Washington County Teachers Association, Inc.

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Washington County Teachers Association Bylaws

ARTICLE I – NAME AND AFFILIATION

A. The name of this association shall be the Washington County Teachers Association (WCTA).

B. The Association shall be affiliated with the National Education Association (NEA) under its rules and the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) under its rules.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSES

The purpose of the Association shall be:

A. To support education as a profession by improving and strengthening benefits and working conditions of education professionals in Washington County, including but not limited to, securing and enhancing salaries, retirement, tenure, and leave.

B. To enable members to speak with a common voice on matters pertaining to the education profession and to advance their individual and common interests when presenting before the Board of Education, community stakeholders, and other legal entities.

C. To maintain and continue to promote the implementation of high professional standards, including, but not limited to, ethical practices, equitable personnel policies, and exemplary standards of professional preparation and procedures.

D. To work for the wellbeing and improvement of instructional opportunities for all students and staff.

E. To sustain property, funds, and staff to support the purposes of the WCTA.

ARTICLE III – ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

A. Active membership in the Association shall be open to members employed by the Washington County Board of Education in the Unit 1 bargaining unit as determined by negotiation with the Board of Education. The Representative Council may determine other categories of membership.

B. Active members have the right to nominate and vote in Association elections, hold Association office, be active in Association committees, have their voice heard on Association matters, and attend and participate in the deliberations of Association meetings as defined in the Bylaws and Association procedures.

C. All members shall subscribe to the purpose(s) and Bylaws of the Association.

D. Active membership shall be continuous until the member leaves employment with the Washington County Public School system, resigns from the Association, or fails to pay membership dues.

E. The active membership year shall begin on September 1 and shall end August 31.

F. A person shall not be eligible for active membership in the Association unless the person maintains membership in MSEA and NEA.

ARTICLE IV – RETIREE MEMBERSHIP

A. Any former member of the Association who has retired from professional employment and who has been a member of the Association for at least one (1) year immediately prior to retirement, and upon payment of the appropriate annual retirement dues as required by MSEA/NEA, may become an active retired member.

B. Active retired members may serve on Association committees, including as an appointed chair.

C. Active retired members may not run for or hold an elected office.

ARTICLE V – DUES AND GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Association dues shall be set at the annual meeting by a majority vote of those present.

A. Notification of any proposed increase in Association dues shall be given to each member at least ten (10) days prior to the annual general membership meeting and shall include the amount of increase for local, state, and national dues, as well as the proposed total dues.

B. The Board of Directors shall arrange at least one (1) meeting of the general membership each year to be held annually.

C. Quorum for general membership meetings shall be declared upon recording that a majority of schools are represented by the members in attendance.

D. In the absence of a quorum at the annual general membership meeting, any business on the agenda (except the amendment of bylaws) may be conducted at the next Representative Council meeting.

ARTICLE VI – ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A. The elected officers of the Association shall be the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

B. Only active members of the Association may hold these offices.

C. Terms of officers shall be three years.

   1. Officers' terms shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30.
   2. After having been elected to a full term in the office, the Board officers, including the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary, shall serve no more than two consecutive terms and three lifetime terms in the same office.
   3. The President and Vice-President shall be elected in the same year. The Treasurer and Secretary shall be elected in alternate years.

D. The Vice-President shall fill a vacancy in the office of President until the next regularly scheduled election. A vacancy in any other elected office shall be filled by appointment by the Representative Council until the next regularly scheduled election.

E. If the offices of President and Vice President become vacant at the same time, the Board of Directors shall choose one (1) of its members to serve as President pro tempore until the vacancies are filled in accordance with the bylaws.

F. The elected officers of the Association shall serve as delegates to the MSEA and the NEA Representative Assembly.

ARTICLE VII – DUTIES OF OFFICERS

A. The President shall:

   1. prepare agendas for meetings of the Representative Council, Board of Directors, and General Membership meetings with input from the Board of Directors;
   2. present written or oral reports to the Representative Council and General Membership meetings;
   3. appoint and give a charge of duties to each member of standing and special committees subject to the approval by the Board of Directors;
   4. serve as an ex-officio member of committees, *if needed*, except the Nominations and Elections Committee;
   5. Attend wider Association meetings. If unable to attend, the succession of order of officers shall be followed (Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, any elected Board of Directors member);
   6. serve as spokesperson for the Association representing the Association before the public and governmental bodies;
   7. when speaking for the Association regarding matters of potentially controversial issues, seek guidance of the Board of Directors, and, when appropriate, the Representative Council, to determine the stance of the Association;
   8. be responsible for all records of the Association;

