

## Strengthening the church through education

MEA report to the Delegate Assembly – **MennoCon23**

### HISPANIC MINISTRIES

MEA's flagship Hispanic Ministry programs continue to train Hispanic pastors and leaders for discipleship in the church. Students are drawn to the Hispanic Anabaptist Bible Institute and Seminary, known as IBA (**Instituto Bíblico Anabautista**) and SeBAH (**Seminario Bíblico Anabautista Hispano**) respectively, for their strong theological and biblical teaching, in Spanish and from an Anabaptist perspective that is uniquely Hispanic. Led by passionate staff, professors, and tutors, the programs are accessible and affordable: SeBAH is 100% online while local congregations host study centers for IBA groups. IBA's inaugural virtual center launched this year – an initiative we expect to expand.



### GOING DIGITAL



In addition to IBA, SeBAH, and continuing education courses, MEA's Hispanic Ministries has moved into digital outreach with an e-zine "**MenoTicias,**" (Mennonite News) and podcast, "**Un Momento de Anabautismo**" (An Anabaptist Moment). These resources aim to inspire and teach about Mennonites and Anabaptists, the vision of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century Anabaptist-Mennonite Church, and what it means to walk with Jesus.

### HISTORIC PARTNERSHIP

A new partnership emerged in the past year with Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind., to create the first Spanish language graduate certificate in theological studies. The course of study for the **SeBAH-AMBS Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies** will be taught in Spanish and is designed to provide professionals, congregational leaders, and bivocational pastors with a foundation in theological and biblical study. The certificate requires 21 credit hours and can be completed in two years. Graduates will then be eligible to enroll in AMBS master's programs. The program is set to begin in the fall of 2023.

### VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

The visionary behind MEA's Hispanic Ministries is Director Marco Güete, who was part of the group of Hispanic pastors in 1988 who imagined a way to train leaders in every Hispanic Mennonite church. They founded IBA and built partnerships with local congregations across the country, established study centers within those churches, and recruited students and teachers. Hundreds of students have enrolled in the program since then. Many have graduated with certificates or diplomas and have gone on to serve as pastors and leaders in the church. SeBAH emerged in 2010.



**"The Hispanic Mennonite church is growing, and we want these congregations to have well-trained disciples of Jesus to lead them."**

As the director, Marco has invested more than most in these ministries, and he continues to dedicate himself to strengthening the Hispanic Mennonite Church. This summer he is completing the third leg of a multi-year pilgrimage along *el Camino de Santiago* (the Way of Saint James) in Spain – a total of 483 miles! – to raise awareness and support for IBA. Keeping the program affordable is a priority, and fundraising is critical. Güete hopes his walks raise awareness and inspire generosity within the church.

## MENNONITE LEARNING NETWORK

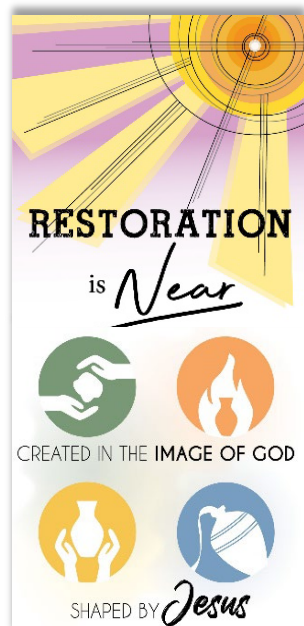
MEA operates the Mennonite Learning Network, a Moodle platform for online learning. Current partners include SeBAH, [Semilla](#), [Mennonite Mission Network – Sent training](#), the [Collaborative MBA program](#), and the [Doctorate in Nursing Practice consortium](#). MEA is shaping plans to make this platform available more broadly to MC

USA area conferences as an online learning platform they can access at reduced costs compared to getting the services on their own.

## AMBS PRESIDENTIAL REVIEW

In accordance with its bylaws, the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) Board of Directors launched a regular presidential review of Dr. David Boshart in October 2022. Michael Danner was a member of the Review Committee, and MEA staff Jolene VonGunten provided administrative support. The Committee completed its role in April. We are pleased to be part of this important work.

## “AT HOME” RESOURCES



Inherited from our friends at Mennonite Church Canada, the At Home worship guide series leads individuals and families through the days and weeks of Lent and Advent with the goal of deepening their experience of the seasons. Daily and weekly Scriptures are woven with worship rituals, prayers, activities, and background information.

**Whether at home or in the classroom, MEA is committed to helping teachers and parents as they impact children and young people.**

At Home resources can be downloaded at no cost from

MEA's website: [www.MennoniteEducation.org/resources](http://www.MennoniteEducation.org/resources).

