

Marion Education Association Constitution (Revised September 10, 2001)

Article I - Name

The name of the Association shall be the Marion Education Association (MEA).

Article II - Purposes

Section 1 - To work for the welfare of school children, the advancement of education, and the improvement of instructional opportunities for all.

Section 2 - To develop and promote the adoption of such ethical practices, personnel policies, and standards of preparation and participation as make a profession.

Section 3 - To unify and strengthen the teaching profession and to secure and maintain through collective bargaining the salaries, retirement, tenure, professional and sick leave, and other working conditions necessary to support teaching as a profession on all three levels: local, state and national MEA-FEA.

Section 4 - To enable members to speak with a common voice on matters pertaining to the teaching profession and to present their individual and common interests before the District School Board and other legal authorities.

Section 5 - To hold property and funds and so employ a staff for the attainment of these purposes.

Article III - Membership

Section 1 - Active Members

- A. Active membership in the Association shall be open to teachers employed in the schools of Marion County Public School System who agree to abide by the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession, and who have signed authorization for payroll deduction and/or have paid the full MEA-FEA membership dues in cash.
- B. Each membership, once approved, shall be continuous as long as qualifications for membership are met and annual dues are paid, unless revoked by the Executive Board or by written request of the member.
- C. Active members of the Association will be members of the Florida Education Association (FEA).
- D. Membership in the MEA shall not be denied to anyone on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, handicap, marital status or economic status.

Section 2 - Other Membership Classifications

Persons employed in the schools of Marion County who are not eligible to become active members may upon payment of dues, enroll as associate members with all the rights and responsibilities of active members except the right to re-vote, to hold office, or to represent the Association. Active members who retire may continue as associate members for life, paying such annual dues as the Representative Council may determine.

Section 3 - Revocation of Membership

Members who fail to adhere to any of the conditions of membership as provided in the MEA Constitution and Bylaws, or who violate the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession, shall be subject to censure, suspension or expulsion upon the recommendation to the Executive Board. The Executive Board may reinstate a member who has previously been suspended or expelled from the Association.

Article IV - Officers

The officers of the Association shall consist of a president, a first vice-president, a second vice-president, a secretary, and a treasurer.

Article V - Executive Board

Section 1 - The Executive Board shall consist of the officers, and additional members as follows: Five members from the Instructional Division to be allotted in the following manner. Three representatives from Kindergarten through fifth grade, one representative from 6-8, one representative from 9-12, one representative from special areas, one representative from special education and one representative from Applied Technology. This Board shall constitute the executive authority of the Association.

Section 2 - Whenever a majority of the Executive Board shall agree that an officer has been grossly negligent of the duties defined in the bylaws or is incapacitated, they shall recommend to the Association Representative Council that the office be declared vacant. If the Council so votes by a two-thirds majority of those present, it shall immediately elect a replacement to fill the unexpired term.

Section 3 - If at any time the Executive Board has fewer than twenty (20%) percent ethnic minority members, the Board shall add sufficient ethnic minority members to bring the total twenty (20%) percent through special election of the Executive Board. Nominations will come from the Executive Board and a special election shall occur at the next regularly scheduled Executive Board meeting. The person receiving the majority of votes cast will be seated immediately.

Article VI - Association Representative Council

Section 1 - The legislative policy forming body of the Association shall be the Association Representative Council.

Section 2 - The Association Representative Council shall consist of the Executive Board and one or more representatives from each school faculty.

Section 3 - Only members of the Representative Council or their designee shall have the right to vote on issues presented before it.

Section 4 - Any member of the Association who is not a member of the Association Representative Council may attend any of its meetings, regular or special, and may receive permission to speak.

Article VII - Amendments

The Association Representative Council may adopt amendments to this Constitution by a 2/3 majority of those voting at any regular Association Representative Council meeting, provided that amendments have been introduced at the preceding regular meeting of the Association Representative Council and that copies of proposed amendments have been distributed to members of the Council for member discussion.

Bylaws

Article I - Meetings

Section 1 - Executive Board - The Executive Board shall meet not less than eight (8) times per year at the call of the President, or at the request of three members of the Board.

Section 2 - Association Representative Council - The Association Representative Council shall meet not less than eight (8) times per year. The Executive Board shall prepare the agenda for each meeting.

