

ESP Leadership in Action:
Voices from the Field

Thursday, April 27, 2023
7:00-8:00 p.m. ET

Presented by:
Tameka Mays, ESP Fellow, NEA
Dan Brown, Senior Policy Analyst, NEA





- Trains ESP members to be effective leaders in their associations
- 11-month program that involves in-person training, webinars, outside readings, and completion of a capstone project
- Targeted training across an array of leadership areas that is designed and delivered by ESP members



ESPLI Class of 2023 Graduation
NEA ESP National Conference – Seattle, Washington



LFT [ESPLI] was life-changing for me both personally and professionally. I changed my leadership style which made it possible for my local and my state members to benefit from what I had learned and applied. I am a better person, not because LFT made me that way but because it taught me how to get there myself.

- Marie Glass, Class of 2009





My Capstone Project

Words Matter: Building Inclusive Spaces
for ESP's and members of color

YAHAIRA RODRIGUEZ, ESP MASSACHUSETTS

My Why?

- ▶ Educate others understanding why words matter to ESPs
- ▶ Engage members in racial, economic and social justice work and elevate good work already happening
- ▶ Create inclusive spaces where uncomfortable conversations around these issues could occur and growth will follow.
- ▶ Empower educators of color and ESPs to share their voices.



Educators Voices: Black Lives Matter Rally

- ▶ First time local union participated in community rally.
- ▶ Collaborated with communities of color to include educators voices



MTA Name Change Process	April 16, 2021
NBI NAME	Date and Time
Yahaira Rodriguez	Educators Association of Worcester
Delegate Making the Motion	Association Represented or Retired
Jean Fay	Amherst Pelham Education Association
Delegate Seconding the Motion	Association Represented or Retired

According to the MTA Standing RULE 6: Order of Business and Debate, Section 13:
With the exception of items on the agenda, all substantive motions shall be submitted in writing to the Presiding Officer.

MOTION

MOVED:

To be truly inclusive of the diversity of our 110,000 members and over 400 local associations, MTA shall immediately Affirm and acknowledge that MTA is a union of educators by articulating a "Member Acknowledgment" following the Land Acknowledgment at meetings, programs and events. MTA shall also acknowledge we are a union of educators in the media, social media and in print, when possible. MTA President to appoint a Task Force to develop a democratic process and a work plan with the goal of changing the name of MTA in 3 years to honor our commitment to full inclusion of all members. The submitter of this NBI would be the chair of the Task Force.

Goal of the Task Force would be to:

- Organize a process for engaging members about the MTA name
- Encourage inclusiveness to all MTA Locals Association and look into impact to the Local with the name change
- Create Timeline for the research and steps for name change work
- Estimate cost associated with process for each fiscal year.
- Submit a report to the MTA Board of Directors each year of the task force

The Task Force will be appointed by MTA President and will be composed of members to represent the below membership groups (to reflect the diversity of the profession)

- 3 ESP members recommended by the ESP committee.
- 2 Board of Directors
- 2 Higher Ed (from different local associations)
- 2 Local Presidents

SUBMITTER'S RATIONALE:

One of MTA's strongest qualities is the diversity of our profession and membership. We consist of teachers, faculty, professional staff and education support professionals. Another strong quality is what we share in common as educators – a commitment to equity and inclusion in education that will enrich and transform the lives of students in public schools, colleges and universities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As role models and leaders in the education community, we must continue to demonstrate this commitment to equity and inclusion in how we operate as a labor organization, including using language and terms that reflect and express our values. As educators, we know that "words" matter and can have immeasurable power and influence in culture and society.

DUES IMPACT:

SUBMITTER'S COST & STAFF TIME ESTIMATE:

MTA COST & STAFF TIME ESTIMATE (For MTA use only):

40 hours per month staff time (with further staff time required as elements of the process are implemented)



The Massachusetts Teachers Association is a diverse union of educators. The membership includes teachers, faculty, professional staff, nurses, counselors and librarians, as well as Education Support Professionals. As a union, we are committed to equity and inclusion in how we operate, including using language and terms that reflect and express common values.