## 2022-23 ENROLLMENT REPORT

**Mennonite schools are touching the lives of 9,290 students, an increase of 189 (2.1%) since 2021-22.** The headcount for higher education institutions decreased by 71 students, while preschool, elementary, and secondary education levels showed an increase of 260. The number of students connected with MC USA congregations decreased in higher education by 69 and increased among PreK-12 schools by 181, for a total net increase of 112. MEA collects these statistics on an annual basis from all member educational institutions and programs, from early childhood through continuing education. We compile the data to develop a picture of enrollment trends across the institutions: the total number of students enrolled in the institutions, the number of Mennonite and non-Mennonite students enrolled, racial/ethnic diversity, breakdown by grade and degree level, and other demographics. The 2022-23 report and previous years' reports are available at this link: [MEA Enrollment Reports](#).

## NEW SCHOLARSHIP FOR BIPOC STUDENTS

MEA is finalizing a new scholarship to encourage BIPOC students (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), who are members of MC USA congregations, to attend higher education institutions affiliated with MC USA. The scholarship will be launched for the 2023 – 24 academic year.

## MENNONITE EDUCATORS CONFERENCE

MEA's Jo Helmuth provided event planning and logistical support for the [Mennonite Educators Conference](#) in Leesburg, Va, February 2 – 4. Following a three-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the theme “**Better Together**”



resonated deeply with the 330 attendees, who represented fourteen Early Childhood – grade 12 schools from across the U.S., plus an international affiliate from Albania. Eastern Mennonite

University Professor Emerita Dr. Judy Mullet was one of the keynote speakers, and Harrisonburg-based [The Walking Roots Band](#) gave a concert and led a worship session. The event was co-sponsored by Everence Financial, Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Disaster Service, and Mennonite Mission Network.

## JOB BOARD

MEA publishes a weekly [Job Board](#) and distributes it to congregations, schools, constituents, and donors across the denomination and beyond. Schools partnered with MEA can list their job openings at no charge. There are a significant number of vacancies at all levels across Mennonite education.

## PRAYER SUPPORT

The MEA prayer newsletter is a monthly prayer resource that continues to be a blessing to the schools and local congregations. These prayer requests come directly from schools and educational programs across all levels of Mennonite education to help congregations and individuals know how best to pray for the schools and the work being done toward faith formation. The prayer requests can be shared in bulletins each week and/or printed or emailed to congregants each month for home use. To view or subscribe, visit [www.mennoniteeducation.org/monthly-prayer](http://www.mennoniteeducation.org/monthly-prayer).

## MEA INVESTMENT FUND

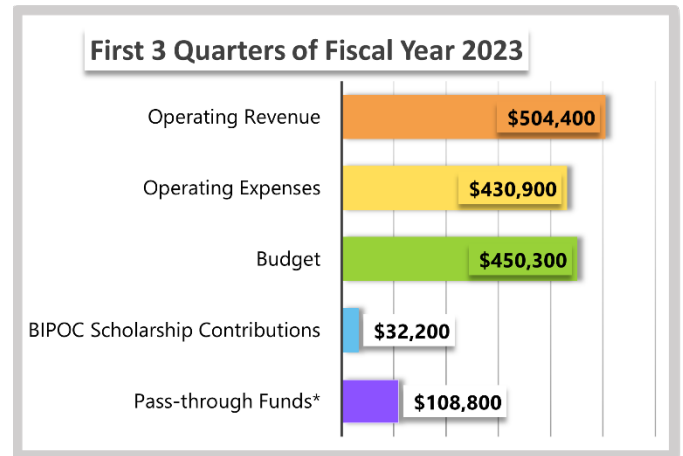
Since 1995, [The MEA Investment Fund](#) has served MC USA-affiliated schools, congregations, area conferences, and other programs with Mennonite education-related assets that are integrated into an investment pool. Pooling funds offer many benefits to the participants. Today, over twenty entities participate in the pool. As of January 31, 2023, it was valued at \$197.2 million.

## NEW WEBSITE

MEA launched a new website in April. Designed by Shé Langley of [Rank Lift](#), the new site has improved navigation and search capabilities as well as a sharp, new look. We are excited to utilize the site as a communication hub for schools and congregations. Check it out at [www.MennoniteEducation.org](http://www.MennoniteEducation.org).

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The following chart shows the financial activity for the first half of fiscal year 22-23. (Investment-related gains and losses are not included.) MEA is in a good financial position currently. COVID's silver lining was reduced travel costs, which had been a huge line item, and there were staffing changes. We do have a safety net now. However, looking forward, there is concern about changes in significant funding sources and whether contributions will continue a downward trajectory.



\*Pass-through Funds are donated for schools, colleges, and seminaries sent through MEA.

**On behalf of the staff and board of directors, thank you for supporting Anabaptist-Mennonite education.**

Submitted by Michael Danner  
Executive Director