

Negotiation Update

The MPEA and Board Teams met on Oct 18 and 24th. The meetings have been productive and our team is "cautiously optimistic." The list of outstanding items has been narrowed considerably. Individual items are not being "TAed" (signing a Tentative Agreement) until a complete contract agreement has been reached. The teams had a significant discussion on financial items; however, there are still major issues to resolve. A subcommittee was formed to resolve the calendar. Our team feels that the presence of Board Members observing the negotiation sessions has made a big difference in the effort at substantive communication and finding middle ground.

Two more negotiating sessions have been scheduled: Monday, Nov. 7, and Thursday, Nov. 17th.

The Crisis Committee is reactivated and ready to support us for the "worse-case-scenario".

We have chairs in 10 of the 11 subcommittees. Committees are beginning to meet on a regular basis. Although our negotiations team is cautiously optimistic, it would be wise to beef up that "rainy day" savings account.



MPEA members greet bargaining team member Ted McIntyre as he enters MPATC for a bargaining session.

COME TO BOARD MEETINGS !!!

This is a plea for all members to attend the upcoming Board of Education meetings on **Monday, Nov 14 and Monday, Nov 21**. This is a critical time in Bargaining – and your presence at these meetings sends a powerful message to the Board that getting this contract is important to you! Wear red for unity!

Upcoming Dates:

Mon, Nov 7 Negotiating Session 6:00 p.m. at MPATC Conference Room

***Mon, Nov 14** Committee of Whole Board Meeting
6:30 p.m.
Kinney Conference Room

Wed, Nov 16 Crisis Committee Meeting
4:30 p.m. at MPEA Office

Wed. Nov. 16 MEA New Member Orientation
6:00 -8:30 p.m.
Doherty Hotel, Clare

***Thurs, Nov 17** MPEA Executive Board Meeting
4:30 p.m. MPHS Room 122

Thurs, Nov 17 Negotiating Session 6:00 p.m.
MPATC Conference Room

***Mon, Nov 21** Regular Board of Education Meeting 6:30 at City Hall

Thurs, Dec 1 Executive Board Meeting
4:30 p.m. MPHS Room 122

Mon, Dec 5 Regular & Curriculum Board Meeting
6:30 p.m

***Reminder to Vote Tuesday, Nov. 8. School Board Candidate and Millage Renewal**

From The President

Show Us the Numbers!

We have been saying that we are losing ground to surrounding districts. We have been saying that we are paying for our insurance by taking a cut in salary. The salary comparisons in the insert in this edition of Chalkdust show this very clearly. Take a few minutes to examine these comparisons. Our sacrifices over the years become evident. The districts comparisons are all among those used in our current round of negotiations or that are a part of the Saginaw Valley Conference. Remember that because of proposal A, there is no longer an issue with the type of community in which a school is located because the state, and not the local community, determines the level of funding.

While the top of our salary schedule is still higher than the small districts that surround us, what it takes to get there makes it less attractive to prospective teachers than it did just few years ago, and it is woefully lacking when compared to the districts in our conference and in most districts of similar size.

Our district has lost so much ground to other districts in salary that there is little left to point to as an advantage for our district as a potential employer. I have heard comments from student teachers who look at these salary comparisons, and wonder why they would want to work for Mt. Pleasant Public Schools. This is sad.

Ballot Initiative

The drive to collect signatures for a school funding ballot initiative continues to be a priority. MEA had a total of 170,000 signatures toward a 300,000 goal. That is less than 2 per current MEA member. MPEA has turned in over 1,000 signatures toward our goal of 1200. MEA staff are being assigned to work on the drive to help reach our goal, and there are incentives being offered to encourage members to get signatures. One thing is clear. The legislature appears to have no intent of funding education at the level necessary unless they are forced to do it. We will be initiating phone banks and seeking volunteers from among our retirees and Student MEA members to collect signatures at the polls on election day.

Welcome to New Members

Erica Burns, Kindergarten at Pullen, and **Laurie Richards**, Resource Room at Vowles and West, were added to our membership in October. A warm welcome to both of them.

