

Somerset Teachers' Association Bylaws

Revised: September 13, 2016 at General Meeting

Article I: Name

The name of the organization shall be the Somerset Teachers' Association, being sometimes referred to in these by-laws as the STA or Association.

Article II: Purpose

The object of this organization is to act in areas concerning the welfare of the members, to forge a closer bond among them by means of friendly cooperation, to create a deeper sense of the dignity of education and the importance of the interests which it represents and to increase the efficiency of education. To this end, the STA is dedicated:

- to work for the welfare of the school children, the advancement of education, and the improvement of instructional opportunities for all.
- to unify and strengthen the teaching profession and to secure and maintain the salaries, retirement, tenure, sick leave, and other working conditions necessary to support the teaching profession.
- to act as the official representative of the STA members within the Somerset and Somerset Berkley School Districts, to act as spokesman and bargaining agent before the Somerset and Somerset Berkley School Committees, and to speak for the united teaching profession on matters of education to the communities as a whole.

Article III: Affiliations

The Association shall be affiliated with the Massachusetts Teachers' Association, hereinafter called the MTA, the National Education Association, hereinafter called the NEA and the Bristol County Educators Association, hereinafter called the BCEA.

Article IV: Membership

Section I

Any eligible professional employee of the Somerset Public Schools and/or the Somerset Berkley Public Schools as defined in the STA contract may become an active member upon payment of the annual dues.

Section II

Membership of individuals in the Association shall simultaneously require membership in the appropriate units of MTA, NEA and BCEA.

Section III

As a part of its collective bargaining agreement(s), the Association may establish the payment of an Agency Service Fee (agency fee).

The privileges of individuals paying such a fee shall be limited to the area of collective bargaining as provided by governing labor law and regulations.

The administration of the agency service fee shall:

1. Be in accordance with the contract agreement that creates it, as well as the state and federal regulations that govern it.
2. Utilize the rebate procedure for challenging agency service fees demanded by local affiliates of the Massachusetts Teachers' Association and the National Education Association as most recently published by MTA.
3. Provide for receipt of a copy of said procedure by any member requesting it in writing.
4. Provide for delivery of a copy of said procedure (along with all other materials required by said procedure) to any individual from whom payment of an agency fee is demanded.

Article V: Organization

Section I

The elected officers shall be a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, and a Secretary who shall serve for a term of two (2) years and are eligible for re-election. One of the Vice-Presidents must be from the Somerset Berkley Regional School District (High School) and the other from the Somerset School District (Middle and Elementary respectively).

Section II

The appointed officers shall be a Chairperson of the Negotiations Committee, a Chairperson of the Professional Rights and Responsibilities Committee, a Chairperson of the Acknowledgement Committee, a Chairperson of the Membership Committee, a Chairperson of the Professional Development Committee, Chairperson of the Nominative and Election Committee, two representatives of the Bristol County Educators Association, a Parent-Teacher Conference Representative from each school level, two (2) Sick Bank Committee Representatives, and the Chairperson of the Social Committee.

Section III

Each building or bargaining unit shall be entitled to elect faculty representatives according of the following formula:

1-30 members – 1 rep

31-60 members – 2 reps

61-90 members – 3 reps

91-120 members – 4 reps

121-150 members –5 reps

In buildings with more than one (1) rep or co-reps at the elementary level, an individual shall be designated to the Executive Committee as senior faculty rep by the representatives of that building. Where there are co-reps from a particular building, such co-reps shall constitute a single entity for the purpose of voting.

Section IV

The elected and appointed officers, the building representatives, the committee chairpersons and the immediate past President shall form the Executive Committee.

Article VI: Duties of Officers and Committees

Section I: The Executive Committee

A. Purpose

The Executive Committee shall approve all appointments to the other committees. Its members shall receive reports of the officers at its request and/or whenever it is possible before their presentation at general meetings. It shall be the coordination body between and advisory body to all committees and advise the officers as they take action on behalf of the Association. It shall authorize the dispersal of all funds (with the exception of NEA and MTA) from the Treasury.

B. Meetings

1. Monthly meetings shall be called during the second week of each month during the school year. The call shall be made in a manner similar to general meetings.
2. Emergency meetings called by the President or upon receipt of a petition of 20% of the membership or the members of the Executive Committee.

3. The President shall be the presiding officer of the committee except as otherwise noted in these by-laws.
4. Accurate minutes of all actions shall be maintained by the Secretary and a report shall be made available to all members of the Association so requesting.
5. A quorum of 25% of the committee shall be necessary to direct Association action on matters discussed.
6. The agenda of the monthly meetings shall be posted on the STA website and emailed to the membership at least 48 hours before each meeting.
7. Presence of the general membership as observers shall be allowed by the President on a space available basis.

