

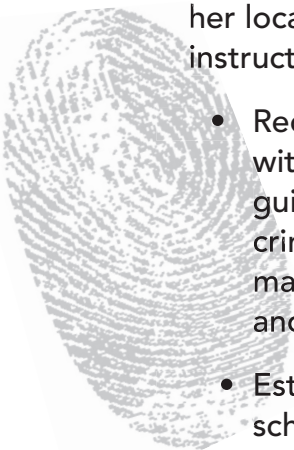
"Pupil Protection Laws" threaten MEA members' jobs

A list of teachers and other school employees with misdemeanor or felony convictions in their past is due soon from the Michigan Department of Education.

The state is expected to notify school districts of the names of employees who have previously been convicted of crimes, as required by a series of new state laws collectively known as the "Pupil Protection Laws."

The list is part of a package of laws expected to directly impact school employees. The law now:

- Requires all school employees to be fingerprinted by the Michigan State Police, including school employees who have previously been fingerprinted.
- Requires a criminal background check on each school employee. The law does not specify whether the school district or the employee is responsible for the cost of fingerprinting and background checks.
- Requires a school employee charged with a crime covered by the Sexual Offenders Registration Act (SORA) to report to his/her local superintendent and the state superintendent of public instruction the fact that he/she has been charged with the crime.
- Requires the discharge of teachers or other school employees with state board approval (school psychologists or school guidance counselors, for example) who are convicted of crimes covered by SORA. Those convicted of other felonies may continue to work with permission of the superintendent and board of education.
- Establishes "Student safety zones" within 1,000 feet of a school facility, where individuals registered under SORA, with certain exceptions, may not reside, work or loiter.



For an overview of the laws provided by MEA legal counsel or a list of the SORA crimes that will require a district to discharge an employee, go to www.mea.org