

Miner Matters

Welcome 2009!!



Negaunee Education Association
906.475.7866

January 2009

Contract Corner Bargaining Update

The 403(b) issue has not yet been settled. After the Board declared impasse and passed resolutions for the district to join the Consortium, we filed an Unfair Labor Practice charge. At the same time, we entered into mediation with the Board Committee and Superintendent. The first step was meeting with the mediator on December 16th. Although we were unable to reach a final resolution at this meeting, we are continuing to negotiate this issue. The ULP is currently on hold.



Bargaining Conference

The MEA Bargaining Conference will be held in Detroit this year from February 5th through February 7th. Karen Plaisier will be attending the conference in her role as MEA Board Member. RaeAnn Loy will attend as part of her training in the Local Presidents Academy. Pete Ruokola will attend the conference as a representative of our P.N. Team. Our contract doesn't expire until 2010, but the conference will be helpful in getting us off to a positive start.

Time-Saving Tips

* Use a daily planner. Keep all your "to do" lists there. Or, keep one calendar handy and write everything on it that you need to accomplish.

* Do not try to accomplish difficult tasks when you are tired. Save those for your peak periods.

* Remember: Every single paper-and-pencil task a student completes, does not have to be graded.

* Allow students to self-grade or peer-grade when appropriate.

* Make transparencies for directions to tasks. (This way you won't have to repeat yourself several times.)

* When students pass in papers, tell them to pass them across the rows instead of passing them forward. The people in the row to whom the papers eventually come can then pass them forward to one person.

* Keep a log of phone calls made to parents. You can make a form which includes the name of the student, phone number, reason called, results.

* Assign tasks to students. If a student can do the job just as well as you can, then let her or him do it. Most students love helping.

* Learn to say no. Admittedly, this is not easy, but your time is valuable so guard it wisely.

* If you find yourself constantly running to the office, consolidate trips. Place the material you are taking with you in one area and limit yourself to one trip.

* When making phone calls, write down the points you want to discuss ahead of time so you can "get to the point" as well as remember what you wanted to talk about.

* Before you dismiss the students have them look around their desks and pick up any trash, papers, or items on the floor. Assign one student to pick up "wandering items" and put them in their proper place.

* Keep a large calendar handy for noting make-up assignments for students who were absent. Place any materials they will need near the calendar. Assign one student to be "in charge" of telling returning students what they missed. If you are a middle school or high school teacher, make a file folder for each of your classes and put the missing student's work in the folder with his or her name on it.

* Don't reinvent the wheel. There are literally thousands of lessons, units, and thematic plans, and interdisciplinary plans available on the internet. Go to a search engine such as Google and type in keywords.

Reports

Region

Elections were held during the Region meeting Held in December. Elected to positions from our Association were the following people:

Louise Levi – Alternate, MEA RA At Large Delegate Representing Minority 3-1g

Lori Boase – NEA RA At Large Alternate Representing Minority 3-1C

RaeAnn Loy – MEA RA At Large Delegate Representing Minority 3-1g

Karen Plaisier is the Region President.

Patty Juidici was elected as the ESP NEA RA Cluster Alternate

UPEA

The UPEA met on January 8th in Escanaba for their goals and objectives meeting. They plan to revise the point system that has been used to evaluate contracts. This system has been productive in our bargaining process.

Coordinating Council

Interesting tidbits from December's Coordinating Council meeting are as follows:

NICE is offering an ERI--\$30,000 over 3 years. They need 6 members to leave the district in order to get this ERI.

Regarding 403(b) TPA decisions, it was reported that NICE went with the Consortium. Marquette is close to a TPA decision. Superior Central went with Capitol. Negaunee is still in mediation.

The Coordinating Council delegates from our Association are Pete Ruokola and Sue Scott.

It Takes a Village...

It was 7:20 a.m., 15 below, and a Monday—the first day back from Christmas vacation to boot. I ran quickly from my car to the door to avoid the frigid air. “Good morning and Happy New Year!” Tom Cody called out as he paused in his task of making sure the path to the doorway was clear of snow to open the door for me. That pleasant greeting and positive attitude was enough to start the new year at school off right. On my way up to my classroom, I noticed the shiny floors and clean windows.

I was in my classroom for only a few minutes when Lori Boase popped into my room with a smile. “They painted my room,” she said. “I didn’t know they were going to do that. They even put all of my posters back up.” Later that morning, Dan Thompson stopped by to see how our breaks were and how Lori liked her room. We all complimented him on the excellent shape the school was in. It’s something more than that, though. Our custodians, bus drivers, and support staff add a critical piece to the whole picture of education.

When I think about districts that have privatized services, I know that it is the personal approach and the investment that employees have in the workplace that is lacking the most in those districts. Not only does our support staff do an excellent job, they are a critical part of our school community as well. These folks interact with students on a regular basis serving as role models and guiding their development as people. It’s not only the quality of the work but also the quality of the individuals doing the work that is important. The old saying, “It takes a village to raise a child” applies here. We all work together to make a difference in the lives of children. We’re fortunate here in Negaunee that the Board and Administration have recognized this as well. —RaeAnn Loy

Staff Spotlight



Molly Kus graduated from Northern Michigan University with a degree in Elementary Education and a major in science. Her first job was teaching Kindergarten at Calumet Laurium Keweenaw Schools. Molly’s husband, John, decided to go to anesthesia school so they moved to Marquette so he could pursue his degree.

Molly’s first job at Lakeview Elementary was as an instructional aide. When a kindergarten job opened, Molly was hired, and she taught at that level for 4 years at Lakeview. This year, Molly was hired for a fifth grade position, which she had always wanted to teach, due to a positive student teaching experience. Molly says, “I enjoyed teaching kindergarten, however have always wanted to teach fifth grade. When the opportunity came, I grabbed it. The best part of teaching fifth grade is interacting with the kids.”

John and Molly are the proud parents of a 3 year old little girl named, Romy. Her hobbies outside of school include gardening, reading, and playing with Romy.

Pete Ruokola will be attending some MEA training this spring to become a Financial SNAP. Pete will be trained to take all available financial data from a district and produce various types of reports that will assist local associations in preparing to bargain their contracts. This is the first time this type of training has been offered in the Upper Peninsula.



Our new president, **RaeAnn Loy** was chosen to attend the Women’s Leadership and the NEA Midwest Conference in Chicago this month. In addition to learning a great deal of information, she will also participate in an MEA presentation on Building Full Capacity Locals.

Karen Plaisier is hard at work on the MEA Budget.



Lobby Day

Lobby Day is a one day event held in Lansing this year on Wednesday, February 18th. Lobby Day attendees get to meet with their legislators, get updates on current legislation, and gain valuable information about public education funding that can be used on behalf of their communities.

Tentative Agenda:

7:30-8:45 a.m. ...Registration (Radisson)

8:45-10:00 a.m.... Legislative Briefing

10-11:30 a.m. Visits with Lawmakers (Capitol or legislative offices)

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Legislative Reception

1:45 – 3:00 p.m. Afternoon Session (Action Plan)

Hotel/travel expenses are paid and the pay for the sub covered by the Association. In the past, participants have flown down the night before in a charter plane and have returned the evening of Lobby Day.

Contact Karen Plaisier if you would be interested in attending this worthwhile experience.