

You Are the STA!

*A Guide to Membership in the
Sharon Teachers Association*

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August 20, 2018

Welcome to the 2018-2019 school year. On behalf of the Sharon Teachers Association, I wish everyone a rewarding school year.

Many of you, may be wondering, “How does union membership benefit me?” A union is founded on the concept that unionism and professionalism are intricately intertwined. Working conditions are better and turnover rates are lower in unionized public schools [<http://nonprofitquarterly.org/2014/08/27/charter-school-turnover-and-charter-school-union-organizing>]; when teachers are valued and treated with respect, they thrive. The goals of our association, as outlined in the Constitution of the STA, are to promote the health and professional interests of its members, to form a professional bond among those in the membership, and to encourage the growth of public education. The Sharon Teachers Association advocates for fair and respectful working conditions, negotiates to improve salary increases and benefits, works to resolve issues surrounding school policies and procedures, and offers its members opportunities for professional development through its affiliation with the Massachusetts Teachers Association and the National Education Association. Of course, these are just a few of the things the Sharon Teachers Association does for its members.

Teachers unions have a long and proud history in this country [<http://www.pbs.org/onlyateacher/timeline.html>]; however, in recent years, educator unions have been under attack in many states including California, Wisconsin, and Illinois. In response to these attacks, educators all over the country are fighting back and reclaiming their place as leaders who care deeply about the youth; we have seen important union actions in Chicago, West Virginia, Arizona and other major cities in the U.S.A.

This document, *You are the STA*, highlights some of the benefits that the Sharon Teachers Association has procured for our members. In the pages that follow, you will find information on the structure of our union, how to contact officers, and a summary of some of the rights guaranteed by our contract. I believe it will serve as a valuable reference for you during the coming school year.

The strength of our union is in our membership; therefore, YOUR involvement is key to our success!

In solidarity,

Bernadette Murphy, President
Sharon Teachers Association

Organization of the STA

The STA is you, the professional employees of the Sharon Public Schools. The Sharon Teachers Association is the representative organization for all the professional employees of the system, the teachers, social workers, psychologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech and language pathologists, specialists, librarians, nurses, coordinators and instructional assistants for the pre-school through grade 12.

The STA Executive Board and the STA Constitution govern our organization. The Executive Board consists of the elected Officers, a Board of Directors (the Building Representatives, Negotiation Chair, PR&R Chair, Retiree Representative & NCTA Chair). Each member has one vote. Elections for these positions take place at the Annual Meeting usually in the spring. All members of the STA are eligible to serve in these positions.

STA Constitution:

STA bylaws can be found in the *Constitution of the Sharon Teachers Association, Incorporated*. This document was last ratified at the Annual Meeting in May of 2018. A copy of this document can be found in your building's Teachers' Lounge along with the most recent version of the STA contract.

Building Representatives

STA members elect building representatives, 3 from each school, to serve for 2 years. A Building Representative serves as a liaison between the STA leadership and the membership in his/her building.

Executive Board

The Executive Board (E Board) is responsible for the governance of the Association. It meets once a month from 3:30-5:30pm (see your building representative for the schedule). During this time, suggestions and concerns of the membership are presented and discussed. Meetings are held at one of the schools in the district and all STA members are welcome to attend. See your building representatives in September for the Executive Board meeting dates.

Labor/Administration Relations

The President, Vice President and/or the Grievance Chairpersons meet periodically with the Superintendent throughout the school year to discuss a variety of general issues and/or concerns on an as needed basis. If you have any concerns or questions that you would like to be brought to the Superintendent's attention, be sure to share it with one of your Building Representatives, who will bring it up at the next monthly Executive Board meeting, where it will be addressed by the board and possible resolutions will be discussed. A log of any addressed concern, proposed resolutions, and any follow-up meetings with the Superintendent and/or the School Committee will be recorded and shared with any member[s] involved.

Who's who in the STA for 2018-2019

This list is provided to all STA members. Please **contact your building representatives directly** with any questions and/or concerns that you may have over the course of the school year; they will direct you to the appropriate person[s] and/or resource[s].

President: Bernadette Murphy, S.H.S.

Vice President: Lisa Scarborough, S.M.S.

Secretary: Karen Woods, K-5 Sci and Social Studies Coordinator

Treasurer: Marie Cioffi, S.H.S.

