

MPEA Recommends Board of Education Candidates

On October 4, 2006 The 2006 Board of Education Screening and Recommendation Committee consisting of Claudia Lang, Kathy Primeau, Rick Trainor, Judi Swartz, and Stacey Yost met with Ms. Emily Harris and Mr. Barry Alford, the two individuals running as write-in candidates for the vacant School Board positions. The committee recommends Ms. Harris and Mr. Alford for the following reasons:

1. Both individuals demonstrated a strong commitment to communication and problem solving solutions.
2. Both individuals emphasized honesty and integrity in dealing with other people.
3. Both candidates had engaging personalities and had positive experiences with MPPS staff. Both emphasized that staff is a key strength of MPPS.
4. Both had similar comments about imposing a contract and the adverse effects that this action would have on staff and children.
5. Both are intuitive to the needs of children and adults.

Further, Ms. Harris is the mother of a young family. She plans to be a part of MPPS for the "long haul", and has vested interest in this school district. She is employed as a probation officer with the Tribal Court working with adults and juveniles.

Mr. Alford has a great deal of experience in education. He has two children who graduated from MPHS. He is a professor of English at Mid Michigan Community College.

The committee is pleased that we have two candidates who represent two very different parts of the community. Please see the insert document regarding how to write in their names on the ballot.

Superintendent Search Begins, Community Asked For Input

Parents, community members and Mt. Pleasant Public Schools' staff are invited to participate in a meeting to be held on November 6, 2006 in room 111 at the Mt. Pleasant High School, 1155 S. Elizabeth Street. This will be an opportunity for people to communicate the qualifications and skills that they perceive are important for the position of superintendent of the Mt. Pleasant Public Schools.

Dr. Jann Jencka of the Michigan Leadership Institute will be facilitating the scheduled meetings. If you are unable to attend but would like to provide input, a questionnaire can be obtained from Central Office by calling 775-2301 and then submitting to Dr. Jencka with the address provided. Selection of the superintendent will take place in March, 2007.

Welcome to all the newest members of MPEA! For a complete list of new staff members see page 4.

Upcoming dates

Executive Board Meeting

Thursday, November 2

MPATC conference room - 4:30 pm

Superintendent Search Meeting

Monday, November 6

MPHS room 111 - 4:30 pm (teachers)

6:00 pm (community)

Election Day

Tuesday, November 7

General Membership

Thursday, November 16

MPHS room 111 - 4:30 pm

Committee of the Whole Meeting

Monday, November 13

Kinney Conference room - 6:30 p.m.

Regular Board Meeting

Monday, November 20

City Hall - 6:30 p.m.

From the desk of the President:

We are now a full marking period into the 06-07 school year. While we have faced our share of problems, when we look at the three recent tragedies in school buildings in our nation, we appreciate that we have been a part of a positive and proactive effort to create safe school environments in our community.

As I work with other presidents from across the state, I consistently find that our community has done more than most to prepare for emergencies, have plans in place to keep students and staff safe, and to implement those plans and practice them.

Housekeeping items:

- Marla Michalak has asked me to communicate with members regarding the need for purchase orders for all purchases and for competitive bidding for “big ticket items.” This is true for all purchases whether they are funded by tax dollars or grant monies. It is a violation of state law for the districts to spend above a set amount without seeking competitive bids for the expenditure. This year the limit is just under \$19,000.00. There is a formula that adjusts that amount annually. It is my recommendation that any teachers who order anything that runs over \$5,000.00, protect themselves by at least emailing their principals or Marla at mmichalak@mtpleasant.edzone.net to be sure that you are following district procedures.
- Use of personal days that were carried over from 05-06 extends to October 31, 2006. After that, unused personal days from the previous year become professional days. Professional days accumulate without limit.
- I have been getting questions about hourly use of accrued leave time (sick days, personal days, professional days). This is permitted by the Master Agreement, but it REQUIRES prior administrative approval. To use hourly leave you must complete the paper leave form and have your principal sign it prior to your use of the time. Leave time cannot be changed to an hourly basis after-the-fact.
- The MPEA President’s teaching day ends at 10:51 a.m. Normally, I will not be able to return calls or answer email before 11:30 a.m. The practice of answering calls with a personal

visit to your building that I have frequently employed over the past four years is no longer a possibility. Personal meetings with members will often need to be by appointment and may need to be conducted at the MPEA office after school.

- Our MEA coordinating council has scheduled an Association representatives’ training session for October 25, 2006. It will be a dinner meeting at the Doherty Hotel in a Clare. Any Association representative (officers, building reps, committee members, committee chairs etc., can attend the meeting. Building reps should have a flier on the session. Any one interested can contact me via Groupwise email.
- Election 2006 information is included in an insert to this Chalkdust. Please take time to read the insert and be familiar with positions and candidates.

-Rick

PAC UPDATE

As of October 16, we are only at about 42% district wide for PAC participation. This is extremely disappointing as it is a significant drop from our last drive and this year’s election is far more critical. We did not ask for money last year, so it is vital that members come through this year.

West is the top building so far with about 90% participation.

If you have lost your form please let me know. We can also use donation envelopes that are simpler than the forms if you intend to write a check. This is a critical year for us in Michigan. We will be accepting PAC contributions through the 1st of December which is the deadline.