Rick

Contract Corner

Over the years our union has worked for “collaborative” language in our contract. The provision in Article XX, Part D is a framework for our School Improvement Teams. This language states:

“The staff and administration are mutually participating in School Improvement Teams which involve cooperative site-based decision-making and planning with the goal of improved student achievement.

Site-Based Decision Making processes contemplate decision making groups organized around locations, programs, and large extensive problems that impact more than one location. Participation on a School Improvement Team is voluntary and shall not be a part of a teacher’s evaluation or otherwise be used to discipline a teacher.

The teacher representatives on any school improvement team shall be selected by the teachers in their respective buildings in a manner to be determined by the teachers. The teacher reps on the district-wide school improvement team shall be elected by the teachers in their respective buildings.

All meetings shall be open to the staff and announced in advance. All team minutes and/or reports shall be posted in every building. Individual team recommendations will be presented to the building staff and other affected employees for discussion, revision, and approval. Any recommendation that is implemented shall be terminated if 50% of the teachers who are being affected vote to terminate it.

Decisions made by a school improvement team that affect working conditions shall be approved by the Association and Board prior to implementation of the decisions.”

Are all buildings adhering to these provisions? We would like to hear how School Improvement Teams work in each building.



Building News

Mt. Pleasant Area Technical Center

Shirley Greening, Bridget Long, Gloria Sowle and **Carol Todd** completed teacher training in-service in HIV-AIDS education.

Shirley Greening teaches classes at Davenport College. She attended Blackboard Boot Camp at the GIRESD. For the past five years Shirley has taught an on-line class Medical Terminology Class.

Is it CSI? No, it's **Bridget Long**. Bridget attended an Applied Technologies Summer Workshop in Georgia covering hands-on activities in Forensic Science, Math and Technology Integration and Science and Technology Integration. Bridget is also a new grandma.

Carol Todd is a Certified American Red Cross CPR Instructor. Carol and **Gloria Sowle** attended the Family and Consumer Science Educators of Michigan Conference in Kalamazoo. The workshops covered the new Food Pyramid, Theories of Child Development as well as the importance of hands-on learning.

Gloria received an ICE Award from the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe at the end of the school year. Congratulations, Gloria! Gloria teaches a teen step class at the Wellness Center and an Adult Step Class. Later this month she is traveling to North Carolina to visit her sister Terree and Denny Kuiper.

Chris Theunissen is taking a Reading in the Content Area Class. This summer he played a lot of golf and worked on the school house project. He also went on college visits with his daughter Vicki.

Mary Kay Voeks was presented with the Star Performer Award at the Michigan Construction Teachers' Conference. This spring she attended a colored pencil workshop at Houghton Lake High School. Her summer vacation was a family camping trip that covered 17 states, California and back, six National Parks, 7,550 miles, and nineteen campgrounds.

Outside of school, **Perry Wiles** is a Cub Scout Leader for elementary boys. This summer he took a summer leadership course and went camping with his family. Recently Perry and **Joe Maney** hosted a Best Practices for Area Transportation Educators at the Mt. Pleasant Area Technical Center.

Gary Anderson just returned from a two-day training in Memphis on Energy Management. Gary loves new challenges and this is his area of interest; "poking boilers and crawling on roofs".

Debb Andres is taking an on line "Teaching Creativity with Creativity" class. Debb traveled to North Carolina to check out various restaurants during the hot summer.

Diane Benford is looking forward to becoming a grandma in February. She just attended a workshop on "Identifying Sexual Predators in Schools".

Paul Driggers is now a Level I Shooting Instructor for the National Sporting Clays Association. He is working on his Masters Degree at CMU.

Earl Ingram competed in fifteen Dirt Track Auto Races this Year. His son is a dirt bike racer.

Debb Leasher keeps busy coordinating community service projects for students as part of the Torch Award component of BPA. She traveled to Florida and California and still found time to take classes in Coaching, Career Pathways, Portfolios, Publisher and Excel.

Doug Sickles and his family have recently moved into the home that he built.

Outside of school **Karen Lee** spends her time training two new Quarter horses and three teenage daughters.

Kerry Lockwood completed fifteen credits in computer technology this fall. She will be attending a creative Marketing conference with

Mindy Wischmeyer and taking students to an Accounting Leadership Conference.