With this understanding, delegates at the 2021 MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates approved a new business item that established a task force to organize a democratic process for **engaging members about changing the name of the MTA.**

Specifically, the delegates agreed the union will resolve to:

- Affirm and acknowledge that MTA is a union of educators by articulating a "member acknowledgment" following the land acknowledgment at meetings, programs and events.
- Acknowledge we are a union of educators in the media, social media and in print, when possible.
- Appoint a task force to develop a democratic process and a work plan with the goal of changing the name of MTA in three years to honor our commitment to full inclusion of all members.

Who and what do we aspire to be as an organization?

The Name Change Task Force has been discussing this question for several months, and now it hopes to kick off a discussion throughout the MTA that will explore the Annual Meeting decision and consideration of a name change.

While changing the name of an organization like the MTA is a several-year process including legal, financial, and rebranding steps, the first step is to engage members in important discussions of the underlying issues of inclusivity and identity. We have plenty of time to have this conversation at every level of the MTA. The task force hopes to have a proposal to present to the 2023 Annual Meeting.

It's natural for members to think of possibilities for new names, and we've done that ourselves, playing with names such as "Massachusetts Union of Educators" or "Union of Massachusetts Educators." But let's not forget about the issues underlying the Annual Meeting decision, which go well beyond a word or two.



If you have ideas for a new name, thoughts about the process, or anything else you'd like to share with the task force, please let us know at namechangetaskforce@massteacher.org. We want to hear from you. And we'll be seeing you soon at MTA events across the state!

See reverse for more information.

The 10-member Name Change Task Force includes the following members: Yahaira Rodriguez (chair), Gayle Gorman, Naomi Akan, Mary Malinowski, Christine Turner, Nellie Taylor, Tom Goodkind, Edith Casanova, Renae Gorman and Laura Demakis. Below, some of the members share their thoughts about the significance of this project:



Yahaira Rodriguez (chair), Education Support Professional, Worcester
As a paraprofessional I feel the history of our union did not represent all of our members. One of the MTA's strongest qualities is the diversity of our profession and membership. Words matter. The magnitude of the importance of words was illuminated to me when I was doing my summer organizing. I was speaking to members about the MTA and the majority response was, "But I am not a teacher." It is important that when our members and potential members hear our union name they do not feel alienated, but rather unity in that all talking and are represented, including bus drivers, cafeteria, custodial and secretarial workers, paraprofessionals, higher education representatives, and many more.



Laura Demakis, Chicopee Education Association president
I am very proud to be part of the Name Change Task Force. The MTA has been very proactive in uniting us in the past few years – it has prioritized recognizing and valuing all of our members. We are advocating for the name of the union to do the same. What is in a name? Everything! It is time this name be all-inclusive, representing a union made of so many more than just teachers.



Tom Goodkind, retired machinist, UMass Boston, former Professional Staff Union president
Our local union has every kind of member, but very few would call ourselves "teachers." While we have felt welcomed in the MTA, I think many of us – like ESPs – have felt invisible because of our union's name. The name dates to 1845, long before collective bargaining rights were won and long before non-teaching educators joined the organization. It belongs to an era when many thought of it as a professional association, and some were fearful of being identified as part of a union. Those days are gone, and it's time for us to be fully inclusive and proud to be a union of educators.



Gayle Gorman, Education Support Professional, Plymouth-Carver
I feel honored to be on this task force and a part of MTA history! Education is changing and along with that change comes respect and understanding for all the different kinds of educators our schools employ. ESPs are not substitutes or mothers looking for "more hours." We are trained professionals and work with some of the most vulnerable student populations in the school system. The MTA has always supported ESPs and valued our experiences. The union knows we are an integral part of the education of students in our districts. I would love to see the MTA name reflect the values of all the diverse educators in our communities.



Renae Gorman, full-time faculty member at Springfield Technical Community College, MCCO chapter president
The MTA is intended to represent the many facets of education, from preschoolergarten to higher education. I agreed to participate with this task force because I believe the name should reflect that representation.



Nellie Taylor, Professional Staff Union, UMass Amherst
Having spent 19 years in the classroom, I am now a member of the Professional Staff Union at UMass Amherst. The name MTA no longer fully represents the work that my colleagues and I do in staff positions, and we're still active members of this union. A name that represents us all more fully is needed.



