

# Welcome Back/Thank You and What We Achieved!

Dear Marshfield School District Educators,

“Welcome back” and “thank you” doesn’t begin to cover the range of emotions, including extreme gratitude for our colleagues, that we have as we begin this 2020-2021 school year. This summer so many of you continued to be involved. You served on committees, answered surveys, made phone calls, scoured the internet for ideas, attended training(s), and already took turns talking friends, colleagues, and probably even yourselves down from frustration and anxiety. This year is asking more of us than ever before on professional and personal levels. Our unity matters more than ever before.

We want to be clear that our unity doesn’t mean we all agree. Our unity means even when we disagree we know in our hearts and bones that we have a support group. We are going to lean on each other in ways we haven’t before, and that might be a good thing.

Some of us are starting this year hurting and exhausted, worried about safety, quality of instruction, the future of our programs, our students...the list goes on. There is someone in our union that is here for you. We can’t always solve the problems or know all the answers, but we are here to listen and share your concerns.

This year will be hard, but we will still learn new techniques and philosophies that strengthen our teaching, and we can learn self-care and resiliency techniques that contribute to our overall happiness and effectiveness as educators. This is a year when we have to train ourselves to stay focused and actively work on gratitude, positivity, and work/life balance. That is more natural for some of us than others. We can grow from this year, and we should still celebrate our individual and collective victories.

**MTA, WEAC and NEA continue to achieve and to advocate. Below are some of the 2019-2020 highlights:**

- Achieved option to choose between 26 versus 21 pay periods, with more consistent deductions
- Continued practice of negotiating raises for every professional staff member (\$922.00 for the 2020-21 school year)
- Convinced district to move up the first paycheck of 2020 school year to August 28th, so we now have a year to budget for the first paycheck in 2021 being in September 2021.
- Gained benefits for the post-2012 hirees, and slowed the decrease in post-retirement benefits for pre-2012 employees
- Shared input on 2020-2021 calendar, including advocating for the planning/reinforcement days that have been added in the revised calendar.
- Maintained conversations with administration from March 2020 to share remote learning concerns and re-opening concerns. This resulted in some immediate answers that could be communicated specifically to MTA member and pressure on administration to communicate more frequently (and personably), and pressure to simplify EE requirements
- Surveyed MTA to get a feel of our priority concerns and questions
- Released multiple legal updates and advice regarding Covid-19 and re-opening

concerns

- Advocated for clearer support and guidelines for remote teaching, virtual teaching, blended teaching, safe classrooms, etc.
- Maintained pressure for teacher input
- Called board members with concerns and questions
- Supported more than 25 individual members or groups in crafting their advocacy with administration
- Released statement to the school board and to newspaper editorials affirming MTA's dedication to students, while advocating for safety, teacher input and collaboration
- Shared WEAC and NEA resources, webinars and trainings to help with virtual instruction, personalized learning, and racial justice instruction ([Wednesday Webinars](#) are continuing during the school year)
- Trained members in social justice advocacy
- Continued dialogue on student behavior concerns, staffing and scheduling decisions, staff self-care, sub shortage, district initiatives, PLCs, 4K program, student services positions/support and improvement plan procedures
- Informed members about licensure changes and important political concerns
- Developed MTA leadership and membership growth via various trainings
- Prevented raise in required educator retirement age
- Advised and supported dozens of individual members in workplace or potential discipline concerns
- Kept members aware of handbook and policy changes and impacts
- Donated \$1000 to Yes, Committee to begin work on the 2020 School District Referendum
- Donated \$500 to the local aquatic facility, and maintained our scholarship MTA program

All of these accomplishments are possible because of the resources, time and advocacy at the Region 2, State (WEAC) and National (NEA) level.

Together we will continue advocating for educator friendly politicians and school board members, teacher input, protection of teacher time and work/life balance, social/emotional support for educators and students, racially and culturally sensitive teaching practices, workplace conditions and benefits that are safe and help us retain quality staff. Our fight is never done, and we are honored to continue fighting for all of us.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Mahoney  
MTA Co-President  
715-383-0083  
[kmmahoney12@yahoo.com](mailto:kmmahoney12@yahoo.com)

Rhonda Smith  
MTA Co-President  
715-659-5834  
[smithrszm27@hotmail.com](mailto:smithrszm27@hotmail.com)