Kathy Davis-Gonzalez went on a 16 day sail to the North Channel and put on a wedding this summer. Her new grandchild is due the end of October. Kathy also administers ORA tests for Business Educators.

Shawncey Cook-Aguirre recently became a homeowner in Shepherd.

McGuire 5/6 Elementary

We have several staff members in new positions at McGuire this year: ***Amy Ouelette** has returned to teach 5th grade at McGuire after two years teaching 6th grade at Fancher.

Karin Kuiper is here in the afternoons serving as our school Counselor. Our new Title I staff includes **Jane Leroux-Evans**, teacher, **Gail Mitchell**, parent involvement coordinator, and **Jeanne Cook**, paraprofessional.

Kathy Primeau is our wonderful Literacy Consultant.

***Judy Mako** sends a big "thanks!" to all of you who offered prayers and good wishes for her son Jamie. He was recently discharged from the U.S. Marines. Jamie participated in three tours of duty in Iraq over the past four years, but he is now "home in one piece." Recently, Judy's youngest son assisted Jamie in a 2-day marathon drive back from Camp Pendleton, CA. Judy is all smiles these days!

***Kelly Hovey** is in the second year of working (year round) toward her Doctorate through Walden University. She and **Deb Derry** are team-teaching a lively group of 5th graders in a large open classroom at McGuire. Some of their cooperative activities take place in the grassy area outside of their classrooms.

***Theresa Burdick's** 5th and 6th grade students are involved in a Peer Helper Program where they read stories aloud to the SXI students every Tuesday morning. The students all enjoy this activity.

*The 6th graders are finishing their astronomy unit. **Buck Buchanan** reports that their culminating activity will soon start. His students, as well as those of **Kathy Burlington, Jan Carroll, and Judy Mako**, will build model rockets and then have a launch day to send them skyward.

*Fifth grade students of **Nancy Nerbonne** and **Amy Ouellette** used a tribal grant to spend a day at Chippewa Nature Center. They learned to work as archaeologists and also tried doing many of the jobs Native Americans of Michigan did in the past to survive.

The McGuire staff, students and parents have been working together to build a community spirit of caring and learning:

In response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the **Student Council**, students and staff worked hard to raise **\$1000 dollars for the Red Cross**.

The fifth and sixth grades each spent a beautiful fall day at **Camp Rotary**. The teachers taught the seven stations of rowing, survival, beach volleyball, riflery, storytelling, mural-making, challenge course. Over **30 parents volunteered** to lead the student groups around camp. We will return in the winter.

The 6th grade **Safety Patrol**, supervised by **Kathy Burlington**, helps keep the halls orderly in the morning.

The "**Sock-Hop**" will be held for students and their families at the end of October. A pizza dinner will be followed by movin' and groovin' to a DJ in the gym.

Vowles

Ruth Ann Handziak took six credit hours of reading classes at CMU. She is working toward a second Master's degree in Language Arts.

Rhonda Lunsted attended a week long LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers at Reading and Spelling) training in Lansing. She also spent the summer working along side her husband in their family landscape business.

Robin Martinez took 12 college credits toward her Masters plus 45. In between classes she enjoyed spending time with her family and traveling around Michigan.

Cindy Rudert took a three credit class from Marygrove. She had the chance to visit several state universities with her daughter Amanda. Amanda chose to attend CMU and received the Centralis scholarship she is also on the cross country team there. Cindy took some time to relax at her cottage and do some kayaking.

Allison Karr spent her summer working toward her Masters in the Art of Teaching degree through Marygrove College.

Jean Lintemuth participated in the literature study class with fellow colleagues and our MPPS literature consultants. Jean also worked with Lynn Rellinger on the math GLCE's for kindergarten through second grade.

Lura Way and her family wish to express their heartfelt appreciation for all the support they received from her MPEA colleagues this summer.

Sue Coon traveled to Fort Wayne, Indiana for three days of genealogical research in June. She was accompanied by Cindy Smith, Barb Barberi, and Karen Johnson. Joanne Van Sickle also traveled from North Carolina to join them.

Jen Pasanski spent lots of time traveling around the state of Michigan this summer. She also visited family in North Carolina and friends in Maryland.

