

Welcome New Members!

Nicole (Pullen)

Nicole is from Midland and received her degree from Saginaw Valley State University. Prior to college she was in the United States Marine Corps for four years as a musician. She student taught in Midland (general ed) and in Essexville Hampton (Special Ed).

“My family is my hobby! I have two young boys. I also enjoy playing my french horn and spending time on the water in the summer. I am very excited about being a teacher in Mt Pleasant Public Schools, and love it here at Pullen.”

Eric (MPHS)

Eric is from the Blue water area, the small town of Marine City (South of Port Huron). He received his Bachelor of Science in Education from Central Michigan University in the spring of 2006. This year is his first year of teaching, last year he was a sub at Oasis High School and also worked at Oasis as a credit recovery teacher part time. He enjoys going to baseball games-high school, Loon's, Whitecaps and Tigers. Eric also enjoys going camping with his fiancée Tiffany Roberson. Travel is also a hobby of his and he plans on traveling much more in the future.

John (Ganiard)

John is a Mt. Pleasant native and attended CMU until he graduated last spring. He is at Ganiard this year teaching a 1/2 split class. This is his first year of teaching, but he has been lucky to experience other schools around the district. John subbed around the area until Oasis offered him a teacher aide position. He worked there for a year until it was time for him to do his student teaching. During his student teaching John says, “I was lucky to learn from the classrooms of Lura Way and Robin Martinez at Vowles”. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with family and friends as well as coaching soccer at Mt. Pleasant High.

Kristen (Ganiard)

Kristen originates from Mt. Pleasant and was a Vowles Viking. She attended Hope College where she obtained a BA in Mathematics. She did her student teaching in Holland in a third grade classroom. This is her first year of teaching, but

was a Kindergarten aide at Pullen last year. Her hobbies include math, arts and crafts (painting, drawing, scrap booking, etc.), computers, and tennis.

Jennifer (MPHS & Oasis)

Jennifer graduated from Saginaw Valley State University in 2005. Her first teaching experience was Strategic Reading at Saginaw High School last year. She did her student teaching at Dow High School in Midland. She lives in Freeland with her husband, Patrick and their two dogs. Her hobbies include scrap booking, crafting, interior decorating, and reading.

Sherene (Pullen, MPHS, SHA)

Sherene is a speech and language pathologist at Pullen Elementary, MPHS, and Sacred Heart Elementary. She has lived in Mount Pleasant since 1990. Both her B.A. (1982) and M.S. (1984) degrees are from U of M. Sherene has been a Speech/Language Pathologist in the public schools for 14 years in Central Montcalm Public Schools (Sheridan and Stanton), and the Montcalm Area ISD. Prior to the public schools, she provided speech therapy through private practice. Outside of school, her interests are reading, skiing, cooking, crafts, and spending time with her children, who live at home while attending CMU. “The parents I have met have gone out of their way to welcome me to the district. I am really enjoying getting to know all the students!”

Upcoming Dates:

Board of Education

Mon, Jan 7 - 6:30

followed by Committee of the Whole meeting

Kinney

MPEA Exec Board Meeting

Thursday, Jan 10, 4:30

MPEA Office

MPEA Exec Board Meeting

Thurs, Feb 14, 4:30

MPEA Office

General Membership Meeting

Thurs, Feb 21, 4:30

MPHS Room 111

Jodi (Pullen)

Jodi is from South Lyon, Michigan, which is near the Detroit area. She graduated from CMU. Jodi was the Michigan School Readiness Program and Developmental Kindergarten teacher in Vestaburg for 5 years. For two years she worked as a Lead Paraprofessional for the Kindergarten Enrichment program at Ganiard. Now she is here at Pullen serving as half time Kindergarten teacher and half time Enrichment Lead Parapro. In her spare time she likes to read, go camping with her family, go for walks, and watch her kids play hockey.

Amy (MPHS)

Amy is a native of Holland, MI and graduated from Lake Superior State University. This is her first teaching job. She did her student teaching last year at Grand Haven High School. She has lived in Holland. Her mom is a kindergarten teacher at West Ottawa, and dad is an engineer for JCI in Holland, her sister is a sophomore at Central and her brother is a junior at West Ottawa. Amy enjoys running, rollerblading, going to the beach, cross country skiing, boating, and spending time in Traverse City in the summer.