9. assume responsibility for the safekeeping of bonds covering officers, representatives, and employees of the Association;
10. maintain a calendar of their Association activities;
11. report on his/her activities at each meeting of the Board of Directors, Representative Council and general membership;
12. sign jointly with the Treasurer for any disbursement from the Association's funds, including co-signing checks for submitted vouchers and vouchers submitted in support of purchases charged to the Association's credit card;
13. perform such duties as may be assigned from time to time by the Board of Directors or Representative Council;
14. delegate duties not specified herein to officers, directors and others; and carry out other duties customarily performed by the president of an Association;
15. after transitioning to the role of immediate past president, serve as a consultant to the incoming president and attend Board of Directors meetings if invited by the newly elected Association president.

B. The Vice President shall:
    1. perform the duties of the President in the absence of the President;
    2. assume the Office of President when a vacancy occurs;
    3. perform duties that may be assigned by the President or specified in the bylaws;
    4. sign jointly with the Treasurer for any disbursement from the Association's funds;
    5. perform such duties as may be assigned from time-to-time by the President, Board of Directors, or Representative Council.
    6. carry out duties customarily performed by the parliamentarian of an Association meeting unless this duty is designated to another WCTA member by the Board of Directors;
        a. support the President's calling of the meeting to order and inform members of the procedures as outlined by Robert's Rules of Order (or other meeting framework);
        b. enforce the procedures and standing rules;
        c. serve as timekeeper, ensuring that business decorum is maintained;
        d. support the President's adjournment of the meeting;
        e. attend training and educate members regarding appropriate procedures for Association meetings.

C. The Treasurer, working with the assistance of the Office Manager, shall:
    1. be responsible for the collection of dues
    2. have the authority, along with either the President or Vice President, to co-sign checks for duly authorized vouchers and co-sign for vouchers submitted in support of purchases charged to the Association's credit card;

3. receive all monies of the Association, ensure that they are deposited into Association accounts, and that an accurate accounting is kept of all Association funds;
4. present financial reports to the Association governing bodies;
5. assist in the preparation of the Association's annual budget;
6. ensure that a review of the Association's financial records is conducted each year and that materials are available for a formal audit if one is required;
7. ensure that tax and other required governmental forms are prepared and submitted in a timely manner;
8. carry out other duties customarily performed by the treasurer of an Association;
9. provide for an orderly transition to the incoming Treasurer when leaving office;
10. serve as the chair of the Finance Committee; and
11. may be requested, after becoming the immediate past treasurer, to serve as consultant to the Board and newly elected treasurer for a period of up to one (1) year.

D. The Secretary, working with both the Board of Directors and Representative Council and with the assistance of the Office Manager, shall:
    1. keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the Board of Directors, the Representative Council and the membership; ensure that a record of all meetings of the Association, the Board of Directors, and the Representative Council is maintained;
    2. monitor attendance at Representative Council meetings and Board of Director meetings;
    3. assist with Association correspondence;
    4. perform duties that may be assigned by the President, the Board of Directors, or specified in the bylaws;
    5. carry out other duties customarily performed by the secretary of an Association.

ARTICLE VIII – ELECTION AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A. Only active members of the Association may hold the elected position of director.
B. The Board of Directors, as the executive authority of the Association, shall have the following powers and duties to:
    1. implement the policies established by the Representative Council;
    2. carry out the administrative affairs and management of the Association;
    3. receive the minutes and reports of all committee meetings;
    4. be responsible for the oversight of the Association;
    5. approve all expenditures;

6. assure its transactions are reported to the members;
7. assure the Representative Council's transactions are reported to the members;
8. hear and resolve any appeals which may arise in accordance with the bylaws;
9. determine whether a grievance, further appeal, or legal action shall be supported by the Association;
10. accept recommendations from the President for committee chairs and, by majority vote, approve such.
11. Censure, suspend, or take other disciplinary action against members or the Board of other elected or appointed members for breach of fiduciary duties or misconduct.