Cindy Cooper enjoyed a trip to Greenwich, Connecticut in late June. She took her mother-in-law to meet a new great granddaughter she had never had a chance to see. She also enjoyed spending time planning and working on her daughter, Rheanna's, wedding which was celebrated on October 1st.

Cathey Crooks was happy to begin her teaching career in August as the new MOCI classroom teacher. She and her husband, Jeff, are anxiously awaiting the arrival of their second child in late January.

Linda Louisell took 12 credit hours of class this summer and traveled with her family to Pennsylvania to display their Knight Rider car. She performed bluegrass music with her husband and sons at the State Summer Music Workshop in celebration of her Michigan Music Educator of the Year award.

Nancy Black and her husband, John, welcomed their fourth grandchild into the family on August 11th. Georgia Green Bradley weighed 7 pounds 12 ounces and she was 20 inches long.

Jeff Natzel attended classes at CMU this summer to meet the requirements of his Masters in Secondary Education.

Betty Rainwater spent time relaxing and enjoying the beautiful scenery during a three week trip to western states including Colorado and Utah.

Laurie Richards coordinated an all day in-service in Harrison, her former district. The guest speakers were Debbie Miller and Barry Lane. It was funded through a comprehensive school reform grant that she received from the Michigan Dept. of Education.

Cindy Smith attended the International Folk Art Festival in Santa Fe, New Mexico to help Zeny Fuentes sell his woodcarvings. In August she spent two weeks on Beaver Island attending a watercolor class through CMU.

Ganiard

We welcome our new staff members: Joyce **Castellon**, Kindergarten; **Beth Conway**, 2nd grade and **Brett Fidler**, 3/4 split. Other staff news includes:

Val Wolters (1st grade) welcomes her second grandchild, Megan Valerie, born October 6. Val's daughter, Amy, recently purchased her first home and the whole family is celebrating having Val's son and husband home from Iraq and Korea.

Jody Sherwood (1st) traveled this summer to Las Vegas, Philadelphia, Washington D.C. and Niagara Falls. She climbed under the falls (with a broken foot!).

Marilyn Sweeney (2nd) spent a good part of her summer touring the campuses of Michigan Colleges with her son, Patrick, who is a high school senior.

Donna Pestel (1/2 Multiage) completed her MA+45 this summer. She helped her son, Josh, build a barn and an addition and took her grandchildren horse camping.

Jan Eversole (1/2 Multiage) is celebrating having both children out of college and gainfully employed!

Sandy Jansen (3rd grade) traveled to California this summer to visit her two sons, Josh and Ryan.

Janet Cummings also traveled this summer more than usual. She visited Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Iowa and Colorado. The also had a hot, restful summer at her cottage at Coldwater Lake with her family.

K'ana Degen went to Chicago to visit her daughter and see the production of "Wicked". She highly recommends we all see it. She spent the rest of her summer visiting Michigan parks and playing tennis.

Karen Turnbull (Speech) is feeling the "empty nest" and the "empty wallet" with both of her sons at Kalamazoo College.

Mary Alsager (PE) played on a summer softball team. She also taught swim and diving lessons (some to our own Ganiard Gators). She is currently coaching MPHS swimming and diving...go Oilers!

Dee Walter put her house up for sale, and then spent many hours searching for a new home. She endured Driver's Training with her daughter, and relaxed after major surgery.

Pullen

Jane Ogger spent part of her summer in Hong Kong (3 weeks) visiting and traveling with a friend. Besides enjoying the sights and food of Hong Kong, she also made trips into mainland China and Macau. She particularly enjoyed the furniture and art which reminded her of her childhood and living in Taiwan. It was a great experience

Judy Baker and **Marcy Stout** attended the Summer Leadership Conference in Traverse City. They were able to bring back ideas regarding implementing a pyramid of interventions at school. It was a very beneficial experience. Many of the ideas gathered at the conference were shared at summer brainstorming session.

Congratulations Joyce

Joyce Noyes, 2nd grade teacher from Pullen who had been on leave, has retired from the district effective November 1, 2005. Joyce joined the district in August of 1972. She taught lower elementary at Ganiard Elementary for over 25 years and spent the last three years of her career teaching 2nd grade at Pullen. We wish her all the best in her retirement.