



# A Proud History

MTA members have been advocates for public schools for more than 150 years. Every legislative and legal victory has been a victory for MTA, for public schools and for the future.

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

1845

1845-1899

Progressive practices are implemented, such as physical fitness programs for students, special education for the handicapped and retarded, 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.

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.

1900-1920



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.

1945

1954

All new teachers in the public schools **must be certified**. For a century, MTA had advocated for passage of this law.

1965

**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.

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

1972-1980

1976

Public higher education joins MTA.

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

1980

1984

“**Wall-to-wall**” organizing opens 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.

1993

**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.

1999-2010 . . .

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.

MTA continues to work on behalf of members and students through legislative activity, public relations and other forms of advocacy.

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.