

February Webinars:

EARLY CAREER EDUCATOR RACIAL JUSTICE WEBINAR SERIES (now SCECH eligible)

Note: Though it is understood that many veteran MEA members may wish to attend this series (and they can), this particular series is designed with an Early Career Educator lens, so this series would be good for your new-hire outreach. SCECH is available to members in good standing only.

Winter-Spring Webinar Series and Organizing Initiative

The theme of this series: Looking towards a post-COVID workplace.

The Winter/Spring Webinar Series is intended to address the needs and questions educators may have as we look towards a post-COVID teaching and learning environment where the impacts to our students, our school districts, and ourselves may linger. How do we take care of students and ourselves while continuing to grow professionally?

We are offering a series of Webinars designed to address the multiple facets of that question – SCECH Available.

For those of you who have Association Facebook pages, twitter, or other social media accounts, below are the links and images you can use.

Racial Justice Webinar Series Social Media Images and Links

Please see the attached JPG's of the Racial Justice Series flyer – this may be used to post to your Association social media pages.

This is the URL to the Racial Justice webinar signup: tinyurl.com/4cde7tnw

Winter Spring Webinar Series Social Media Images and Links

Please see the attached JPG's of the Winter-Spring Webinar Series flyer – these may be used to post to your Association social media pages.

This is the URL to the Winter-Spring webinar signup page: <https://www.mobilize.us/mea/event/373311/>

You may use this link in your posts.

In solidarity,

Chad Williams

MEA UniServ Consultant – Professional Issues

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My pronouns: he/him/his

Sent from the traditional territory of the

Sauk, Odawa, Peoria, and Anishinabewaki People

You can be a leader in education – [find out how](#)



<http://view.meaction.org/?qs=10cce3fba53a791510c97ab43ee3b722cdb06ab73c8feb1eaed584f60becd5c465dfc70c76aa1420fc077152acfa4e7907b7370e7ef9bfd684a2becae1d12437dac7a8134576153d6f3974a909457a63>



In the past few days, more than 15,000 MEA members have shared their input about COVID vaccination and safety issues. **Have you?**

If not, please take 3 minutes today to complete the survey!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/COVID-vaccine-school-employees>

The survey end Monday morning, so complete it NOW!

MEA is getting requests from health officials, media and policymakers about the state of COVID vaccinations among school employees. This QUICK survey is meant to gather data we can share to help guide decisions as we move ahead in defeating COVID-19.

Thank you in advance for taking a few minutes to help us collect this important data.



Note: There are no Official Communication memos this week, but please see **Other Important Information** below. Thank you.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

1. PRESS RELEASE: *Updated MDHHS Order Allows Contact Sports to Resume with Risk Reduction Measures*

Today, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) [updated its current epidemic order](#) to allow contact sports to resume as of Monday, Feb. 8, provided masks are worn during practices and competition. If masks cannot be worn, participants must be regularly tested for COVID-19 consistent with guidelines issued by MDHHS. Safety protocols like wearing masks and testing will help keep kids, coaches and families safe and allow our schools to remain open for in-person instruction. The order remains in effect through Monday, March 29.

[JIC News Release 430 - Sports Order.pdf](#)

2. PRESS RELEASE: *Governor Whitmer Creates the Student Recovery Advisory Council*

Governor Whitmer today signed Executive Order 2021-02, to create the Student Recovery Advisory Council of Michigan. As Michigan continues to work around the clock to eliminate COVID-19, the Student Recovery Council will provide guidance and recommendations to ensure Michigan students have the tools and resources they need to get back on track.

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Gov._Creates_Student_Recovery_Advisory_Council_715390_7.pdf

3. PRESS RELEASE: *MDHHS To Provide COVID Tests To Educators To Keep Staff, Students And Community Safe As Schools Offer In-Person Learning*

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is moving forward with plans to offer a voluntary COVID-19 testing program that will provide weekly tests to educators.

[JIC News Release 427 School COVID-19 Testing.pdf](#)

4. Adult Education Services Locator Offers New Onramp To Careers

To assist Michiganders with adult education opportunities, the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) has launched a new online tool - the [Adult Education Services Locator](#) - which allows users to conduct custom searches and identify a variety of adult education programs, resources and high school equivalency testing centers available statewide. The Adult Education Services Locator allows visitors to search for a variety of services including adult basic education, adult secondary education, English as a second language and workplace literacy in relation to their city or ZIP code.