C. The Board shall include 10 elected directors as designated by their instructional level or special assignment and will be elected in alternating years.
    1. Two (2) At-Large Special Assignment Directors will be elected to represent various PK-12 unit member assignments such as but not limited to school counselor, encore teacher assignment, central office assignment, library media assignment, speech language pathologist, social worker, mentor, case manager, and lead teacher, one on each alternating year;
    2. Four (4) At-Large Elementary Directors will be elected to represent elementary educators, two on each alternating year;
    3. Two (2) At-Large Middle School Directors will be elected to represent middle school educators, one on each alternating year;
    4. Two (2) At-Large High School Directors will be elected to represent high school educators, one on each alternating year
        a. Members at multi-level schools (e.g. elementary and secondary or middle and high housed in the same building) shall be eligible to run for a seat at any of the levels represented by their school and are strongly encouraged to run at the level most consistent with the majority of their instructional duties.
        b. If a Director transfers from one school level to another, they may remain on the Board until the next election by requesting approval from the Rep Council.

D. An elected director shall serve a three-year term. The term of office shall begin on July 1.

E. Any vacancy on the Board of Directors shall be filled by the election and appointment of the Representative Council until the next regularly scheduled election.

ARTICLE IX – MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A. The Board of Directors shall meet at least once each month during the school year prior to the monthly Representative Council meeting or when called by the President with appropriate notice.

B. The Board of Directors may meet at the request of the majority of the members of the Board.

C. At the request of members for specific situations or at the discretion of the President, Board meetings may be in person, virtual, or a combination thereof.

D. If a decision is required in an emergency and the Directors cannot meet face-to-face, an on-line conference may be held with at least five (5) hour notice. After provision of information to, and discussion by, the Directors meeting as a whole, a vote may be taken electronically. Minutes of the meeting will be kept and approved at the next regular meeting.

E. A simple majority of filled positions will constitute a quorum of the Board of Directors.

    1. Members of the Board of Directors shall attend the regular meetings of the Board. Board members are expected to inform the President of any absences. After three (3) absences without notification, the President may call a special meeting with that Director and the other Association officers to determine next steps.

    2. To reach a quorum that allows the Association's governing bodies to conduct business, video/audio electronic participation shall be permitted ONLY under conditions specified in WCTA policy governing meeting attendance and participation.

F. Any member of the Association who is not a member of the Board of Directors may attend its meetings but may not offer motions, vote, or attend closed session portions of the meetings.

ARTICLE X – ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES AND ALTERNATES

A. Members in each public-school facility shall have one (1) Association Representative (Building Representative) to the Representative Council for each twenty (20) members or fraction thereof. There shall be at least one (1) Representative from each facility.

B. Members in each facility shall select their Representative(s). The Representative(s) shall assume their position as of July 1. A majority of members in a facility may appeal the selection process and/or results by petitioning the Board of Directors by July 1.

    1. Each spring, the WCTA Nominations and Elections Committee, in cooperation with the Office Manager, will coordinate building elections to ensure that the process is fair and open.

    2. If no one runs for representative or if there is no majority, the President may recommend to the Board a viable candidate(s) to serve as building representative until such time as an election can be held.

C. Members in each facility shall select Alternates.

    1. The method of selection shall be agreed upon by a majority of members in the facility, and the results of the selection process shall be forwarded to the Nominations and Elections Committee by August 31 of each year.

2. Alternates shall assume their position as of September 1. A majority of members in a facility may appeal the selection process and/or results by petitioning the Board of Directors by September 30.
3. An Alternate shall attend the meetings of the Representative Council in the absence of the Association Representative.
4. The number of Alternates shall not be limited.

D. The Association Representative (Building Representative) shall attend the regular meetings of the Representative Council.
    1. To receive an excused absence, the Association Rep must RSVP in advance and indicate that an alternate rep will be in attendance or that another building rep from the school will be covering attendance for their school.
    2. An Association Representative who has three (3) unexcused absences from the regular meetings of the Representative Council may be considered negligent of duty.

F. The Association Representative shall:
    1. accurately represent and speak and act in accordance with the vision, mission, belief statements, and goals of the Association;
    2. read and know content of the Negotiated Agreement, reference the contract accurately, and seek assistance from members of the Board of Directors and/or the President, if needed;
    3. call meetings of the Association members to discuss Association business and consider Common Concerns;
    4. serve as a communication link between members and the Association;
    5. participate in and promote annual elections with WCTA leadership annual WCTA and MSEA elections and for selecting subsequent Association Representatives and Alternates;
    6. enroll members;
    7. serve as grievance representative, if needed;
    8. distribute Association information and maintain the Association bulletin board;
    9. read Association materials and emails to stay informed about Association business; and
    10. make an effort to attend MSEA and NEA meetings, training, and events to become engaged in the wider Association network.

