

## INSIDE MSEA WITH DAVID HELFMAN



### Your Voice ...

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.”

John Quincy Adams must have been talking about great educators.

Great schools inspire. Teachers play an indispensable role. So do bus drivers, cafeteria workers, secretaries, classroom assistants, pupil personnel workers, school psychologists, counselors, speech pathologists, administrators, and so many others.

What inspires you to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more...particularly when it comes to your professional life at school? Share your story with your colleagues—both in-person and at our first-ever Twitter chat with President Weller and Vice President Bost on November 20 at 4 p.m. We'll talk about how you inspire your students and colleagues. Use #MSEAinspires to follow along.

Share your inspiration, and get inspired by your colleagues from across the state!

### ... And your vote.

Who has the ability to help make—or keep—your school great?

Chances are the power is in the hands of your school board, county executive, council, or commissioners, state legislators, or governor. The power to determine who is in those offices is in your hands.

Dream more for this election. What could be done if we elected more pro-public education champions?

Learning more is the first step to making it happen. Visit [MDAppleBallot.com](http://MDAppleBallot.com) to find out who's sought—and received—support from colleagues in your local association. They're the candidates who will help us make all our schools great.

Do more by sharing these recommendations with colleagues, family, and friends.

And become more by inspiring your students. What an impression it can make to be able to announce that 100% of school staff exercised their right to vote!

## A WORD FROM MSEA'S LEGAL TEAM

### It's Election Time—What You Can and Can't Say on the Job

Your political activism drives association success in state and local elections, and over and over again, that activism has proven vital. But in an election year, when campaigning for your candidates and issues is so important, you must be very mindful of your audience.

As an educator, your off-campus conversations and activities in political events is likely protected by the First Amendment. But if your activities lead to a disruption in school—or in educator/student or educator/administration relationships—you could be heading for a problem.

That same protection doesn't exist when you're on the job, standing in front of a classroom of students, or conversing with parents about student, classroom, or school issues. In these situations, you're designated a spokesperson for the school district—that means the administration determines what you can and can't say on the job.

At election time, this becomes particularly important.



### Here's what you need to know to stay on the safe side:

**DON'T** discuss your preferred political candidates in the presence of students.

**DON'T** wear political buttons of any kind while in the presence of students.

**DO** keep any discussion of the election, political parties, or candidates non-partial and relevant to the curriculum.

Beyond the classroom, school administrators can't impose rules limiting how you talk with colleagues during breaks or during conversation outside the presence of students. That's why you'll find information about association-endorsed candidates posted on the association bulletin board, in your mailbox, and in employee lounges that are off-limits to students.