Section 3 - Special Meetings - Special meetings of the Association Representative Council may be held at the call of the President or upon written request to the Executive Board from five faculty representatives. Business to come before special meetings must be stated in the call. It shall be sent in writing to each representative if time allows.

Section 4 - General Membership Meeting - The Executive Board shall arrange at least one meeting of the members each year for discussion of professional issues. This meeting will be held during the first three months of the school year.

Article II - Quorum

A quorum is defined as 40% plus one (1) for Association Representative Council and 50% plus one (1) for the Executive Board.

Article III - Authority of Officers

Section 1 - President - The President shall preside over meetings of the Executive Board and Representative Council, and must have the advice and approval of the Executive Board, to appoint the chairpersons and members of the standing committees and special committees, and shall be ex-officio member of all standing committees. The President may make temporary appointments to long term county committees and external committees with the approval of the Executive Board at the next regularly scheduled meeting. The President shall appoint a parliamentarian. The President shall represent the Association before the public either personally or through delegates, and shall perform all other functions usually pertaining to this office.

Section 2 - 1st Vice-President - The 1st Vice-President shall serve in the absence of the president; shall distribute materials to those absent at the Representative Council meetings; shall work with standing committees as the President may request, and shall become President when the presidency becomes vacant except as provided in Article V, Section 3, of the Constitution.

Section 3 - 2nd Vice-President - The 2nd Vice-President shall serve in the absence of the 1st Vice-President, shall work with standing committees as the President may request; and shall produce monthly internal communications with the general membership.

Section 4 - Secretary - The Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the Executive Board and the Association Representative Council, shall maintain official files, and shall assist the President with Association correspondence.

Section 5 - Treasurer - The Treasurer shall provide authorization for the expenditure of funds, shall keep accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements, shall report to each meeting of the Association Representative Council and Executive Board, shall prepare an annual financial statement for publication to members as directed by the Executive Board, and shall assist the Budget Committee in the initial drafting of the annual budget.

Section 6 - Terms and Succession:

- A. The officers shall be elected for two year terms and may be re-elected
- B. Whenever the offices of both President and 1st Vice-President shall become vacant between elections, except as provided in Article V, Section 3 of the Constitution, the remaining members of the Executive Board shall choose one of their number to serve as President pro tempore until the Association Representative Council can fill the vacancies.
- C. Any other Executive Board offices which become vacant between elections shall be filled by a recommendation of the President, subject to the approval of the Executive Board.

Section 7 - All officers shall be active members of the Association during the school year in which they are elected.

Article IV - Authority of the Executive Board

Section 1 - The Executive Board shall be responsible for the management of the Association, approve all expenditures, carry out policies established by the Association Representative Council, report its transactions and those of the Council to the members, and suggest policies for consideration by the Council. The Executive Board may expend funds from the "Contingency Fund" when it considers it in the interest of the Association to do so.

Section 2 - The Executive Board shall delegate its power to negotiate to the bargaining team. The Executive Board may direct the goals/activities of the standing and district committees in its management of the association.

Section 3 - The Executive Board shall develop workshops and training conferences for all representatives during each school year.

Section 4 - After two unexcused absences or proof of failure to perform duties, an Executive Board member may be removed from office. The status of the Executive Board seat will be determined by a majority of the Executive Board. To declare an Executive Board members seat vacant, the Executive Board member will receive written notice that a recommendation to declare their seat vacant will be made at the next regular executive board meeting. The written notice will include a statement of the opportunity to appear before the board to make a presentation.

Section 5 - Appeals Process - Said member shall have the right to appeal within 10 working days to the AR Council. The hearing will be held within 10 working days after receiving the appeal. The AR Council's decision will be final.

Article V - Authority of the Association Representative Council

The Association Representative Council shall approve the budget, recommend a dues structure for the Association to be submitted to the membership, act on reports of committees, approve resolutions and other policy statements, and shall adopt procedures for implementing the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession and those to be followed in censuring, suspending, and expelling members for cause or for reinstatement of members. It may adopt such rules governing the employment of staff, the conduct of the Association, and the conduct of the meetings as are consistent with the Constitution and Bylaws. It shall be the final judge of the qualifications and election of officers and Association Representatives. Powers not delegated to the Executive Board, the officers or other groups of the Association shall be vested in the Association Representative Council.

