



overnight news

MISSOURI STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION | NOV. 17, 2006

We are MSTA: hear us roar!

The 845 representatives at MSTA's Assembly of Delegates were feeling their power. The night before, they had gathered to celebrate the association's 150th anniversary, and yesterday during the annual business meeting, members showed they were aware of the power of their voices — and of the voices that had gone before.

MSTA President Tami Pasley urged delegates to voice their dissatisfaction and to state their intentions through MSTA's resolutions. "It is our duty as delegates to make sure our voices are heard," she said in an address to the assembly. "Our resolutions are our voice."

The slate of 70 resolutions outlines the association's positions on public education, school funding, teacher working conditions and professional standards.

Delegates passed with little comment amendments to resolutions calling for a \$500 increase in Career Ladder levels and support for a permanent "25 and Out" option for retirement. In addition, they went on record in favor of due-process rights upon termination of extra-duty contracts and in support of state schools that educate students with severe disabilities.

The resolution for state schools was proposed by newly elected MSTA Vice President Rebecca Ruth, who noted that Gov. Matt Blunt has commissioned a study to make recommendations on whether to keep the schools open. "Right now it's just a study," Ruth said, "but I think we need to have something in our resolutions to address this issue."

Delegates reserved their passion for two topics: the MAP testing window and a statewide minimum salary schedule for teachers.

The MAP debate began with a proposed amendment that would have encouraged DESE to move the MAP tests closer to the end of the school year. Curtis Cunningham, Morgan Co. R-2, said that the test was supposed

to assess what students learned that year, and that testing in March and April was too early to be an accurate measure.

While some delegates called for a clear definition of the end of the school year, others said that testing later in the spring would create a new set of problems.

Lauren Stutzman, Lee's Summit R-7, moved the debate in a new direction by noting that delegates were getting hung up on wording when the real issue was the value of the MAP. "The message MSTA is trying to send is that MAP in its current form is not good for students," she said.

Delegates agreed and voted to delete several lines of resolutions dealing with federal testing and the MAP. Remaining testing resolutions support a "quality, nationally normed testing program."

When it came to teacher salaries, delegates seemed to feel that bolder was better.

A resolution passed that called for starting teacher salaries to begin at \$40,000 and for regular increases to be tied to the Consumer Price Index.

"If we say our teachers need to be paid what they're worth, then our resolutions need to reflect that," said Nate Smith, a Lee's Summit R-7 teacher who proposed the amendment.

Larry McCann, chair of the MSTA Resolutions Committee, cautioned that getting a statewide salary schedule passed by the Missouri General Assembly would be an uphill battle. He said that legislators had considered such a bill only once in recent years — despite MSTA's efforts.

"If we continue to bump these numbers up, we're just whistling in the wind," he said. "We need numbers they will take seriously."

However, delegates were not in a timid

Officers urge member action

The MSTA Assembly of Delegates yesterday elected a history teacher from Springfield R-12 and a foreign-language teacher from Festus R-6 as the organization's new president-elect and vice president, respectively.

Gary Rademacher ran unopposed for president-elect. He most recently served as MSTA's vice president.

MSTA must have a crucial role in setting Missouri's education agenda, Rademacher said. He urged teachers to communicate with their legislators and also with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education officials.

"If teachers should be held accountable, so should the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education," he said, earning applause from the delegates.

Valerie Moats will start her term as president today. Watch for an interview with her in the winter issue of *School & Community*. Tami Pasley will serve the coming year as past president.

Delegates selected Rebecca Ruth as vice president over write-in candidate Joe Clauser. Ruth has served two terms as president of the Jefferson County Region.

All candidates discussed the need for changes to the Missouri Assessment Program, improving teacher preparation and supporting the addition of an educator to the State Board of Education.

Ruth invoked the character of Bob the Builder to encourage MSTA members to work to fix Missouri education. When she repeatedly asked the crowd, "Can we fix it?" they answered, "Yes, we can."

"Can we fix everything now?" she asked. "Maybe not completely, but small steps lead to great strides."