Section II: Tie Vote

During any committee action carried out under this article the person presiding shall vote only in case of a tie.

Section III: Additional Committees

- A. The creation of additional permanent standing committees shall be only by amendment to these by-laws. Said amendments shall specify the committee purposes, organization and duties.
- B. The creation of temporary committees shall be accomplished by the Executive Committee.
- C. Temporary committees must be renewed annually at the June Executive Committee meeting following their creation in order to continue. The President shall place an item for consideration of this on the agenda, if so asked by the committee, who shall be contacted by the President at least 2 weeks prior to the Executive Committee meetings.
- D. The term of temporary committees shall be specified at their time of creation.
 1. Committees may be created also as part of a unit contract with the School Committee or as directed of the legislature, judiciary, or Department of Education.
 2. The purpose, duties, and term of the committee(s) so created will be as specified by said contract, law, or directive. The Executive Committee shall ask for a list of volunteers, and appoint Association members to temporary committees. The appointments shall be effective until the following June 30th. The Executive Committee may renew them upon reappointment at its June meeting.

Section IV: The Nominating and Election Committee

A. Purpose

The Nominating and Election Committee shall receive nominations for all officers, delegates and representatives not directly appointed by the President. It shall, in conjunction with the Membership Chairperson, produce a list of eligible voters. It shall produce the ballots bearing the names of all those accepting candidacy in each election. It shall receive nominations commencing each February for MTA/NEA delegates. It shall receive nominations of officers over a two-week period closing one week prior to the May election.

B. Organization

1. The Executive Committee shall, at its September meeting, appoint the members of this committee.
2. The committee shall consist of two (2) members in addition to the chairperson. No member of this committee shall be a candidate for office.
3. The committee shall solicit and collect nominations electronically.
4. The committee shall conduct the annual election of officers electronically during the three school days up to and including the day of the May general meeting. Voting shall conclude at 3:45 pm the day of the May general meeting and the election results will be announced pursuant to Article VIII, §B.

Section V: The President shall:

- A. Along with the Executive Committee, act on behalf of the Association in matters requiring Association action by contract, law, directive of affiliated organizations, vote of the general membership or, of the PR&R and/or Executive Committee(s).
- B. In conjunction with the Treasurer act in the dispersal of funds.
- C. Appoint the officers required in Article V, Section II, subject to the approval of the elected Executive Committee. Any such appointment shall be coterminous with the term of the President.
- D. Except as otherwise noted in these by-laws, preside at the general meetings and Executive Committee meetings of the Association and prepare the agenda of general meetings in conjunction with the Executive Committee.
- E. In conjunction with the Vice Presidents, provide STA representation at all meetings of the Somerset School Committee as well as the Somerset Berkley Regional School Committee meetings.
- F. Represent the STA before the public and perform all other functions as may be necessary to carry out the business of the STA.

- G. At the request of a majority of the Executive Committee, or upon receipt of petition of 20% of the membership, call a General Membership Meeting.
- H. Delegate presidential responsibilities to the Vice President of his/her choice.
- I. Keep accurate records and file reports of all activities of the office.

Section VI: Vice-Presidents shall:

- A. Perform the duties of the president upon his or her incapacity and report back to the President.
- B. Assume the office of president when it becomes vacant. Upon such vacancy, the Vice President from the same level as the prior President shall fill the office for the remainder of the term. The position of Vice President will be filled by a vote of the Executive Committee.
- C. Establish a training program for all elected officers, appointed officers and building representatives.
- D. Keep accurate records and file reports of all activities of the office.
- E. Attend more than 50% of regularly scheduled monthly school committee meetings.

Section VIII: The Treasurer shall:

- A. Keep an accurate record of all financial transactions.
- B. File financial reports and statements required by contract, law, directives of affiliated organizations, vote of the membership and/or the Executive Committee.
- C. Present to the Executive Committee and general meetings a Treasurer's report.
- D. Present to an auditor before the September Executive Board Meeting, the financial records of the Association for the fiscal year ending June 30. The auditor's report will be presented at the September Executive Board Meeting.
- E. Prepare and present to the September general meeting an operating budget for the Fiscal year beginning July 1 and ending June 30.
- F. Review, evaluate and recommend to the Executive Committee the proposed budget recommendations and the dispersal of non-budgeted funds requested by any officer for the purpose of conducting the duties indicated in these by-laws or required of them by affiliation agreements(s) MTA, NEA, and BCEA dues and payments
- G. Perform the duties assigned to the treasurer under state, federal, MTA, and NEA guidelines concerning Agency Service Fee.