G. When an Association Representative seat becomes vacant AND THERE ARE NO ALTERNATES, the seat shall be declared vacant by the Board of Directors.
    1. The President shall work with members at the school facility affected by the vacancy to facilitate the selection of an Association Representative.
    2. The Nominations and Elections Committee shall recommend members to the Representative Council to fill vacancies that occur between annual elections until such time an election can be held.

ARTICLE XI – MEETINGS AND DUTIES OF THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

A. The Representative Assembly shall consist of the officers, directors, and Association Representatives elected annually from each building/worksite in the county. The Representative Council shall be the primary policy-approving body of the Association.

B. The Representative Council shall:

1. be informed about the legislative program of MSEA and adopt it, in part or in total, annually;
2. adopt the agenda and its rules for governing the meetings;
3. adopt resolutions and other policy statements;
4. receive the reports of committees;
5. adopt amendments to the bylaws;
6. enact such other measures as may be necessary to achieve the objectives of the Association although not specifically provided for under these bylaws; and
7. fill vacancies among officers and on the Board of Directors as specified in these bylaws.

C. The Representative Council shall meet no fewer than five (5) times during the school year pursuant to a calendar prepared by the President and approved by the Board of Directors. Such meetings may be in person, virtual, or a combination thereof.

D. The President shall prepare the agenda for each meeting and shall circulate it to all Association Representatives, at least one (1) week prior to the meeting except in emergency situations, so that Representatives have time to discuss it with WCTA members.

E. Special meetings of the Representative Council shall be held at the call of the President, by majority of the Board of Directors, or upon request from ten (10) Representatives. Special meetings shall be called within ten (10) days of receipt of such request.

F. Each member of the Representative Council shall have one vote.

1. In the absence of a Representative, one designated Alternate from the absent Representative's school facility shall have the same rights and privileges as the Representative.
2. On items requiring a vote, alternates up to the number of elected representatives for each building may participate.

F. Quorum for meetings shall be determined by a majority of schools with elected representatives in attendance.

G. Any member of the Association who is not a member of the Representative Council may attend its meetings, but may not offer motions, vote, or attend closed session portions of the meetings.

ARTICLE XII – NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

A. The Nominations and Elections Committee shall be responsible for planning and implementing the procedures to be presented for adoption by the Board of Directors and by the Representative Council.

B. A written notice shall be sent to all members explaining the adopted election procedures and shall include a clear method for nominating candidates.

C. Any member of the Association may nominate any Active Member as a candidate for office.

D. The Nominations and Elections Committee shall develop the official ballot and establish procedures ensuring ballot security, which may include the following:

1. Open nominations;
2. The distribution and collection of nominating forms and preparation of the candidate slate;
3. The publication of the list of nominations prior to and during the election;
4. Secret ballot election by active members only;
5. Conformity with the one-person one-vote rule;
6. The tally of the ballots or the validation of the results from an on-line election;
7. The election of officers and directors by a majority of the valid ballots cast or by acclamation where only one candidate is nominated;
8. Announcement of election results to the membership within 10 business days of the close of the election.

E. Members shall vote by secure and private ballot within the designated time frame.

F. Local representatives to state and national Association bodies shall be elected in accordance with their respective bylaws.

1. The Nominations and Elections Committee shall prepare a timeline and procedures for conducting elections of local representatives to state and national association bodies.
2. A written notice shall be sent to all members explaining the adopted election procedures for local representatives to state and national association bodies.

ARTICLE XIII – RECALL

A. An officer or director role may be recalled for an unlawful act or for misconduct or gross negligence in office.

B. Recall proceedings against an officer or director role may be initiated by written petition submitted to the Board of Directors by at least twenty-five (25%) percent of elected members of the Representative Assembly; by twenty-five (25%) of the active membership; or by majority vote of the Board of Directors.

C. Upon receipt of such petition or upon such action by the Board of Directors, the officer or director named shall be suspended from duty pending the outcome of the recall process.

D. Having been appointed according to Article XIV, the Review Board shall hold a due process hearing. If a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Review Board sustains the charge against the officer or director, ballots shall be prepared for a membership vote on the recall.

E. A 2/3 majority of members voting on recall shall be required-to recall. Upon recall, the office shall be declared vacant.