5. Do the Write Thing Challenge

The annual Do the Write Thing Challenge is an national essay program that gives middle school students an opportunity to examine the impact of violence on their lives. Through this program, students are invited to communicate in written form what they think should be done to reduce youth violence. Students are also encouraged to make personal commitments to do something about the problem. Two national ambassadors from Michigan will be invited by the National Campaign to Stop Violence to attend the "Do the Write Thing Challenge" recognition week in Washington, D.C. The deadline for schools to participate is March 26, 2021. For more information, visit the Do the Write Thing Detroit [website](#) and access the [2021 Michigan Schools Packet](#).

6. Reminder: Virtual Conference: **Building Mirrors and Windows: Children Seeing Themselves and Others in the Literature that We Teach**

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is excited to announce and host a free virtual conference for educators and administrators, **Building Mirrors and Windows: Children Seeing Themselves and Others in the Literature that We Teach**, on February 25, 2021. The conference will focus on how to increase the amount of diverse literature available to students and how to use the materials for instruction and student engagement. The Keynote will be delivered by Dr. Ghody Muhammad. Dr. Muhammad is the author of *Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy*. For more information, please review the official conference announcement memo on the MDE [website](#).

7. Reminder: Virtual College Financial Aid Night

Students and families looking for help paying for college are encouraged to register for an upcoming Virtual College Financial Aid Night hosted by Michigan Department of Treasury's MI Student Aid team. Sessions will be available from 6:30-8 p.m. EST every Tuesday and Thursday in February. All sessions are free and open to the public. Participants will be able to gather information on the following financial aid topics:

- FAFSA application information
- Federal financial aid programs
- State financial aid programs
- Scholarship searching
- MiSSG Student Portal Accounts

Due to limited space, participants are encouraged to sign up for one session only. Registration can be completed by visiting the MI Student Aid website at www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid.

8. Reminder: Earth Day Poster Contest and Environmental Service Award Competition

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development invite students to participate in either the Earth Day poster contest or the Environmental Service Award.

The Earth Day poster contest is for students in **Kindergarten - 5th grade**. Their submitted posters are judged based on the 'Restore Our Earth' theme and including plants, wildlife, or ecosystems native to Michigan. The artwork can be drawn by hand or digitally created. Each school hosts its own contest for the students and submits the top three posters for each grade. The Earth Day poster contest committee selects the top two first and second place winners from each grade.

The Environmental Service Award (ESA) competition is for **students in 6th - 8th and 9th - 12th grade** categories. Schools are invited to nominate a student or group of students to be recognized for completion of a school-sanctioned, environment-based project, that has tangible results. The project must incorporate the 'Restore Our Earth' theme and provide a benefit for plants, wildlife, or ecosystems native to Michigan. Schools confirm the validity of each project and outcome. The Earth Day ESA committee selects the top two projects from each category.

Schools can find the applications for either contest at, www.Michigan.gov/EarthDay. The deadline for both contests to submit entries is **February 28, 2021**. The winners from both contests will be notified by March 15, and their work will be posted on the Earth Day web page. If you have any questions, please contact Pam Howd at 517-282-8357 or HowdP@Michigan.gov.

9. Reminder: MILogin Third Party

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is moving in a direction to consolidate some systems and logins/passwords. Beginning in February and throughout the calendar year 2021, MDE will be transferring the Cash Management System (CMS) and Michigan Electronics Grants System Plus (MEGS+) to NexSys. NexSys will be utilizing MILogin for user authentication. MEGS+ users are encouraged to create a MILogin Third Party account and link that account to their MEIS account. For complete information and step-by-step instructions, please go to www.michigan.gov/mde-nexsys.

* Stay up to date on the latest department Assessment and Accountability news and important information each week -- Sign up for *Spotlight on Student Assessment and Accountability* at <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MIMDE/subscriber/new>. To view the latest *Spotlight*, click here: www.michigan.gov/mde-spotlight.

* To access previously sent MDE memos, please go to our archive: www.michigan.gov/mdememos. Follow MDE on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/nichdepted> Follow MDE on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mieducation>

Don't forget to remind leaders that are putting their local member recruitment plans together about the leader new ed toolkit. The resources are too powerful to not share. The toolkit can be found at: <https://mea.org/newed/>

MEA, MESSA, & MEA-FS DEICC

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY THE LABOR MOVEMENT



"IN OUR GLORIOUS FIGHT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS, WE MUST GUARD AGAINST BEING FOOLED BY FALSE SLOGANS, SUCH AS 'RIGHT TO WORK.' IT IS A LAW TO ROB US OF OUR CIVIL RIGHTS AND JOB RIGHTS. ITS PURPOSE IS TO DESTROY LABOR UNIONS AND THE FREEDOM OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING BY WHICH UNIONS HAVE IMPROVED WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF EVERYONE...WHEREVER THESE LAWS HAVE BEEN PASSED, WAGES ARE LOWER, JOB OPPORTUNITIES ARE FEWER AND THERE ARE NO CIVIL RIGHTS. WE DO NOT INTEND TO LET THEM DO THIS TO US. WE DEMAND THIS FRAUD BE STOPPED. OUR WEAPON IS OUR VOTE."—DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

When we talk about the history of the civil rights movement and the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we rarely include that he also advocated on behalf of the organized labor movement.