Clauser, a member of MSTA's Board of Directors from Fredericktown, said he would run for vice president next year. Board member Marvin Young, South Harrison Co. R-2, also said he planned to run.

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Amendments prepare MSTA for future

MSTA entered a new era yesterday with the Assembly of Delegate's passage of two constitutional amendments, including new articles of incorporation.

The new articles of incorporation passed with only two dissenting votes, which brings the association in line with today's laws regarding nonprofit corporations.

The new articles were meant to mirror the association's previous documentation, with a few updates of language, said Audie Cline, MSTA field representative and staff liaison to the Constitution and Bylaws Task Force.

"The foundation that has held this organization together for 150 years is there," Cline said. "We just transferred it to a new document and changed some language so that

it reflected changes in the status of nonprofit corporations such as ours."

Among the changes, the term "forward" will replace "rebate." The Executive Board will also be known as the Board of Directors.

In addition, the assembly unanimously approved a constitutional amendment that will allow all first-time members to pay reduced dues for their first year of membership. Previously, reduced dues were available only to those in their first year of teaching.

The change is designed to improve recruitment of members by local CTAs, said Kathy Moses, CBR committee chairwoman.

Neither amendment generated discussion on the assembly floor.

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mood, and they passed the proposed resolution.

"Just because something hasn't been done before, doesn't mean we shouldn't try," said Nate Smith. "Demand statewide funding. We are worth it. You are worth it. What better time than now?"

That question — what better time than now? — resonated through the work of the delegates on Thursday. As the association begins the first year of its next 150, members are prepared to make sure their voices are heard.

Election results

Proposed constitutional amendment 1

Allows MSTA to offer \$124 memberships for one year to new members.

For 744

Against 0

Proposed constitutional amendment 2

Reorganizes MSTA constitution into bylaws and articles of incorporation.

For 739

Against 2

MSTA president-elect

Gary Rademacher 701

MSTA vice president

Rebecca Ruth 382

Joe Clauser 306

They're outstanding!

Congratulations to the following MSTA leaders who were recognized at the MSTA Awards Banquet last night. Learn more about these hard-working individuals in the next issue of *School & Community*.

Overall Outstanding MSTA/CTA Leader of the Year

Lory Schupbach, Aurora R-8

Local Service Leaders

Cheryl Allen, Moberly
Scott Courtois, Potosi R-3
Ashley Dougan, St. Joseph
Tracy Fuller, Monroe City R-1
Donna Weber, Mt. Vernon R-5

Region and State Leader

Cora Hollon, Grundy Co. R-5

Associate Member Leaders

Rosetta Johnson, Laquey R-5
Rebecca O'Riley, Waynesville R-6

Administrator Leaders

Jess Grizzell, Waynesville R-6
Paul Kinder, Blue Springs R-4
Tim Roth, Moberly
Robert Sigrist, St. Joseph
Monique Stokes, Laquey R-5

Reception celebrates election victories

The MSTA Impact Committee hosted a reception Thursday night to celebrate the success of association-endorsed candidates in the fall election.

More than 90 percent of MSTA's endorsed candidates succeeded in their races on Nov. 7. Sixty-three of 70 endorsed candidates for the state House won their races. All eight of the candidates endorsed for state Senate won.

MSTA's endorsements allow the association to build relationships in the Gen-

eral Assembly and assist the election of pro-education candidates. Funding and testing are expected to be top issues as these candidates take office at the start of the legislative session in January, said Robyn Behen, chairwoman of the Legislative Impact Committee.

Gail Willis-McCray, MSTA's political action manager, said that MSTA made some great endorsements this year and she looks forward to working with pro-education legislators.

Earn college credit

College credit will be available for \$60 from Lindenwood University. A representative will be on-site at a table in the area outside the door to the Exhibit Hall for registration and to answer any questions.

Convention 2007

Mark your calendar now for next year's convention in St. Louis. The meeting will take place at the Renaissance St. Louis Grand on Thursday and Friday, Nov. 15-16.