F. If recall fails, the member remains in the role.

ARTICLE XIV – REVIEW BOARD

A. When required, a Review Board shall be appointed by the President and approved by the Representative Council. Members of the Review Board shall be members of WCTA who do not hold an ELECTED office (i.e. Board of Directors) of the Association.

B. The Review Board shall adopt its own rules of procedure consistent with due process and these bylaws.

C. In addition to any other enumerated powers provided in these Bylaws, i.e. Article XIII (Recall), a Review Board may also be appointed to review, rule on, and/or propose remedial action on:

1. Alleged ethical violations by any member serving in an elected or appointed capacity,
2. Matters of censure, suspension or expulsion of members upon petition of at least fifteen (15) members of the Representative Council.
3. Provide for a hearing in such cases which shall guarantee due process of law to the member affected
4. The action of the Board of Directors or Representative Council regarding consistency with bylaws.

ARTICLE XV – CONTRACT RATIFICATION

A. Active members of the Association who are also members of the bargaining unit governed by a proposed contract are eligible to vote on the ratification of that proposed contract or negotiated agreement. A majority of those voting is necessary to ratify the proposed contract.

B. At least one informational meeting shall be held prior to the ratification vote. This meeting shall be held as close in time as possible to the determination of the final proposal and within a week prior to the ratification vote.

C. The complete and final language and monetary details of proposed contract changes must be distributed physically or electronically to those eligible to vote on the contract at the informational meeting and/or simultaneously with the vote on ratification.

D. The ratification vote may be held at a meeting of those eligible to vote, at a meeting of the Representative Council, or by paper ballot or electronic vote.

E. Notice of the ratification meeting or a paper ballot or electronic vote shall be provided to those eligible to vote at least three (3) days prior to the scheduled event. If the vote is conducted at a Representative Council meeting, a straw poll of eligible voters must be conducted by Representatives in each building/worksite. Each site's representatives' votes on ratification must reflect the outcome of the site's straw poll.

F. The Nominations and Elections Committee shall be responsible for verifying the eligibility of voters, tallying, verifying, and announcing the outcome of the ratification vote.

ARTICLE XVI – STANDING AND OTHER COMMITTEES

A. The Association establishes the following standing committees:

1. The Membership Committee shall plan and assist in the enrollment of members and maintenance of membership in the Association.
2. The Nominations and Elections Committee shall prepare guidelines for and carry out elections as noted in bylaws and assist in the process of contract ratification.
3. The Negotiations Committee shall prepare for and oversee the conduct of contract negotiations for each bargaining unit represented by the Association and ensure that the requirements of Article XV "Contract Ratification" are carried out.

B. The appointment or re-approval of these standing committees shall take place no later than one hundred and twenty (120) days after the President assumes office or within a purpose-driven timeframe.

C. Other ad hoc committees and task forces may be established by the President, Board of Directors, and /or the Representative Council to carry out specific duties, address priorities, or support the work of the Association.

ARTICLE XVII – PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES

The most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for the Association on all questions not covered by these bylaws or by the rules of procedure adopted by the Board of Directors or Representative Assembly.

ARTICLE XVIII – CONFIDENTIALITY

A. Directors, officers, employee(s), and committee members of the Association shall keep confidential all records and sensitive information discussed during closed or executive sessions of the Board of Directors or its committees. Confidential information does not include information that is publicly known or becomes publicly known through no fault of the Director.

B. Upon resignation, termination, or expiration of a Director's term, the Director shall promptly return all documents, records, digital data, and other materials containing confidential information to the Association.

ARTICLE XIX – AMENDMENTS

A. Amendments to these Bylaws may be proposed by the Board of Directors, by recommendation of the Bylaws Committee with approval of the Board of Directors, by the Representative Assembly, or by a petition to the Board of Directors signed by twenty percent (20%) of the general membership.

B. The proposed amendments, and the notice of the method by which the vote on said amendments will be taken, shall be distributed to the membership at least 30 days prior to that meeting/vote. This notice shall include the details on the manner in which the vote will be conducted whether in a meeting or through a paper ballot or electronic vote.

C. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members attending a regular or special meeting of the membership or the Representative Assembly or a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members voting by paper or electronic ballot shall be necessary to approve an amendment.

D. Unless otherwise provided for in the vote on the amendment, all amendments shall take effect on the following July 1, consistent with terms of office as defined in these bylaws.

Adopted: November 18, 2026, by the WCTA Representative Assembly.