessments, portfolios, graduation/dropout rate, in-grade retention, percent of students taking Advanced Placement classes/exams, and college-enrollment rates.

## MSTA OPPOSES

MSTA opposes school vouchers or education tax credits that would divert public funds to pay for private-school tuition.

MSTA opposes merit pay, including the use of standardized test scores or other subjective criteria as a measurement of teacher performance or to determine future salary increases.

MSTA strongly opposes strikes, blue flu and other tactics that could interrupt the instruction of students.



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