Christine Turner, librarian, UMass Amherst
I am committed to public education and the learning that happens across all settings in our schools, colleges and universities. Members of the MTA contribute to public education and student learning in many roles. We're a team, each playing a critical part. A union name that includes all our members shows our recognition of everyone's contribution.

Words Matter





Challenges

- ▶ “You are racist Yahaira, against white people”
- ▶ Leadership pushed back
- ▶ Denied grant
- ▶ Fear of change

Learnings

- ▶ I learned that I was more passionate about my work that I thought.
- ▶ People want to have these conversations
- ▶ We have allies
- ▶ They want to learn to do better
- ▶ Words **DO MATTER**

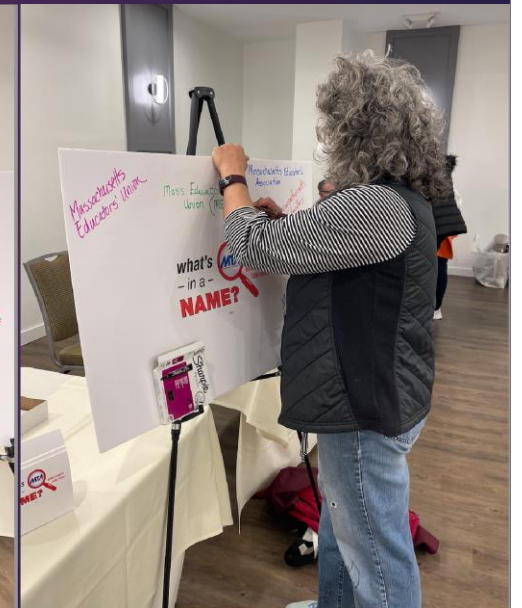
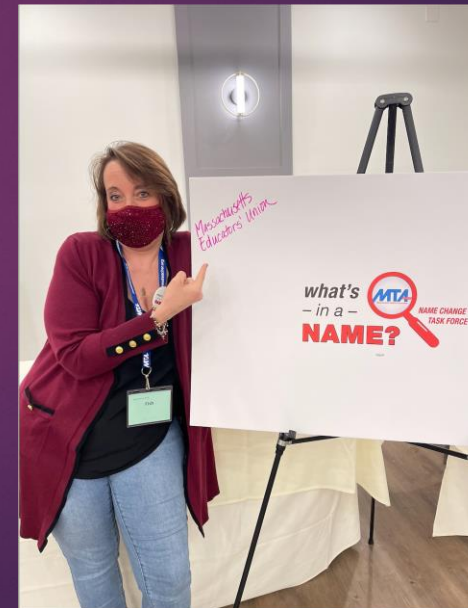
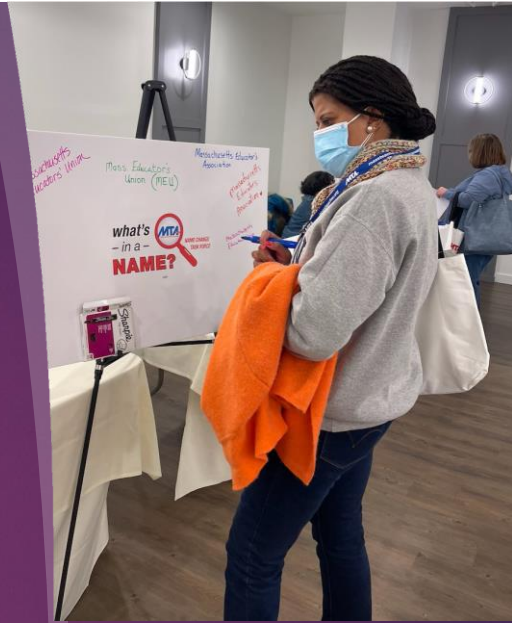


LEARNINGS

•

In conclusion I'm very proud of the work we have done. We built power, identified new leaders and are creating a new union that looks like the members who belong to our union.

ESP. POWER





Ohio Education Association

Advocates for Racial, Social and Economic Justice

By: Cheryl Williams, OEA ESP at Large, NEA ESPLI member



OEA Strategic Priorities Oversight Committee

Charged with creating a 4th Strategic Priority around racial, social and economic justice.