- H. Keep accurate records and file reports of all activities of the office.

Section IX: The Secretary shall:

- A. Keep an accurate record of all actions taken at General and Executive Committee meetings.
- B. Maintain a complete list of officers as may be required by law or affiliation agreements.
- C. Present and updated copy of these by-laws to all newly elected or newly appointed officers as well as any member who shall request it.
- D. Work in conjunction with the President using various technologies in order to keep the membership updated about matters of concern.
- E. Create monthly agenda with the President and distribute to members prior to the meeting via existing, current communication methods.
- F. The secretary shall take over the president's responsibilities while the nominating and election process takes place for a vote to fill the vacant positions.
- G. Keep accurate records and file reports of all activities of the office.

Section X: The Chairperson of the Negotiations Committee shall:

- A. Form separate committees for Unit A and B (subject to the Executive Committee approval).
- B. With the assistance of the Executive Committee conduct the appropriate activities necessary to achieve the purposes of the negotiating committees.
- C. At the request of the Executive Committee report negotiations progress to groups called by the President to receive such reports.
- D. Preside at all meetings of the Negotiating Committees.
- E. See that accurate and complete records of negotiating committee activities are maintained.
- F. Keep accurate records and file reports of all activities of the office.

Section XI: The Negotiations Committees

- A. Purpose

The Negotiations Committees shall have as their purpose the generation of contracts between the School Committees of Somerset and the Somerset-Berkley and the various bargaining units within the Association, the consideration of any request made to the Association to act as bargaining agent, and through its Chairperson, the presentation of its recommendations to a general meeting for consideration and ratification.

B. Organization

1. The committees shall be responsible for membership classes covered by the Teachers Contracts.
 - a.) The Chairperson of Negotiations shall serve on the committees as their chairperson, and with Executive Board approval, may create subcommittees as needed to deal with issues.
 - b.) The MTA field representative shall serve on the committees unless the bargaining unit's STA membership shall request his/her deletion.
 - c.) A Secretary shall be named for each of the committees by the Chairperson if he/she desires.
2. The committee shall have the Executive Board as an advisory unit and a direct negotiations unit, which shall be formed as follows:
 - a.) The direct Unit A negotiations unit's composition shall include the Chairperson of Negotiations and the MTA field rep. In addition to the negotiations Chairperson, it shall have two (2) representatives from each level: elementary, middle, high and two (2) representatives at large to serve in the direct negotiations unit (subject to Executive Committees approval).
 - b. The direct Unit B negotiations units' s composition shall include the Chairperson of Negotiations and the MTA field rep. In addition to the Negotiations Chairperson it shall have one (1) representative from 9-12, one (1) representative 6-8 and one member at large.

Section XII: The Professional Rights and Responsibilities Chairperson shall:

- A. With the assistance of building representatives form the PR&R Committee (subject to Executive Committee approval).
- B. With the President act as the Association spokesperson whenever an action by the Association shall be required by the grievance procedure.
- C. See that accurate and complete records of the activities and policies of the PR&R Committee are maintained.
- D. Preside at any meeting or section of a meeting the purpose of which is to discuss matters of PR&R or at his/her discretion designate the individual who shall preside.

- E. Fulfill all other duties assigned by the grievance procedures of the unit contracts.
- F. Keep accurate records and file reports of all activities of the office.

Section XIII: The Professional Rights and Responsibilities Committee

A. Purpose

The Professional Rights and Responsibilities Committee shall have as its purpose to develop policies consistent with the Code of Ethics of the United Teaching Profession (NEA), the General Laws of Massachusetts, and the Policies of the DLR and to perform its duties assigned under the STA Negotiations Committee. This Committee shall be informed of any action favorable or adverse to be taken by the Association for or against any member, officer, or prospective member and may, if it is so voted, direct its Chairperson to conduct an Executive Committee meeting on the matter and present its recommendations.

B. Organization

1. In addition to the chairperson, there shall not be less than one (1) nor more than two (2) members per school level (elementary, middle school, or high) on the standing committee. Said members shall be approved by the Executive Committee.
2. At his/her discretion or upon vote of the committee both may temporarily add to (maximum number not having met) the standing committee members.
3. At his/her discretion or upon vote of the PR&R and/or Executive Committee the Chairperson may add on the MTA field rep or MTA Legal Counsel to the Committee as an advisor and/or spokesperson.
4. The Chairperson may invite other consultants to advise the Committee, provided that, no debt shall be incurred without advance consideration and authorization by the Executive Committee.

