

Maryland State Education Association  
Montgomery County Education Association – NEA  
2010  
Questionnaire For *Candidates for Maryland Delegate*

- 
1. While our members recognize the fiscal challenges faced by the state, they are concerned about the possibility of shifting pension costs to the counties and how that would have an impact on local funding for schools systems. How would you ensure that solutions developed to deal with spending priorities, including pensions, do not hurt students and education employees?

During this time of economic hardship, jurisdictions across our country are closing schools and cutting jobs. The legislature, state school board, county council, and local school board must evaluate costs and programs to ensure that our budget dollars are being spent on our students, classrooms, teachers, staff, and on programs that have proven to work and are effective; not on unnecessary bureaucracy and trial and error initiatives. Investment strategies must be reviewed to determine risk and to maximize all potential earnings. Any pension shifting must be offset by additional revenues from the state.

*The following are MSEA position statements on critical issues in the MSEA Legislative Program. For each issue, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the MSEA position. Be certain each comment clearly indicates your position. There is space provided for you to elaborate on your positions.*

**Agree with the MSEA position statement** – *Would support legislation that reflects the MSEA position*

**Disagree with the MSEA position statement** – *Would oppose legislation that reflects the MSEA position.*

2. The existing Maintenance of Effort law dealing with a minimum level of local funding for public education is intended to reinforce the shared responsibility between the state and counties for adequate funding of our public schools. MSEA is opposed to efforts to reduce or weaken the minimum funding requirement. Do you agree or disagree with MSEA's position?

  X   Agree with MSEA position

           Disagree with MSEA position

Comment:

Montgomery County is home to one of the finest school systems in the country. The Maintenance of Effort Law is essential if we are to stay competitive and keep Montgomery County moving forward. In the past, Montgomery County has always exceeded its' Maintenance of Effort. A unique situation was created this year due to the shortfall. With strong, cohesive leadership, as this crisis abates, Montgomery County will again exceed its' Maintenance of Effort.

Maryland State Education Association  
Montgomery County Education Association – NEA  
2010  
Questionnaire For *Candidates for Maryland Delegate*

3. The Thornton Commission recommended an adjustment in State Education aid to reflect regional differences in the cost of providing educational services, called the Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI). MSEA believes GCEI is an integral part of full funding for the Thornton plan and should be included in the State's school finance system.

Agree with MSEA position

Disagree with MSEA position

Comment:

Thornton funding provided an additional \$1.3 billion in educational funding. This funding has helped propel our state school system to its' #1 ranking by Education Week as the top school system in the country. The Geographic Cost of Education Index is an important component to the Thornton funding because it helps to narrow the achievement gap among students and provides extra funding for jurisdictions where the need for services is greater. Montgomery County's diverse student body would greatly benefit from this extra funding as we attempt to level the playing field.

4. Public schools accept and educate all students who enter them. Diversion of public funds from public schools jeopardizes this mission. Therefore, MSEA opposes draining funds from public schools through private or religious school vouchers, direct state funds for programs, textbooks, technology, direct state aid to non-public schools at risk of closing, or tax credits for private school tuition.

Agree with MSEA position

Disagree with MSEA position

Comment:

Constitutionally, Maryland must provide an education for all its students. Private school, however, is a choice that individuals make and thus, they must be responsible for their choices and the costs of those choices. Fiscal responsibility dictates that our commitment must be to our state's public schools.

Maryland State Education Association  
Montgomery County Education Association – NEA  
2010  
Questionnaire For *Candidates for Maryland Delegate*

5. As we look ahead to the next four years, we realize that budget and revenue changes are inevitable. To raise additional revenues, MSEA supports full utilization of existing revenue producers (homestead tax credit and local income tax), spreading the base (combined reporting for corporations and sales tax on services), and reform of the state's income tax brackets. Would you consider these options and do you have suggestions for additional revenue producers?

Agree with MSEA position

Disagree with MSEA position

Comment:

I would consider all of these options. In addition, we may have some additional sources of revenue stemming from an improved business climate, less unemployment, and slot revenue. As a public official, I would give all of these options due diligence and, at that point, make a determination as to which are best for Montgomery County and the state.

6. MSEA opposes contracting out, to the private sector, management and/or delivery of goods and services traditionally provided by public school employees.

Agree with MSEA position

Disagree with MSEA position

Comment:

All services traditionally provided by public school employees should remain as such. We should particularly not be considering doing so at a time of economic hardship. This could possibly result in jobs leaving our state completely. We should do everything possible to keep good jobs at home.

Maryland State Education Association  
Montgomery County Education Association – NEA  
2010  
Questionnaire For *Candidates for Maryland Delegate*

7. MSEA opposes public funding of religious and private for-profit charter schools and kindergarten programs. MSEA does not oppose public charter schools that meet the following criteria.

- Are under the control of local school boards
- All students are eligible
- Are held to the same standards as other public schools
- Staff members have the same collective bargaining rights as their counterparts in mainstream public schools and
- Must be qualitatively different from what is available in mainstream public schools and not just an avenue for parental choice.

Agree with MSEA position

Disagree with MSEA position

Comment:

I agree with MSEA's position. Religious, private for profit charter schools and kindergarten programs must have accountability and oversight by local school boards and meet the same standards as public schools such as work conditions and civil rights laws.

