

Where Do Teacher Union Dues Go:

Public Higher Education in Massachusetts

By Rebekah Paxton

On average, only about 16 percent of annual union dues paid by members in 19 Massachusetts public school districts stayed with local union chapters. The remaining 84 percent of dues revenue went directly to the state (Massachusetts Teachers Association) and national (National Education Association) union affiliates, according to Pioneer Institute’s report, “Where Do Teacher Union Dues Go?”.

But what about public higher education in Massachusetts?

For unions representing faculty at the Commonwealth’s community colleges, state colleges and universities, and the University of Massachusetts system, the dues revenue structures are also hierarchical. Individual university unions remit a substantial portion of their dues revenue to state and national-level organizations, as shown below.

University	Union name	State Affiliation	National Affiliation
UMass Amherst	Massachusetts Society of Professors	MTA	NEA
UMass Boston	Faculty Staff Union	MTA	NEA
UMass Dartmouth	Faculty Federation Organization	AFT	AFL-CIO
UMass Lowell	Massachusetts Society of Professors	MTA	NEA
Community Colleges	Massachusetts Community Colleges Council	MTA	NEA
State Colleges	Massachusetts State College Association	MTA	NEA

Like K–12 teacher unions, the majority of annual membership dues does not stay with local affiliates to cover the costs of collective bargaining negotiations and grievance representation. For the Amherst and Boston UMass campuses, whose dues levels were made publicly available, less than 27 and 29 percent of total dues, respectively, remained at the local level. For the Massachusetts Community Colleges Council (MCCC), which represents all 15 community college campuses, 30 percent stayed local. The remaining 70 percent went to the Massachusetts Teachers Association and the National Education Association.



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Rebekah Paxton is a Research Assistant at Pioneer Institute. She first joined Pioneer in 2017 as a Roger Perry intern, writing about various transparency issues within the Commonwealth, including fiscal policy and higher education. Since then, she has worked on various research projects under PioneerPublic and PioneerOpportunity, in areas of state finance, public policy, and labor relations. She recently earned an M.A. in Political Science and a B.A. in Political Science and Economics, from Boston University, where she graduated summa cum laude.

University	Union name	Local Dues	State Dues	National Dues	Total Dues	Percent Dues Staying Local	Year
University of Massachusetts	Massachusetts Society of Professors (Amherst) ¹	\$251	\$494	\$189	\$934	27%	2017–2018
	Faculty Staff Union (Boston) ²	\$276	\$494	\$192	\$962	29%	2018–2019
Community Colleges	Massachusetts Community Colleges Council ³	\$297	\$494	\$192	\$983	30%	2018–2019
State Colleges	Massachusetts State College Association ⁴	\$175	\$494	\$189	\$858	20%	2017–2018

While these organizations exhibit a similar dues remittance structure to the K–12 unions previously examined, there is another tier to which dues paid by professors at the Commonwealth’s state colleges and universities are spread.

The Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA) represents faculty on nine campuses: Bridgewater State University, Fitchburg State University, Framingham State University, Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Salem State University, Westfield State University, and Worcester State University. While professors pay dues to the MSCA, it only retains 20 percent of annual dues revenue. Of \$858 in total dues, \$683 goes to the state and national teachers unions. Depending on the campus, professors represented by the MSCA, also pay \$10 to \$86 in “chapter” dues, which are added to the \$858 already going to affiliated local (MSCA), state (MTA), and national organizations (NEA).

The nature of this structure means a very small percentage of dues go to the chapter closest to dues-paying professors. For example, 9 percent of what Salem State University professors pay in total dues goes toward the campus chapter of the Massachusetts State Colleges Association. On the other hand, only 1 percent of dues goes to the Framingham State chapter of the

MSCA. Contract negotiations for professors are conducted by the MSCA at all nine state colleges and universities⁵, yet members fund a total of four tiers of the union organization. According to the MSCA website, grievance representation is a chapter-level function, where members must utilize local MSCA “chapter grievance officer[s]” to protest potential violations of the contract.⁶ This allocation of resources raises questions about how individual chapters can afford to represent members with grievances. For these college professors, key services and benefits are dispersed among more levels of union hierarchy, while members are required to pay an additional organizations just to remain in the union.

In higher education, local unions tend to calculate dues by full-time or part-time status, or by credit hour. Thus, there is no real distinction between types of professor (i.e. tenured professor, assistant professor, lecturer, or adjunct faculty).

The U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Janus v. AFSCME* gives both union members and non-members the right to make wholly informed decisions about joining or remaining in the union. To assess the benefits union membership brings to individual professors, understanding the hierarchical nature of dues remittances and the value each level of union affiliates actually provides is important to making decisions about membership.

Union name	Chapter dues	Local dues	State dues	National Dues	TOTAL	% Local	Year
Massachusetts State College Association	-	\$175	\$494	\$189	\$858	20%	2017–2018
Bridgewater	\$60	\$175	\$494	\$189	\$918	7%	2017–2018
Fitchburg	\$66	\$175	\$494	\$189	\$924	7%	2017–2018
Framingham	\$10	\$175	\$494	\$189	\$868	1%	2017–2018
MassArt	\$15	\$175	\$494	\$189	\$873	2%	2017–2018
Mass Maritime	\$15	\$175	\$494	\$189	\$873	2%	2017–2018
MCLA	\$30	\$175	\$494	\$189	\$888	3%	2017–2018
Salem	\$86	\$175	\$494	\$189	\$944	9%	2017–2018
Westfield	\$35	\$175	\$494	\$189	\$893	4%	2017–2018
Worcester	\$67	\$175	\$494	\$189	\$925	7%	2017–2018

Endnotes

1. (n.d.) Join MSP. Retrieved from Massachusetts Society of Professors: <https://umassmsp.org/join/>.
2. (n.d.) Membership and Dues. Retrieved from Faculty Staff Union UMass Boston: http://fsu.umb.edu/sites/fsu.umb.edu/files/FSU%20Dues_18-19.pdf.
3. (n.d.) MCCC Dues Rates and Benefit Information. Retrieved from Massachusetts Community College Council: <http://mccc-online.org/STORE/Dues/index.htm#DUES%20RATES>.
4. (n.d.) Annual MSCA/MTA/NEA Union Dues Breakdown by Category. Retrieved from Massachusetts State College Association: <http://mscaunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Dues.pdf>.
5. (n.d.) Union Benefits. Retrieved from Massachusetts State College Association: <http://mscaunion.org/494-2/>.
6. (n.d.) About the MSCA. Retrieved from Massachusetts State College Association: http://mscaunion.org/msca_about/.