Article VI - Association Representatives

Section 1 - In each public school in Marion County, faculty members who are members in good standing of this Association, shall elect one Association Representative to the Association Representative Council for each 15 members or major fraction thereof; provided there shall be at least one such Representative from each faculty. Elections of the Association Representative shall coincide with that of the Association elections.

Section 2 - Association Representatives shall attend the regular meetings of the Association Representative Council. After two unexcused absences of a Representative, or his/her designee, two (2) or more members in a school not being represented will be notified by the 1st Vice-President. The President shall then declare the seat vacated and call for a faculty election to fill out the term.

Section 3 - The Association Representative shall facilitate two way communication within the Association. They shall call faculty meetings of the Association members to discuss Association business, shall appoint such faculty committees as the Association may require, and shall organize the enrollment of members and the elections of Association Representatives.

Section 4 - Faculty Association Representatives shall be members of the Marion Education Association, Florida Education Association-NEA and National Education Association (MEA-FEA) and shall maintain their membership in good standing during their term of service.

Article VII - Standing Committee

Section 1 - Structure - There shall be standing committees carrying the specific functions as directed by the Executive Board. The chairperson is recommended by the President with the approval of the Executive Board. Each member of a committee shall be a member of the Marion Education Association, Florida Education Association-NEA and National Education Association. Each committee may, with the approval of the Executive Board, organize special sub-committees and task forces.

Section 2 - Meetings - Each standing committee shall meet as necessary and may hold special meetings at the call of the chairperson, or the President.

Section 3 - Reports - Each chairperson of a standing committee and at least one person from any district representational committee shall report to the Executive Board, and Association Representative Council.

Section 4 - Standing Committee Designations

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| A. Membership | F. Legislative |
| B. Communications (Newsletter Editor) | G. Human Relations Multicultural Affairs |
| C. Bargaining | H. Internal Public Relations |
| D. Political Action Committee | I. Elections |
| E. Instructional Professional Development | J. Budget |
| | K. Any other deemed necessary by the Executive Board |

Section 5 - Relation to Executive Board - The Association Representative Council shall assist the Executive Board to appoint members to the standing committees. It shall require and assist committees to define their immediate and long-range objectives, and shall review committee plans as necessary.

Section 6 - Relation to State and National Associations - The standing committees shall seek to understand and relate to the objective and programs of corresponding units of state and national associations and shall counsel with them.

Article VIII - Elections

Section 1 - Nominations

- A. The active members of the Association in each building during odd years shall nominate candidates for President, 2nd Vice-President, Treasurer and four (4) Executive Board members consisting of: one (1) Kindergarten through fifth grade member, one (1) high school member, one (1) applied technology member, and one (1) special areas member. A nominee shall be a candidate for one office only each election cycle. The Building Association Representative shall deliver all nominations in writing to the Committee on Elections.
- B. The active members of the Association in each building during the even years, shall nominate candidates for 1st Vice President, Secretary, and four (4) Executive Board members consisting of: two (2) Kindergarten through fifth grade members, one (1) middle school member, and one (1) special education member. A nominee shall be a candidate for one office only each election cycle. The Building Association Representative shall deliver all nominations in writing to the Committee on Elections.
- C. The Committee on Elections shall report all nominations to the Association Representative Council at the March meeting. Members of the Council may nominate other candidates from the floor. Candidates may provide a goal statement for MEA and a professional biography for distribution to general membership in accordance with distribution timelines.
- D. Nominations and elections for delegates to conventions shall be done in accordance with guidelines.
- E. Election guidelines will be distributed to all members each year.

Section 2 - Balloting

Members shall vote for officers by ballot, in accordance with procedures developed by the Committee on Elections and approved by the Association Representative Council. The Committee on Elections shall report results to the President, who shall cause them to be published. The new officers will officially assume their duties July 15th.

Article IX - Authority

Roberts Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for the Association on all questions not covered by the Constitution and Bylaws and such standing rules as the Association Representative Council may adopt.

Article X - Amendment

The Association Representative Council may adopt amendments to these Bylaws by a 2/3 majority of those voting at any regular Association Representative Council meeting, provided that amendments have been introduced at the preceding regular meeting of the Association Representative Council and that copies of proposed amendments have been distributed to members of the Council for member discussion.

Article XII - Fiscal Year

The MEA fiscal year shall begin on September 1st.