Monique (Rosebush & West)

Monique graduated from Saginaw Valley State University. This is her first teaching position, and she did her student teaching at Floyd Elementary School in Bullock Creek. She currently lives in Midland with her husband Andrew, also a teacher, and their two daughters Audrey 2.5 and Abigail 15 months. She enjoys gardening, quilting, reading and walking. She just recently finished up the Master Gardeners Program through Midland County this fall. She is currently teaching K4 resources room at Rosebush and Resource Room Math, Social Studies and Study Skills at West Intermediate.

Amy (Ganiard)

Amy is from Manistee, MI. She received her degree from CMU in December of 2006. This is her first year teaching. She did her student teaching at Vowles Elementary with Lisa Auker and Lisa Bergman last fall. Amy was a substitute teacher in Mt. Pleasant schools the second half of the year. She and her husband Chad have been married for 11 years. Chad is an electrician with Block Electric. They have two children who keep them very busy. She loves to spend time with them camping, fishing and visiting friends and family. "I am loving being a part of such a wonderful team of teachers at Ganiard Elementary."

Presidential Primary Information: January 15

Here are some key points about the Jan. 15 presidential primary that all MEA members need to know:

- * Voters will vote at their regular polling places between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. on Jan. 15

- * Voters can vote by absentee ballot if they meet one of the requirements—out of town, age 60 or older, disability, etc. Get an absentee ballot request form.

- * In order to vote at a polling place, a voter must show a photo ID or sign a statement that they do not have a photo ID with them. Absentee voters do not have to produce a photo ID.

- * Voters will be asked whether they want a Democratic or Republican ballot, and a record will be made of which ballot they take.

- * The voter's choice of candidate will be secret as in all public elections.

- * The names of all nine candidates will appear on the Republican primary ballot.

- * The Democratic ballot will have 6 choices: Hillary Clinton, Christopher Dodd, Mike Gravel, Dennis Kucinich, Uncommitted and Write-in

- * A vote for "uncommitted" is a vote to send delegates to the Democratic National Convention who are not committed or pledged to any candidate. Those delegates can vote for any candidate they choose at the convention.

- * Supporters of Joe Biden, John Edwards, Barack Obama and Bill Richardson are urged to vote "uncommitted" instead of writing in their candidates' names because write-in votes for those candidates will not be counted.

Happy Holidays from the MPEA



President's Message

As was reported to you in November, 2nd VP Kathy resigned her MPEA position effective November 30. To date we have had no members come forward willing to replace her. Kathy has now announced that she will be retiring from Mt. Pleasant Schools on December 31. I thank her for her four years of service as MPEA 2nd Vice President and wish her all the best in her retirement.

Margaret retired from teaching on November 15. Margaret came to Oasis from Clare Pioneer High School 15 years ago. She taught last year at Mt. Pleasant High School and Oasis and has been on leave since the beginning of the current year. I wish a full and rewarding retirement to Margaret.

If you wish to send our retirees a card on the occasion of their retirements, let me know and I can forward you their mailing addresses.

As we approach the holiday break I am amazed at how quickly the year has passed. While we have been working hard on the agreement for the transition to a trimester delivery model at the High School, we have been working actively with the new administration to build a positive relationship. I am confident that we are continuing to move away from the adversarial approach to problems that we were forced into in the past.

There are some important issues that warrant our continued attention, and MEA is monitoring them closely. Among them, the ongoing state revenue shortfalls, attacks on member rights and benefits, and the recent U.S. Dept. of Education decision that may place yet more hurdles before some of our secondary special education teachers. The U.S.D.O.E. has ruled that the **elementary all subjects test** that many in our state used to meet Highly Qualified requirements will no longer be allowed. MEA is working with the Michigan Dept. of Ed. to determine how members can meet the requirements in the face of this Federal reinterpretation. There is a message from MEA regarding this matter. (see column at right for more details)

I have successfully uploaded information to a web-based survey service that will allow the Association to get member feedback on issues in a more timely and effective way. The team has already used the service to conduct a K-4 survey using **Zoomerang**. It allowed us to get the information and results from members in a more timely way than ever before. I am encouraged at how this worked and expect to use it to get member input on a number of issues in the coming months.

