

PGCEA Faculty Representative Role & Responsibilities

PGCEA Faculty Representatives are the heart and soul of the Association. You are our grassroots leaders, selected by your colleagues, to represent them in the creation of an effective organization that advances the interests of educators and public education. PGCEA Faculty Representatives are leaders, organizers, and problem-solvers.

Roles are Changing

As we look to the future, the role and responsibilities of both PGCEA and its Faculty Representatives are changing rapidly. The way we have always done things will no longer be sufficient to meet the new challenges we face. Public support for – and expectations of – public education is changing rapidly.

For PGCEA, putting the quality of teaching and learning first is at the center of our agenda. PGCEA's Faculty Representatives must re-conceptualize their role as well. PGCEA Faculty Representatives must not only seek to represent the best interests of the faculty as a whole, they must become advocates for improving the quality of teaching and learning.

The ideal PGCEA Faculty Representative should:

- Maintain confidentially at **ALL** times
- Be an instruction leader in your school.
- Have the respect of your colleagues – and the administration.
- Be self-aware about your role as a leader – earning respect by the way you exercise your judgment, treat other people, and work to solve problems.
- Do what is right for teachers and students.

Responsibility of Faculty Representatives

Your primary responsibility as a Faculty Representative is to *provide leadership* for PGCEA members at your school or worksite by

- **helping them solve problems;**
- **advocating for and representing their collective interests and needs;**
- **mobilizing collective action when necessary; and**
- **getting other members involved in the governance of the school and the work of the union.**
- **distributing association materials**
- **conducting on-site elections**

The most effective Faculty Representatives develop a core of colleagues to share in the many tasks involved. The ability to recruit volunteers can be the most valuable skill for a Faculty Representative to develop.

Support for Faculty Representatives

A primary responsibility of the leadership and staff of PGCEA is to help Faculty Representatives be successful. PGCEA's President, Board of Directors, and Field Staff are all regularly engaged in helping Faculty Representatives organize their schools effectively. They are available to speak at membership or faculty meetings; to meet with Faculty Representatives to plan and organize; or to assist in problem-solving.

Faculty Representative Structure

- Your school/worksites is entitled to at least one PGCEA Faculty Representative, and additional Faculty Representatives are on the basis of **1 for every 25 PGCEA members** (or portion thereof). *See the FAC guidelines.*
- Faculty Representatives should be elected at a meeting of the PGCEA members at your school or worksite. Traditionally, this is done during September. Some schools do it in the spring, so planning can be done over the summer.
- PGCEA sends out pre-service Faculty Representative packets to all prior years' Faculty Representatives to assist in the conduct of this meeting.
- In sites with more than one Faculty Representative, one should be designated as the Faculty Representative Chair (or Head Faculty Representative).

The Representative Assembly

- PGCEA's Faculty Representatives are a critical link in the communications between members and the elected Board of Directors.
- PGCEA holds a countywide Representative Assembly (RA) every month (Sept.-May). The RA is held the fourth Monday of every month at the PGCEA center at 8008 Marlboro Pike in Forestville.
- The RA is a policy-making body within the organization. It operates under Roberts' Rules of Order and its own Standing Rules.
- The RA is open to all members. Voting is limited to duly designated Faculty Representatives.

Effective Building-Level Organization

There are many tasks involved in developing an effective building-level organization. No one person can do it all. That's why **developing a core of activists** is essential. By distributing leadership and building the leadership skills of others, you will accomplish much more. A well-functioning team of Faculty Representatives shares the responsibility for:

- **Ensuring that your school/worksites is represented at every Rep Assembly**
 - Some Faculty Representatives attend every RA themselves. Others rotate the responsibility among several Faculty Representatives. The key outcome is to ensure that your school is represented.

- **Promoting communication about issues**
 - All Faculty Representatives should be on PGCEA's Faculty Representative e-mail list to receive important news and updates.
 - The RA is a vehicle for two-way communications. Faculty Representatives should share feedback from and to their colleagues about issues at the RAs.
 - Faculty Representatives should take a lead role in advancing thoughtful discussions about the issues that matter to our members.
 - Faculty Representatives should regularly copy PGCEA's posting from the PGCEA web site to their own school's private folders in order to keep their members informed and should be encouraging their colleagues to regularly read and check the web site for ways to keep informed.

- **Helping members solve individual and school-wide problems**
 - You should establish a way for teachers in your building to communicate directly with Faculty Representatives about any concerns or problems they face (individual or collective).
 - A Faculty Representative should be designated to follow up on concerns by learning more about the problem, determining its scope, suggesting appropriate means of resolving the problem, involving others when necessary and helping the member(s) get a solution that works for everyone involved.
 - It is appropriate for Faculty Representatives to support individual teachers when meeting with the Administration.
 - **Remember, PGCEA staff and officers are available to help you solve problems.**

- **Organizing PGCEA membership meetings in your building as needed**
 - Some schools meet every month, others less frequently. But regular, short, informative membership meetings are critical to keeping your colleagues informed and staying in touch with their concerns.
 - In other schools, Faculty Representatives regularly provide updates during staff meetings.

- **Promoting involvement in decision-making at your school**
 - Involve your colleagues in establishing a FAC.
 - Help members understand and interpret the contract.
 - Serve as a representative of the faculty in resolving problems with the school's PTA.
 - Ensure the faculty has good communication with the leadership of the school's PTA.

- **Conducting PGCEA elections**
 - PGCEA is a democratically run organization. In addition to electing their own Faculty Representatives, PGCEA members elect the PGCEA Board of Directors, the Board of the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA), and delegates to the annual convention of the National Education Association (NEA). All elections are conducted at schools and worksites and sometimes election materials may be sent to the member's home address. This is another concrete, specific task that can easily be assumed by a volunteer other than the Faculty Representative.

- **Involving members in Associations activities**
 - There are always opportunities for member involvement: be it by enrolling in trainings or workshops, participating in forums or conferences, serving on committees or joint work groups, or participating in rallies or other collective actions. Faculty Representatives play a critical role in encouraging members to participate. Faculty Representatives should always be thinking about opportunities for involvement and what might appeal to specific colleagues. As with membership (*see below*), the only way people get involved is if they are personally asked.

- **Recruiting new members to the Association**
 - Recruitment of new teachers is critical to the vitality of the organization. A PGCEA Faculty Representative in their building should contact every new teacher personally.
 - Early in each year, PGCEA provides Faculty Representatives with rosters to identify who is a member and who is not. Either the PGCEA Faculty Representative or another designated "recruiter/welcomer" should both contact each new teacher and recruit to membership those who have not yet joined.
 - All new teachers are required to either join the Association as a member or become a "representative fee payer" for the services PGCEA is legally required to provide to them.

- **Promoting involvement in political action**
 - As public employees, much of our work lives are influenced by the decisions of elected officials. Involvement in political action is essential to our ability to

improve the compensation and working conditions of our members and the quality of public education.

- PGCEA regularly works to mobilize its members to get involved in key political races, to work the polls and to financially support political action through the *MSEA Fund for Children and Public Education*.
- This is another great opportunity to recruit one or more volunteers to take on discrete tasks that help build the organization and win improvements in the lives of our members.