

President's Message

Dear Association Leader and Friend:



As educators, there are promises that we make to ourselves and our students. We promise to inspire our students to great achievements and successes. We promise to open minds and open doors. We promise to go the extra mile, give the extra encouragement, and spend the extra time. We promise to seek the joy in teaching—and learning—every day.

Our elected officials have made education-related promises of their own. They've passed and fully funded Thornton, resulting in historic education funding with the goal of raising student achievement and the quality of our public schools. In 2006, legislators voted—unanimously—to pass a long-overdue enhancement of our pensions, which were then the worst in the nation. And in 2010, they made mentoring and the local development of evaluation systems crucial parts of the Education Reform Act.

This year, we all must keep our promises. I know that we will continue to honor the promises that we've kept over the years. We'll keep the promises that we've made to our students. We'll keep the promise to effectively use the resources available to us to keep Maryland's schools #1. We'll keep the promise that we made in 2006 to more than double our pension contribution to strengthen the retirement system and fund our enhancement. And we'll keep the promise to support high standards, best practices, and strong, transparent evaluation systems.

However, we need legislators to keep their promises as well. They must keep the promise to provide our children and schools with the resources they need to thrive and remain #1. They must keep the promise to maintain a sustainable pension system that allows Maryland to attract and retain the best teachers and honors their lifelong commitment to public service with a secure retirement. And they must keep the promise to ensure that local communities and educators can determine the best way to support and achieve high standards in their schools and for their students.

We must all get involved in this effort to keep the promise. This year, take an extra step. Reach out to your community and share your vision for your students, classroom, and workplace. Become a part of the growing MSEA community by joining our Facebook page,* signing up for our enewsletter, *FrontLine*,** and following our Twitter feed.*** Our opportunities to organize around the serious issues that affect public education are hugely enhanced by these exciting new tools. To really improve public education and make sure that children's interests remain at the forefront, we need frontline educators—MSEA members—to lead the way.

If we all keep our promises, we can honor the most important promise of all—the promise to our children of a great public school, a world of opportunity, and a boundless future.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Clara Floyd".

Clara Floyd, president

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** Sign up at [marylandeducators.org/frontline](https://www.marylandeducators.org/frontline)

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MSEA Mission Statement and Strategic Objectives

The Maryland State Education Association dedicates itself to advancing high quality universal free public education built on quality teaching, high student expectations, and a genuine opportunity to learn for each student; building a unified education profession with a powerful voice for the rights, professional interests and working conditions of educational employees; and working to enhance the rights of labor and human and civil rights for all.

Great Public Schools for *EVERY* Child

A message is a tool to help you stay focused on your priorities. When you're having a discussion about public schools, teachers, ESPs, or students, always come back to *Great Public Schools are a Basic Right for Every Child*. That means school employees need the resources, respect, and support to provide them.

Here are some ideas to help you use MSEA's message as you talk about the important issues that affect student achievement and your job.

We need tools and resources

A Great Public School for Every Child means:

- Students have updated texts and technology, smaller classes, access to quality early-childhood programs, safe and modern schools, proper healthcare, and nutrition.
- Teachers and ESPs have the time and resources to teach, access to quality professional development, and adequate salaries and healthcare.
- Parents and the community are informed and engaged stakeholders.

The world is changing ... fast

Educators must:

- Be prepared to meet the increased demands of higher standards and greater accountability.
- Meet the needs of more students with diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Have access to high-quality training in the latest research on cognitive development and learning styles.
- Be on the cutting edge of technology and its effect on how students learn and function in the world.

Responsibility + mutual respect = results

- Educators, parents, elected officials, and the community share responsibility for high-quality public education in a safe learning environment.
- Working together, stakeholders can address every student's needs and ensure a sustained commitment to provide adequate resources.
- The school environment must promote respect for employees and students regardless of cultural or ethnic background or sexual orientation.

We must engage students

- Schools and communities enthusiastic about schools create engaged students.
- Students learn in different ways. Educators must evaluate student progress in multiple ways.
- Administrators must make sure the pressures of standardized testing do not stifle teachers' creativity or the students' ability to grasp content.

Weave your own experiences and examples into the talking points above so the message makes sense for you, your students, your school, and community.

Visit www.marylandeducators.org to find out more about the education issues that affect you and your students. Questions? Contact your local association or MSEA, 800/448-6782.