If you still have your form, please remember to fill it out today and get it to your building representative.

Cindy Smith is the Michigan Art Educator of the Year



Cindy Smith, former elementary and current high school teacher, received the award for excellence in art education from the MI Art Education Association.

She has been MAEA Region 12 Liaison, Membership Secretary, Co-chaired the Statewide Elementary Exhibit and facilitated registration at many

state conferences. She is also a practicing artist, taking classes in water color every summer on Beaver Island.

In our community, she has been a moving force for art education; twice chairing our Fine Arts Task Force, participating in the Empty Bowls program with our local soup kitchen and Seniors' Meals-on-Wheels. She has been on the Art Reach Board for many years.

Cindy is an extraordinary teacher and a wonderful person. Her classroom is an active and creative environment where emphasis is put on originality, creativity and diversity. After receiving a Fulbright scholarship and studying in Mexico, she wrote a grant and three times brought Mexican Native American artists to our schools.

Cindy helped to organize "Day With The Arts" in our elementary schools, a program where local artists come into an elementary school and demonstrate their craft. It is a school-wide elementary program utilizing artists and high school students. She works hard to collaborate with classroom teachers. Right now, she is working with six elementary teachers and their classes, Judy Thurston and her CMU Art Education students and a local senior citizens to do a bookmaking project (280 books).

"Cindy works well with many different groups and because of this skill, she has unified and strengthened our Art Department. She is a person who quietly organizes and provides opportunities for her students as well as our school district and our community. Cindy Smith consistently models life-long learning and inspires students with the same passion. Cindy is truly one of a kind...." said Jan Alfano, former Mt. Pleasant High School Art teacher.

Our congratulations to Cindy for this distinguished award!

Contract Corner

All members should have in hand a copy of the Master Agreement (July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2007) in either hard copy form, or on a CD disk. If you do not, please let your building rep know. You can also access the contract from our MPEA Website at www.iammea.org/mpea

Building Reps for 2006-07

High School

Rosa Johnson

Christine Knapp

Diane Benford

Kathy Davis

alt. Janet Roberts

West Intermediate

Julie Maxon

Larry Russell

alt. Marcia Quast

Oasis

Margie Dexter

Fancher

Deb Finck

alt. Sue Horgan

McGuire

Jan Carroll

alt. Amy Ouellette

Ganiard

Michelle French

alt. Kathryn Hughes

Pullen

Kit Connaughton

alt. Jeanie Butka

Rosebush

Sue MacPherson

Vowles

Jeff Natzel

Executive Board Openings

There are currently two open positions on the Executive Board. The External Communications chair position and the Elections chair position are unfilled at this time. If you are interested in either position, please contact Rick Trainor or Karen Turnbull.

“Vote as if Your Life Depended On It,

because it does.” This is a favorite quote I hear at *League of Women Voters* functions. For public school teachers in this Nov 7 election it is very true. Although I have not agreed with Jennifer Granholm on all issues (particularly her stand on the Perrier water-bottling plant in Mecosta County); she HAS supported public education in the past four years (contrary to anti-Granholm messages that have bombarded us). If you value your MESSA insurance, you had better vote for Granholm. MEA fought hard to keep MESSA when it was under attack by select Republican leaders during Granholm’s term. With DeVos at the helm there is no doubt that attacks on public teacher’s insurance and retirement will be renewed.

Republicans for Granholm

I may be preaching to the choir here, but if I am not. . . here is an interesting sideline. I noticed signs and billboards this fall in more affluent areas (Traverse City and Detroit suburbs) that say “Republicans for Granholm”. My curiosity got the best of me. Visiting the website www.republicansforgranholm.com revealed a grassroots organization who is “committed to the Republican party”, but has concluded that “the best course for our State of Michigan is to re-elect Governor Granholm”. They view DeVos as an extremist in the Republican party. They made this decision based on Granholm’s stand on the following issues:

- Stem cell research
- Evolution vs. Intelligent Design
- Economy and jobs
- School vouchers
- Fiscal responsibility in office
- Abortion in the case of rape, incest, and health of the mother.

Check it out. Perhaps you can use this information to convince your well-meaning friends or family members who are supporting DeVos. And on November 7, “vote as if your life depended on it. Because it does.” **(An Editorial by Karen Turnbull, VP MPEA)**

Welcome New Staff!

Patrick Burkholder - Business Education (MPHS)	Jason Russell - Special Education (West)
Brian Dalke - Mathematics (MPHS)	Allyn Saari - Special Education (McGuire/Rosebush)
William Dennis - Social Studies (Oasis)	Andrew Schoenborn - Sp. Ed/Social Studies (MPHS)
Robyn Gott-Wickes - Special Education (Fancher)	Angela Skonieczny - Special Education (Pullen)
Louis Kanyo - Language Arts/Drama (MPHS & West)	Joshua Spence - Language Arts (West)
Tarami Long - Grades ½ (Ganiard)	Brian Sponseller - Special Education (West) Language Arts Teacher Special Education Teacher
Matthew Murphy - Science (Oasis)	Shawn Teegardin - Elementary Principal (Fancher)
Kimberly Nelson - Kindergarten (Ganiard)	Jennifer Thompson - Speech Language Therapist (District wide)
Therese Oldham - Elementary Art (District wide)	
Jodi Roed - Language Arts (West)	