- **I'm on the S.P.O.C. Committee, now what?**
 - As an ESP I was honored to be on this important committee but I was intimidated when the process started.
 - I had never written a rubric before!
 - “Conditions of success” was like a foreign language to me
 - I immersed myself in learning all I could about the process while deepening my understanding of the issues we needed to address
 - My knowledge of the inequities of ESP's and personal experience working in a socio-economically challenged school were vital to me contributing to the conversations
 - NEA, OEA, ESPLI and ESP conference sessions were critical elements to my learning and my confidence
 - How are the Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Core Values and Strategic Priorities different from each other?



OEA Strategic Priority #4

- **Priority #4 as adopted:**
 - ***Educate and organize OEA and its members to advocate for racial, social and economic justice.***



OEA Strategic Priority #4

- **Conditions of Success (developed in conjunction with the Board of Directors)**
 - Number of members attending OEA trainings on racial, social, and economic justice.
 - Number of OEA programs and activities facilitated or curated on the issues of racial, social, and economic justice.
 - Number and percentage of members of color that are elected to and attend the OEA RA.

The Cost of Living:



Wages and Economic Justice in Public Schools

Modest Beginnings

- ▶ Growing up I attended a brand new elementary school.
- ▶ Unlimited Resources
- ▶ Computer Labs
- ▶ Sardis, Georgia
- ▶ Burke County Public Schools
- ▶ Segregated Town



Modest Beginnings

- ▶ The make-up of the town
- ▶ Separated by the main street
- ▶ One side- no resources
- ▶ Other side- resources, parks,
- ▶ The ones on the more established side were the certified staff.

My Why

How can I help people?

Am I the only one that thinks this is ok?

Something needs to change but how?

WHAT'S MY
PURPOSE?



Support Staff Pay Scale

**For the Burke County Public School System
Salary Cap is at 16 steps or years.**

-Custodians in this district works 245 days. 1st year custodian will look to make 21,036. A custodian who has worked the 16 years will look to make around 31,228 dollars annually. This amount does not include Insurance, TRS, taxes, and any other deductions.

-A Paraprofessional 1 in this district work for 190 days, and starts off making 18,575. A paraprofessional who has worked 16 years will look to make 27,575

Paraprofessional II- 20,282- 30, 108 *Bachelor degree requires.

Next Steps



Scheduled meeting with the Superintendent

Use my network and connections to inform others.

Use resources that come from being a former local President, and a member of my Board of Directors for my State Association.

Step out of my Blue(True Colors) bubble, and make a difference

Speak with the Superintendent Advisory Council



The Bartlett Education Association
Educational Support Professional
Mentoring Program





Why Statement

We want to provide our ESPs professional support through mentoring because we want to empower ESPs to achieve their personal and profesional goals as a Bartlett City Schools employee.

Target ESPs

1

Clerical
Services

2

Food
Services

3

Health &
Student
Services

4

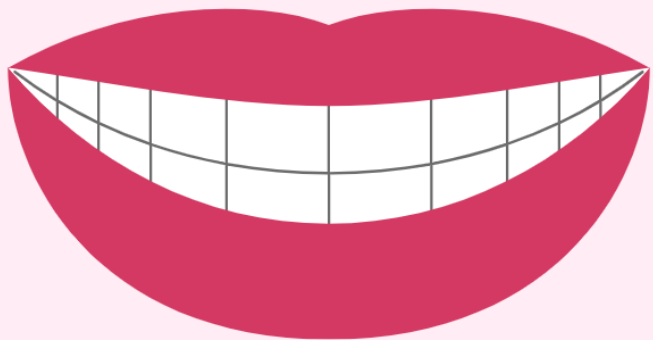
Paraeducators



Launching Support Squad

- Surveyed ESPs to determine the need for and interest in a mentoring program.
- Results showed that the ESPs do not feel supported by the district and the PD offered is not helpful.
- Recruited 3 mentors and 3 mentees for the pilot.





Here is what one mentee had to say:

Are you satisfied with the program?

Absolutely!

Are you getting from the program what you expected?

I wasn't sure what to expect initially, but I am getting lots of helpful information.

What is the best part?

Discovering all the PD that NEA and TEA has to offer.

What can we do to make the program better?

The benefits meeting that was held on the 10th was

Q&A