Chair of Negotiations: Thor VanVaerenewyck

Chair of Instructional Assistants Negotiations: Cathy Hichens

Co-Chairs of Professional Rights and Responsibilities [PR&R]: Scott Tarantino, Elementary, & TBA, Secondary

Building Reps:

Early Childhood Program: Sarah Keough & Lori Carroll

Cottage: Linda Fowler, Trish Shea, & Noelle Allard

East Elementary: Rebecca Fuller, & Kristen Phinney

Heights Elementary: Cathy Friedman

S.M.S.: Valerie Ordway & Erinne Silver

S.H.S.: Lori Leveckis, Courtney Malcolm, & Stacy Newman

Instructional Assistant Representative: Cathy Hitchens & Jodie Carr

Negotiating Committee:

Elementary: Scott Tarantino, Heights Elementary

S.M.S.: Lisa Scarborough

S.H.S.: Mara Georgi

Unit B: Chuck Fazzio

At-Large: Thor VanVaerenewyck

At-Large: Kirsten Davis

Instructional Assistants Negotiating Committee:

Elementary: Cathy Hichens

Early Childhood Center: Teri Robbie

S.M.S.: OPEN

S.H.S.: Stephanie Quintal

At-Large: Phyllis Gorman

At-Large: OPEN

Professional Rights and Responsibilities [PR+R]:

Cottage: OPEN

East Elementary: Katie Conway & Jennifer Grossman

Heights Elementary: Scott Tarantino

S.M.S.: Lisa Scarborough

S.H.S.: Lori Leveckis

At-Large: OPEN

Sick Bank Committee:

Deborah Pruell, Cottage and East Elementary, Glenn Shiebler, S.H.S.

Joint Health and Safety Task Force:

Elementary: Cathy Friedman, Heights Elementary

Secondary: Cathy Collins, S.H.S.

Admin: OPEN

Norfolk County Teachers Association Representative: Chris Brilliant, S.H.S

Retired Member Liaison [non-voting]: Judy Brown

STA New Member Liaison: Erinne Silver

MTA Chair of the New Member Committee & Co-Chair S.E.A.M.: Erinne Silver

MTA Board of Directors, District 30E: Peter Schoonmaker

MTA Uniserv Representative: Cameron Bateman

Your Weingarten Rights

Weingarten Rights

Weingarten rights guarantee and employee the right to union representation during an investigatory interview by an employer. If the interview could in any way lead to the employee being disciplined or terminated, or affect his or her working conditions, he or she should respectfully request that a union representative or officer be present at the meeting. Without representation, the employee may choose not to answer questions.

For more information: <http://definitions.uslegal.com/w/weingarten-rights>

Summary of Weingarten Rights

- Right to representation during investigatory interview
- Reasonable expectation that discipline may result
- Employee must ask for representation
- Employer is under no obligation to inform member of right (unless in Collective Bargaining Agreement)

More Resources

The STA is affiliated with both state and national professional associations the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) and the National Education Association (NEA). The websites of both organizations provide a wealth of information for educators.

National Education Association: www.nea.org

The National Education Association (NEA), the nation's largest professional employee organization, is committed to advancing the cause of public education. NEA's 3 million members work at every level of education—from preschool to university graduate programs. NEA has affiliate organizations in every state and in more than 14,000 communities across the United States.

Massachusetts Teachers Association: www.massteacher.org

- Certification/Licensure
- Member Services
- Career Management
- Position statements on key issues
- Latest news impacting state educators

Massachusetts Department of Education: www.doe.mass.edu

- State curriculum frameworks
- Mandated Testing
- Certification/Licensure

MTA Field Service Representative:

Cameron Bateman is our MTA field service representative (or uniserv representative). If you have questions please see your Building Representative and your Building Representative will pass the message on to your president. Your president will contact Cameron Bateman. (MTA will remind you of this, if you forget and call them first.)

STA Website: <https://sharonteachers.wordpress.com>

Please refer to this useful site for updated information as the school year progresses. If you have any information that you would like to see included on our website, contact, Erinne Silver or send the information along with your building representative to the next E-Board meeting. We also send email messages periodically to our members' home emails if you have not shared your home email with us or you changed your home email then please give your updated address to your building representative.

A Quick Summary of Our STA Contract

One of the important responsibilities of the STA is to negotiate the contract or collective bargaining agreement for the membership. In the last year of an agreement, we select a bargaining team from our own membership, to represent us at the bargaining table where we meet with representatives of the Sharon School Committee to create a successor agreement.

At the bargaining table the STA proposes changes, which are suggested by you, the members of the STA. When the two parties reach agreement, it must be approved, or ratified, by the general membership by the entire school committee. When ratified, your salary, benefits, work year, workweek and workday are established for the term of the contract. These are considered the terms and conditions of your employment.

It is important to familiarize yourself with our contract, as it is a legally binding document that specifies our rights and responsibilities as Sharon Public Schools employees. We have highlighted the following sections of the contract; please take the time to familiarize yourself with the content. Copies of contracts can be found in the Teacher's Lounge in every building. If your building does not have a copy then please see your Building Representative or go to the forms folder in First Class for a digital copy.

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Sources:

Agreement Between the Sharon School Committee and the Sharon Teachers Association

Our Changing Membership: An Organizing Guide. MTA Publications

Distribution of Union Dues for Full-time members:

NEA = \$ 192.00 MTA = \$ 494.00 STA = \$ 80.00 NCTA = \$ 8.00

TOTAL = \$ 774.00

Distribution of Union Dues for Instructional Assistants:

NEA = \$ 116.50 MTA = \$ 149.00 STA = \$ 16.50 NCTA = \$ 8.00

TOTAL = \$ 290.00