

AFT: Massachusetts Federation of Teachers Collection

**Papers, 1952-1980
(Predominantly, 1960s-1970s)**

**12 linear feet
12 storage boxes**

Accession #1071
DALNET #
OCLC #

The Massachusetts Federation of Teachers (MFT) was originally known as the Massachusetts State Branch, American Federation of Teachers. The charter application for the state organization was submitted to the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) in February of 1938 by eleven representatives of then-existing AFT locals in Boston, Cambridge, Lawrence, Lowell, New Bedford, Springfield and Western, Massachusetts. The original name for the organization was chosen because the Bay State counterpart of the National Education Association was known as the Massachusetts Teachers Federation. The name existed until the early 1960s when the Massachusetts Teachers Federation became the Massachusetts Teachers Association, and the State Branch, AFT, adopted its current name of the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers.

As an organization, the MFT continued to grow, establishing its own offices, first in Lynn, the center for several of its early locals in the strong union cities on Boston's North Shore, and then, as its membership expanded throughout the state, in the capital city of Boston. During its first 25 years, the MFT was largely run by monthly meetings of local delegates, who chose state officers from among their own ranks. After the hiring of full-time staff in the mid-1960s, delegate meetings became more concerned with setting policy, with the staff planning day-to-day action. In 1968, the delegates created an Executive Board with a president, four vice presidents, a corresponding secretary, a treasurer, and four committee chairpersons. In June 1969, the MFT held its first annual convention, and from then on, the conventions set broad policy and elected officers. The board made more immediate policy decisions, and the executive secretary and staff made the decisions necessary to carry out policy. Over the years, the size of the board grew. By the 1987 annual convention, the number of vice presidents had increased to 22. A major change in structure occurred in 1980, when the Executive Board voted to make the presidency a full-time position with the president acting as chief executive officer.

The central administrative figure in the MFT was Rose Claffey, who almost single-handedly organized locals in the 1950s as a vice president of the AFT and who served as MFT executive secretary from 1964 to 1975. In 1976 Claffey was succeeded by Paul Devlin, a union representative active in local organizing and contract negotiations.

The papers in the AFT: Massachusetts Federation of Teachers Collection reflect the relationship of local school boards and communities with the teachers and other staff members of the school systems. Most of the documents relate to contract negotiations and collective bargaining. The collection also contains a large number of newspaper clippings dealing with issues of concern to educators, parents and school officials.

PLEASE NOTE: Folders are computer-arranged alphabetically in this finding aid, but may actually be dispersed throughout several boxes in the collection. Note carefully the box number for each folder heading.

Important subjects in the collection:

Collective bargaining--Education
Education--Massachusetts
Public employee unions--Massachusetts
Strikes and lockouts--Teachers
Teachers--Massachusetts
Teachers--Salaries, etc.--Massachusetts
Teachers' unions--Massachusetts

Important correspondents in the collection:

Rose Claffey
Paul Devlin
Sally Parker

Non-manuscript material:

A large number of contracts have been transferred to the Archives Library and a few photographs have been placed in the Archives Audiovisual Collection.

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| 5-28 | AFT; transfer policy, memo re., 1964 |
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| 9-25 | AFT-AAUP Coalition: state college campaign; clippings, corres., notices, 1977-78 |
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| 8-37 | Boston State College; audit report, 1973-74 |
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| 11-7 | Contracts; misc.; Lynn, Salem, Southeastern Regional, 1967; 1973-74 |
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