From even before the ending of the Civil War and throughout the periods of reconstruction, Jim Crow laws, and industrialization, African American workers tried to organize for access to better jobs and fairer wages. However, they were often discriminated and segregated from other prominent labor unions, including the American Federation of Labor (AFL). This began to change when the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) was formed in 1935, in order to bring African American workers and trade unions together. Though when AFL and CIO merged together in 1955, there was less emphasis placed on inclusion and trade unions became increasingly more segregated into the start of the 1960's civil rights movement. In the years leading up to his assassination, Dr. King spent much of his time participating in events centering on racial discrimination within the organized labor movement, and income inequality. In fact, perhaps his most widely recognized "I Have A Dream" speech was delivered during the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, commonly referred to as the March on Washington.

Other key figures in the organization of the March on Washington Movement included John Lewis (on behalf of SNCC), A. Philip Randolph (the founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the Negro American Labor Council (NALC)), and one of Dr. King's top advisors, Bayard Rustin. Bayard Rustin is especially notable, as he is someone who is not well known in the civil rights movement, but who had a significant role as an organizer for peaceful and non-violent protest during the Civil Rights Movement.

Part of the reason he is not discussed much is because he was a member of the LGBTQ+ community, which was considered to be even more controversial during that time than it is now.

Over 250,000 demonstrators attended the March on Washington, representing civil rights and labor rights activists from all over the country. The march was organized by leaders of five key civil rights groups, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Urban League (NUL), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Congress on Racial Equality, and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). There efforts were joined by leaders of the United Auto Workers (UAW), the American Jewish Congress (AJC), the Commission of Religion and race of the National Council of Churches, the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, and the National Council of Negro Women. This broad coalition is a shining example our history gives us on the power we can wield collectively if we all come together in the fight for justice and equality. The event remained peaceful, and led to the eventual signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Today, much of that legislation has been gutted, and we have seen a decline in union membership due to constant attacks from leaders who do not have the best interests for the majority of American workers as a priority. We have also seen an increase in racially and religion based hate crimes in recent years. Still, history proves that we can collectively effectuate social change. The work we do as employees here directly contributes to the progressive efforts that have been going on for centuries. May we let the legacy of those who came before us continue to inspire us in our continued fight for equality and social justice.

Sources:

Read more about Black history and unions [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

Read more about the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom [here](#) and [here](#).

Read more about Bayard Rustin [here](#).

Lastly, read more about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s positions on labor [here](#) and [here](#).



MEA

Week in Review

MEA Week in Review: 2/2/21

Serving Our Members

[“Tell Lawmakers Our Students Are Not Political Pawns – FUND OUR SCHOOLS!”](#) (mea.org, Jan. 28)

On Wednesday, the Michigan House Republicans issued a proposal that made distributing bipartisan federal education funding contingent on the governor giving up important powers to protect public health, including closing schools and suspending activities like athletics if data about how the virus is spreading warrants it.

[“Dr. Anthony Fauci Answers Educator Questions About COVID-19”](#) (nea.org, Jan. 29)

NEA and AFT host a virtual “fireside chat” with the nation's leading infectious-disease expert.

[“Senate Education Committee Chair Launches Survey – Make Your Voice Heard”](#) (mea.org, Jan. 28)

Sen. Lana Theis (R-Brighton), chair of the Senate Education and Career Readiness Committee, has launched an online survey to hear from educators, parents and students about the impact of COVID-19 on education. The survey is meant to gather “first-hand accounts, feedback and recommendations [to] help lawmakers evaluate where we are one year on and help identify what we might need to improve or adjust to ensure Michigan’s children are receiving the quality education they deserve,” according to Sen. Theis’s Facebook page.

MEA in the News

“Michigan asking feds to cancel standardized tests after year of inconsistent education” (MLive, Jan. 31, *see attached PDF)

Hamtramck Public Schools Superintendent Jaleelah Ahmed thinks the only tests that schools should be focused on conducting this school year is COVID-19 tests.