Section XIV: Acknowledgement Committee

The Acknowledgement Chairperson shall:

- A. Prepare and mail appropriate acknowledgements to STA members and document associated expenses.
- B. Maintain accurate and complete records of activities.

Section XV: Membership Committee

The Membership Chairperson shall:

- A. Maintain an accurate listing and/or file of all members and represented non-members.

- B. Present all dues information and breakdowns to the Treasurer.
- C. Certify with the Treasurer the amounts due from the School Department as payroll deductions for each payroll period.
- D. Coordinate the membership campaign and report all membership transactions to the Treasurer, MTA, NEA and the Executive Committee.
- E. Keep accurate records and file reports of all activities of the office.

Section XVI: Building Representatives

Building representatives shall:

- A. Assist members of their buildings in making contact with whatever Association officers or committee(s) whose assistance they might need.
- B. As provided in these by-laws, assist other association officers in the performance of their duties.
- C. Be responsible for the completion of the Association membership campaign conducted by themselves and/or assistants of their designation.
- D. Serve on the Executive Committee.
- E. If they so desire, serve as their building's member on any other Association Committee with approval of the Executive Committee.
- F. Serve as an intermediary in the distribution and/or collection of Association notices or surveys when such is necessary.
- G. Coordinate the initial handling of grievances in the building and aid the PR&R Chairperson as STA representative in disciplinary discussions between STA members and the school district.
- H. Meet with the school principal to discuss contract related concerns when necessary.
- I. Be responsible for taking the minutes at building staff meetings.
- J. Hold building level meetings at least two times per year to discuss building level concerns and building level meetings following all Executive Committee meetings to inform the membership of the determinations of such meetings.

Section XVII:

The Professional Development Chairperson shall:

- A. With the assistance of Building reps form a Professional Development Committee (subject to Executive Committee approval).
- B. Be responsible for proposing and organizing increment credit bearing courses, PDP opportunities and/or personal interest offerings.
- C. Be responsible for collecting tuition for courses to be delivered to the Treasurer.
- D. Distribute course offerings to Building Reps. for posting in each building.

Section XVIII:

Social Chairperson

- A. Plan and execute the social activities for the association within the confines of the budget.
- B. Serve on the executive committee.
- C. Keep accurate records and file reports of all activities of the office.

Section XIX:

Bristol County Educators Association Representatives

The representatives to Bristol County Educators Association shall:

- A. Present reports from the BCEA to the Executive Committee.
- B. Present matters from the Executive Committee to the BCEA board on which they shall serve for the STA.

Article VII: Elections and Appointments

Section I

The Nominating and Election Committee shall prepare ballots for elections and appointments for presentation to the membership as required.

Section II

- A. The Executive Officers (President, Vice Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer) shall be elected at the general meeting in May biannually; all other officers shall be elected annually at this election. The Nominating and Election Committee shall conduct the election and report the results to the membership.

- B. Elections specified in paragraph “A” shall be conducted during the second week of May each year, in accordance with Article VI Section 1 Subsection B 1.
- C. Election of MTA/NEA Annual Meeting Delegates will be done in accordance with MTA by-laws and regulations.
- D. All votes of the members conducted under this article shall be done by ballot.

Section III

- A. The elected officers shall assume their duties July 1 – June 30. The Treasurer and President must complete fiscal year end paperwork for the association by July 15.
- B. Appointed officers shall assume their duties on July 1 upon their approval by the Executive Committee at its June meeting.
- C. The terms of the elected officers shall expire on June 30 following their assumption of office.
- D. The terms of appointed officers shall expire June 30 following their assumption of office.
- E. Any elected officer may be re-elected for more than one term.
- F. Any appointed officer may serve additional terms if re-appointed at the June meeting.
- G. If any office, other than the President or building representative, becomes vacant before its annual election date, it shall be filled by appointment by the Executive Committee at its next regularly scheduled meeting.
- H. Members in a building may immediately elect a new building rep should that position become vacant.

Section IV

- A. The President, Treasurer, and Professional Rights and Responsibility chairperson must attend the annual MTA summer conference and participate in the offered training that is most appropriate to his/her office or the first available training for their office. This requirement must only be met once.
- B. It is also recommended that any newly elected or appointed officer other than those listed above attend the annual MTA summer conference and participate in the offered training that is most appropriate for his/her office.
- C. If the President, Treasurer, and Professional Rights and Responsibility chairperson cannot attend the MTA summer conference due to a documented hardship, then their position will need to be reviewed by the executive board.

