

A Proud History

MTA members have been advocates for public education for 175 years. Every legislative and legal victory is a victory for students, for the MTA, for public schools and colleges, and for the future.

Eighty-five educators from across the state meet in Worcester, Massachusetts, on November 24 and establish the Massachusetts Teachers Association.

The first laws are passed offering pensions and **job protection** to teachers. A **state aid law** diverts a portion of state income taxes to poorer schools to equalize educational opportunity.

The Legislature passes an **equal pay law for men and women**. The Legislature, however, leaves adoption of the law up to each individual city and town. Almost 20 years later, a number of Massachusetts school systems will still maintain two separate pay scales.

1954

Collective bargaining rights are granted to Massachusetts teachers. Within two years of the law's implementation, more than 200 teacher contracts are signed across the state. Within five years, \$1 billion is added to teachers' salaries in Massachusetts.

1972-1980

Public higher education joins the MTA.

1845 1845-1899 1900-1920

Progressive practices are implemented, such as physical fitness programs for students, special education, programs to address the problem of school dropouts (or "non-graduates," as they were then called) and a state tax to help poor school districts.

1945

All new teachers in the public schools **must be certified.** For a

schools **must be certified.** For a century, the MTA had advocated for passage of this law.

1965

The MTA uses its political power to help pass important legislation: **Chapter 622**, which ensures access for students to all programs without regard to sex, race, religion or national origin; the **Transitional Bilingual Education Act**, guaranteeing bilingual education to students from myriad language backgrounds; and

1976

Chapter 766, guaranteeing appropriate services to the state's more than 100,000 special needs students.

"Wall-to-wall"
organizing opens the
MTA to participation
by all public school
employees.

The Supreme Judicial Court rules for the plaintiffs in the **McDuffy** lawsuit, ending a 17-year struggle to have the state's school financing system declared unconstitutional. The SJC rules that the quality of a child's education must not be limited by the wealth of the community in which the child resides.

The MTA takes to the airwaves with its statewide paid media campaign promoting public education. After nearly a decade of lobbying, the Legislature passes retirement reform.

On November 8, 2016, voters overwhelmingly defeat **Question 2**, a state ballot initiative that would have sharply increased the number of charter schools.

The MTA continues to organize educators and work with parents and communities to protect public education. Advocacy increases to pass the **Cherish Act** to secure adequate funding and fair working conditions on public higher education campuses.

1980 1984 1993 1999 2005 2016 2019-2020 TODAY

Passage of **Proposition 2½** places severe limits on local property taxes—the main source of funding for public schools. The impact is devastating.

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act is signed into law. It dramatically restores state financial aid to public schools through a seven-year "foundation budget" commitment and, for the first time in state history, academic standards for public schools are no longer the sole purview of towns and cities. Rather, the state plays a key role.

On February 15, 2005, the state Supreme Judicial Court dismisses the **Hancock** case. The decision reaffirms the fact that the state has a constitutionally enforceable duty to provide a quality education to all students, but gives the governor and the Legislature more time to address inadequacies and disparities.

The Fund Our Future coalition wins the **Student Opportunity Act** to provide \$2 billion a year in additional funding for public schools when fully phased in. On Nov. 26, 2019, the governor signs the **SOA** into law.

Plaintiffs in **Mussotte v. Peyser** agree to drop a lawsuit against the Commonwealth alleging it perpetuated an education funding system insufficient to provide a constitutionally guaranteed right to a quality public education — but they pledge to monitor **SOA** implementation.