In my November President's report I asked for

volunteers to work on a review of our Governance documents as required by MEA. I am looking for newer members to serve on this review committee. It will likely be one dinner meeting in February or March. I would like to get a volunteer from each building. I am disappointed to report that to date, I have only had one response. Please consider stepping up to help with this task. You'll learn more about our constitution and bylaws and how our Association works.

Finally, I wish all of you a happy and safe holiday break. For those traveling, I wish you a safe journey. I hope you all have a restful and pleasant break and I look forward to seeing you in January when we return. -Rick

From MEA on the Special Education Highly Qualified reinterpretation: Special Education Elementary test not option for secondary special education teachers to meet 'highly qualified' requirement

The Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) elementary test is not an option for secondary special education teachers to fulfill the "highly qualified" requirement. MEA has learned that federal auditors told the Michigan Department of Education that it would not be allowed. How many teachers will be impacted is not known at this time. "We will be working with the Department of Education for more definitive answers and solutions," said Linda Keway, of the MEA Professional Development and Human Resources Department, "and we will be updating our members as soon as we receive more information." Frank Ciloski of the Department of Education emphasized that teachers will have until June 30, 2009, to meet the highly qualified requirement through other options. "We will be working with the department regarding these options," Keway said. "Members should be aware that districts may pressure teachers to meet the requirement sooner, but you do have until June 2009 to fulfill the requirements." Districts are asking secondary special education teachers to sign a document—the Official Michigan Highly Qualified Secondary Special Education Teacher Report—on how they met the highly qualified option. It is advised that teachers not sign the document if they used the MTTC elementary test to demonstrate their highly qualified teacher status.

Stop the “Right to Work” Scam!

Volunteer to educate voters on Jan. 15 about this deceptive, anti-worker initiative. In preparation for the Jan. 15 presidential primary, labor groups are mobilizing to be at polling places across Michigan to ensure voters don't fall for the “Right to Work” scam.

Proponents of this anti-worker law are threatening to get this misleading initiative on the 2008 Michigan ballot. Paid signature gatherers may be out in force on Jan. 15 trying to trick voters into believing that this law has something to do with everyone's right to a job. These mercenaries will say anything to get a signature and make a buck, including lying about the true intention of this law—**to cripple union efforts to represent workers by allowing freeloaders to receive union benefits without paying dues or service fees.**

We must be out in force on Jan. 15 to educate voters about this deceptive initiative and protect workers' rights. Our goal is to have more than 5,000 volunteers at polling places across Michigan, telling the true intention of “Right to Work” before the signature-gathering mercenaries have a chance to dupe voters.

We need those interested in volunteering to help monitor a local polling place on Jan. 15 to send an e-mail to meavotes@mea.org with the following information:

- * your name
- * address
- * home and cell phone numbers
- * your precinct and/or the polling place where you vote
- * whether you'd be available for the afternoon shift from 4-8 p.m. or the morning shift from 7 a.m. - 1 p.m.

In early January, there will be training sessions in many different locations statewide preparing you for your work at the presidential primary polling sites. Someone will be in touch with you about options for being trained and which polling place you'll be asked to cover (based on targets and voter turnout projections).

We must turn out volunteers in force to educate voters and show the scam-artists behind “Right to Work” that it is wrong for Michigan.

A WARM MPEA Thank You to:

- *Judy for organizing the successful MPEA Bake Sale which raised money for Christmas Outreach. And thanks to all who brought in baked goods to sell.
- *Val for her continued work collecting books for Christmas Outreach .
- *Stacey , Marge , Karen, Susan, Cindy, Sandy, and Rick for interviewing candidates for School Board Elections in November.
- *Our Bargaining Team of Ted, Linda, Jane, Todd, Judy, and Rick who continue to put in hours of work on the Articulation of items for this expediated contract extension.
- *Kathy for her years of service to the MPEA and MPPS.
- *Guy and Dana for their years of service to MPPS on the Board of Education.