Article VIII: Meetings

Section I

A. Such meetings shall be called by the President or Executive Committee or petition of 20% of the membership, and the call shall be distributed by usual means 9 days in advance of the meeting.

B. Such meetings shall be called to convene during the second week of September, the second week of March, which shall include the election of MTA and NEA Representative Assembly delegates [with such elections being conducted by the Nominating and Election Committee] and the second week of May, which shall include the election of officers and budget approval.

Section II

All calls to general meetings shall carry the agenda of that meeting listing business items to be acted upon as well as the date, time, and place of the meeting.

Section III

During the school year, general meetings shall be called to convene 15 minutes after the dismissal time of the last unit of members.

Section IV

A. A quorum shall not be necessary to act on business items listed on the agenda.

B. A quorum, 25% of the membership, shall be necessary to act upon business items not listed on the agenda of the call to meeting.

C. Any agenda carrying a proposed amendment to these by-laws shall also carry an exact copy of Paragraph "A" of this Section following the statement "Our by-laws presently state that."

Section V: Bargaining Unit Meetings

A. The Executive Committee may instruct the President to include on the call to general meetings of the STA membership items listed for consideration by all members of the bargaining unit.

B. The Negotiations Committee, following a majority vote of its members, or upon direction from the Executive Committee, will call a meeting of all bargaining unit members to consider matters arising as a part of collective bargaining.

1. The Negotiations Chairperson shall inform the STA President of any vote conducted under part “B” of this section.
2. Bargaining unit meetings called under part “B” of this section shall be called, posted, and conducted in a manner consistent with state, and federal collective bargaining regulations.
3. The President, or his/her designee, shall preside at all bargaining unit meetings called under part “B” of this section.
4. Voting at all bargaining unit meetings shall be conducted in a manner consistent with state and federal labor and collective bargaining regulations.
5. A roster of STA members in good standing will be checked as members enter bargaining unit meetings.

Section VI

Under situations not covered by these by-laws, Robert’s Rules of Order as most recently published, shall be followed.

Article IX: Dues

Section I

The dues of members shall be equal to the combined total of the MTA/NEA/BCEA/STA dues as stated by those organizations.

Section II

Local dues shall be determined annually at the May membership meeting. Dues will be set in conjunction with the approval of the local budget.

Section III

- A. Dues may be paid in one sum, which shall be due November 10. Payment may, however, be made before that date; dues payment may be extended by selection of payroll deduction.
- B. By arrangement with the Association Treasurer, an individual may change his/her selected method of payment.
- C. STA dues for an individual hired after December 31st shall be ½ the annual STA dues for the remainder of that membership year.
- D. Members who are employed half time (0.5) or less shall only pay half of the STA dues.
- E. Any member who wants to terminate his/her membership in the Association for the following school year must notify the President of the Association in writing before the last

day of the current school year and the Town/District Treasurer at least sixty (60) days prior to the termination of membership.

Section IV: STA Scholarship

The annual budget, based upon recommendation by the outgoing Executive Committee, shall state at the time of its acceptance an amount to be set aside from the annual per-capita STA dues for the purpose of maintaining an STA Scholarship Trust Fund. The amount of any such set-aside shall be stated to the members at the time of the annual membership update.

The executive board will decide yearly how many scholarships will be awarded and will form a scholarship committee to choose the recipients. The STA shall annually provide and budget for at least the following scholarships for the children of members:

- a. One (1) \$1,000 scholarship
- b. One (1) \$500 scholarship

Article X: Salaries

Section I

The annual salary of the President shall be **\$5000**. The annual salary of the Vice Presidents shall be **\$1000**. The annual salary of the Treasurer shall be **\$2000**. The annual salary of the Secretary shall be **\$1000**. The annual salary of the Chairperson of Professional Rights and Responsibilities shall be **\$3200**. The annual salary of the Chairperson of Negotiations shall be **\$1800**. The annual salary of the Membership Chairperson shall be **\$1000**.

Section II

Officers receiving compensation are expected to attend 75% of all regularly scheduled meetings. Stipends shall be paid once in June 15th. Payment is contingent upon documentation being submitted by June 1st to the Treasurer. The required documentation consists of a responsibilities report containing all duties performed for the position from July 1st to June 1st.

Article XI: Methods of Amendment

Section I

These by-laws may be amended at any general meetings of the Association by a 2/3 vote of the members present, provided that the amendments shall be stated on the agenda carried with the call to meeting and also provided that Section I, paragraph "A" of Article VIII is followed.

Section II

Amendments shall take effect immediately upon approval at a general meeting unless a date is specified in the amendment as adopted.