“Limited supply means some schools can’t vaccinate their teachers against COVID like others can” (MLive, Jan. 21, *see attached PDF)

How far can you stretch 500 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine? That’s the question schools across Bay County found themselves asking when the county’s health department was able to get 500 doses of the Moderna vaccine for teachers and support staff this week.

Big Picture: Top Education Stories

[“Democrats introduce Whitmer’s \\$5.6 billion pandemic spending plan in House”](#) (MLive, Jan. 31)

LANSING, MI - Democratic state representatives want an up-or-down vote on Gov. Gretchen Whitmer’s pandemic recovery plan, countering last week’s House Republican proposal.

[“Opinion: VP MI State Board of Ed: Before children go back to school, leaders must acknowledge COVID-19’s disparate impact on BIPOC”](#) (Detroit Metro Times, Jan. 29)

While COVID-19 has been an inconvenience for some, as noted by a Yale University epidemiologist, it has been more of a genocide by default for others. Children who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) account for 78% of all child deaths due to COVID-19 but only represent 41 percent of the U.S. child population, according to U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

[“CDC officials say schools can re-open during pandemic — but precautions are crucial”](#) (nbcnews.com, Jan. 26)

Schools should reopen as soon as possible if social distancing and mask-wearing can be maintained to keep in-person learning safe, health officials with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in a study published Tuesday. **About MEA Week in Review:** MEA’s Public Affairs Department compiles this weekly digest of MEA and news media items to provide a snapshot of items you may have missed, as well as a one-stop shop for finding stories MEA leaders and staff can cut-and-paste into local communications efforts.

* Sent to MEA Local Leaders, Board Members & Staff *

MEA Week in Review: 2/9/21

Serving Our Members

[“House GOP Holds Funding Hostage in Power Grab, Pushes Voucher-Style Programs”](#) (mea.org, Feb. 8)

Last week the Republican-controlled state House passed a COVID response plan which is opposed by MEA because it holds much-needed federal COVID relief hostage in a political fight and, among other provisions, adds a voucher-style payment to parents to pay for summer programs outside of schools.

[“Whitmer, Stabenow Light Up MEA-PAC Event”](#) (mea.org, Feb. 8)

Reflecting on the past year, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer told attendees at a virtual MEA-PAC event on Friday that we are “still in the tunnel,” but there is light at the end, and “the commitment I’ve made is centered around supporting you and the kids you help every single day.”

[“MEA Retiree Helps Others Get Vaccinated”](#) (mea.org, Feb. 4)

Because she’s 75 years old, retired educator Pam Kellar was able to get a COVID-19 vaccine quickly, yet most days she’s still on the phone and the internet trying to schedule appointments for shots. For the past few weeks, Kellar – who is president of her MEA-Retired chapter in Warren – has taken it upon herself to help both active and retired educators from the area get hard-to-snare vaccination appointments.

MEA in the News

[“Unfair Labor Practice charge filed against North Central”](#) (Petoskey News, Feb. 5)

PETOSKEY — The Michigan Education Association announced Friday that the North Central Michigan College Educational Support Professional Association had filed an Unfair Labor Practice charge against North Central Michigan College.

[NOTE: Quotes from Kurt Murray, MEA UniServ director]

[“Educators worry what an extended school year could mean for some districts”](#) (Fox 47, Feb. 4)

WSYM — Educators are worried about the potential impacts some districts could face if the state mandates an extended school year in order to combat the learning loss students are currently dealing with due to the pandemic.

[NOTE: Quotes from MEA President Paula Herbart]

[“Michigan House clears \\$3.5B coronavirus spending plan over objections from Democrats”](#) (MLive, Feb. 4)

The Michigan House approved a \$3.5 billion plan to fund COVID-19 vaccinations and other response measures Thursday, tying some of the money for schools to a bill giving local health departments more authority in determining coronavirus restrictions.

[NOTE: Quotes from MEA President Paula Herbart]

Big Picture: Top Education Stories

[“Should Schools Reopen If Teachers Aren’t Yet Vaccinated? CDC Will Soon Weigh In”](#) (npr.org, Feb. 5)

The federal government plans to release new guidance next week about how to safely reopen schools in the midst of the pandemic — guidelines that could add new grist to a debate over whether schools should wait until teachers are vaccinated before requiring their return to the classroom

[“Education nominee vows to tackle problems worsened by virus”](#) (Detroit News, Feb. 3)

President Joe Biden’s nominee for education secretary is promising to help reopen schools but says much of the hardest work will come after that as schools try to address long-standing disparities worsened by the pandemic.

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