8. MSEA supports increased funding and resources at the national, state and local level for meaningful professional development for school personnel.

Agree with MSEA position

Disagree with MSEA position

Comment:

Professional development is a key component we must have if we are to remain a top level school system. We must allow teachers and other school system personnel to grow in their jobs. Professional development enhances existing skills and ensures that staff remains current with new developments in their field. Professional conferences and training are an integral part of being highly effective.

Maryland State Education Association  
Montgomery County Education Association – NEA  
2010  
Questionnaire For *Candidates for Maryland Delegate*

9. MSEA supports a comprehensive system of assessment and accountability that relies on multiple measures of student achievement and prohibits the use of a sole test for high-stakes decisions. High-stakes decisions about students and schools should not be made on the basis of one test.

Agree with MSEA position                       Disagree with MSEA position

Comment:

No community is the same, no school is the same, and no child is the same. Our students should be acquiring knowledge to become scholars who are prepared to solve the problems of tomorrow. Teaching to a test will not develop thinkers; it develops test takers.

10. MSEA supports a single salary schedule to insure that all educators are fairly compensated. Any system that provides additional compensation beyond the single salary schedule should meet the following criteria:

- a) The design of the system must be collectively bargained.
- b) Additional compensation must not be based solely on student test scores.
- c) The criteria to determine eligibility for additional compensation must be clearly stated and subject to objective measurement.
- d) The system should not directly or indirectly limit the number of education employees who are eligible for the additional compensation. All education employees should have the opportunity to meet the standards and receive the extra pay. The system may recognize and reward additional knowledge and skills the employees have acquired over the course of their careers.
- e) Full funding should be available to sustain the system.
- f) The system should not diminish the professional status of those education employees who do not receive the additional compensation.

Agree with MSEA position                       Disagree with MSEA position

Comment:

I agree. In addition, teachers who are highly qualified and teach in difficult school settings, need to be considered for additional compensation if by having that teacher in the school, it makes a substantial difference in test scores. It is much more challenging to teach in some schools than it is in others.

Maryland State Education Association  
Montgomery County Education Association – NEA  
2010

Questionnaire For *Candidates for Maryland Delegate*

11. School buildings are the place of learning for 843,861 children and are the workplace for over 80,000 employees. The state Interagency Committee on School Construction currently has a \$900 backlog of requests for school construction projects. MSEA supports continued state funding of at least \$250 million annually for school construction.

Agree with MSEA position

Disagree with MSEA position

Comment:

I support continued state funding of at least \$250 million annually for school construction. The Capital Budget provides for school construction and the necessity of providing safe, uncrowded, accessible, and up-to-date facilities for students and staff in which to work their very best, cannot be underestimated.

Maryland State Education Association  
Montgomery County Education Association – NEA  
2010  
Questionnaire For *Candidates for Maryland Delegate*

**Leadership positions in civic and community organizations:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Montgomery County Commission for Women (currently serving 2<sup>nd</sup> term)
- 2009 & 2010 Chair, Women’s Legislative Briefing, Montgomery County Commission for Women
- Board Member, Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women
- Chair, National Trends and Services, Silver Spring Chapter of the Links, Inc. – (National Trends & Services focuses on promoting healthy living through Maryland’s 10,000 Steps Program in partnership with Northwood High School and on legislative issues in the County).
- Past Chair, Montgomery County Community Development Advisory Committee (served 2 terms)
- Past Vice President of Scholarship, Ivy Vine Charities, Inc. - (served 2 terms) (Ivy Vine Charities provides scholarships for the County’s graduating high school seniors).
- Past Financial Secretary, Ivy Vine Charities, Inc.

**Please share with us what you consider to be your most significant achievements:**

It is hard to specify what accomplishments I consider “significant.” I believe that the true success of a person is measured by helping others, and that “for those to whom much is given, much is required.” Throughout my life, my goal has always been to help those who have not been as fortunate as I and to give back as best I could. To this end, several accomplishments of which I am most proud include: (1) working to forge a partnership with Northwood High School, in conjunction with the Silver Spring Chapter of the Links, Inc., focused on healthy living; (2) while in private practice, providing pro bono services to families in need and being appointed as a Best Interest Attorney for children of divorcing parents by the court; and, (3) while attending the College of William and Mary, volunteering as a mentor with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Williamsburg and working to develop an outreach program to recruit, retain, and involve the retired population of Williamsburg in a mentoring program for the city’s youth. It was also a surprise and an honor to receive the Community Service Award along with my diploma from Villanova School of Law. It’s humbling to receive recognition for things you do from the heart.

Maryland State Education Association  
Montgomery County Education Association – NEA  
2010  
Questionnaire For *Candidates for Maryland Delegate*

**List your top three priorities for Maryland:**

1. **Jobs** – During this economic downturn, creating new jobs and maintaining existing jobs for the residents of Montgomery County must be a top priority. As a delegate, I will work to ensure that Montgomery County remains an attractive location for the business community.
2. **Education** - It is critical that we continue to invest in our education system to ensure that our children have the best education possible. As a product of Maryland's public schools, and the daughter of a public school teacher, our public schools will be one of my highest priorities.
3. **Transportation** - The time has come to make the tough decisions necessary that will allow all Montgomery County residents to live, work and play in our county and have unfettered access to amenities throughout the region without having to expend precious hours traveling to and from destinations.