

Recap from MPEA General Membership Meeting

There are currently two major issues:

1. This week you will be seeing a **Letter of Agreement** (on white colored paper), with an attached ballot and Negotiation Team Report (on blue paper). A **Letter of Agreement** is the result of an issue that came up after the contract was settled, and was worked out between the administration and our Negotiation Team. If the Letter of Agreement is ratified by the MPEA and Board of Ed., it is added to the contract. Please talk with your building rep if you have questions.

2. Because of the **reduction of our President's position to half time next year**, the Executive Board passed a motion to formulate an **Ad Hoc Committee to plan for this change**. *The future of the MPEA will, to a large part, be determined by the recommendations that the committee produces.* This committee will be chaired by Deb Fahr. The committee will include a cross-section of our membership in buildings and experience level. The charge to the committee is to review the priority functions of the MPEA, review current structure and compensation of offices/positions, review and make recommendations for president's future job description as a result of half-time, review the need to provide compensation to other officers to continue to provide current level of programming and service to members. The committee will make a recommendation to the Executive Board with the needed changes for Bylaws, Constitution, and the budget and dues structure. Any recommendations for changes to the Bylaws and Constitution will be presented to the general membership in September.

MEA Concerned about Governor's Race

reprinted from MEA Votes E-Newsletter

In 1990, Michigan was struggling economically. In that fall's election, traditional Democratic voters stayed home, leading to the defeat of Gov. Jim Blanchard - and the election of Gov. John Engler. This translated to 12 years of shortchanging Michigan's public schools and Michigan's economy under the Engler administration.

Now, in 2006, we may face a similar situation. While you may or may not like Gov. Jennifer Granholm, she stands for a strong well-funded public education system. On the other hand, we know that Dick DeVos stands for vouchers, privatization, slashing retirement and health benefits, and more tax cuts that decrease education budgets.

Vouchers: Dick DeVos was the man behind the 2000 pro-voucher campaign, "Kids First Yes". The DeVos family footed the bill for the voucher movement with help from far-right allies. The MEA led the Michigan public school community in

a drive against the voucher program. When the voucher proposal was defeated by a 2-to-1 margin, DeVos made it clear that the issue was not dead for him, saying, "when the time comes, we will bring the fight back to Michigan again and do everything we can there."

Privatization: Last spring, Grand Rapids Public Schools privatized the jobs of 225 bus drivers, giving those jobs to a private company. Aside from the school leaders who voted for this move, who else thought it was a good idea? Dick DeVos. In an April 27, 2005 letter to all of Michigan's school superintendents, DeVos "applauded" the decision to outsource these school employees' jobs and encouraged more school districts to do the same. Currently in Michigan, privatization of support staff is being threatened in more than a dozen school districts. It appears that Dick DeVos would rather trade the safety and security of our students for corporate profit.

Upcoming Dates

Monday, May 1	Interviews for internal candidates completed
Thursday, May 4	Executive Board Meeting High School rm122 4:30
Monday, May 8	Committee of the Whole Meeting Kinney 6:30
Thursday, May 11	Declaration Day - all displaced teachers declare intent
Monday, May 15	Regular Board Meeting City Hall 6:30
Thursday, May 18	Staffing Day Mary McGuire 4:30
Thursday, May 25	MPEA General Membership High School rm 111 4:30

From the desk of the President:

News from MEA

The MEA Spring RA will be held on April 28 and 29th in Lansing. Four of our members will be attending this conference, Rohnna Bridget and me as representatives of the MPEA, Rosa Johnson as a Minority Representative from Region 12, and Al Bowerman as a member of the MEA Board of Directors. Detailed articles on the key issues are available on the MEA website at www.mea.org.

Change in MEA Officers

In February, Lu Battaglieri left the presidency after six and one half years in that role to become the Association's Executive Director. Vice President Iris Salters took over as President on February 13, and Steve Cook, who has been Secretary-Treasurer for 14 ½ years was named interim Vice President by the Board of Directors. There will be an election to select a new Vice President of MEA at the Spring RA.

Steve Cook, Lynn Mason from Belding and Richard Hawkins from Dewitt are candidates for the VP position. If Cook wins, there will be immediate nominations and campaigning for a Secretary-Treasurer to succeed Steve Cook. Region 12, our region, has taken a position in support of Steve Cook.

MEA has acted to allow "if/then" provisional campaigning by candidates who intend to be nominated if the Secretary-Treasurer position becomes available. Five candidates have announced their intent to seek the position: Peggy McMillan from Rease, Ric Hogerheide from Westwood Hts, JoAnn King from Grand Rapids, Sue Pagan from New Buffalo, and Kent Bowden from Alma. Region 12 took a position supporting Peggy McMillan.

NEW DUES STRUCTURE at MEA

Also at the RA, we may see the end of a 20 year effort to change the MEA dues structure. Currently, EA members pay twice the dues that ESP members pay. Two years ago, a proposal passed the RA to base dues on pay rather than employment category. This year the implementation plan will be voted on. If it passes, some members of the MPEA will see their dues go up slightly, but a number of members on the lower parts of the salary schedule could see their MEA dues decrease. In April of 2004 the MPEA Executive Board directed our delegates to support any proposal that moves the organization closer to equal dues for members irrespective of employee classification. Rohnna Bridget and I both supported the 2004 proposal and will be supporting the implementation plan that we believe best meets the goals of the MPEA Executive Board from 2004.

MPEA STAFFING

Kathy Tucker tells me this is not the first time this has been done. The use of email makes it possible for the district to publish the complete list more frequently at lower cost. There is a contractual provision that anything sent by email will be prominently posted in each building. If you do not know where the postings are in your building, you should check with your building principal.
-Rick



A Technology Tip from Marilyn

To create GroupWise groups at school:

- Open GroupWise
- Start a New email (click **New Mail**).
- Click **Address** (either on the top of your screen or the right side)
- On the right side of the address book screen, you should now see buttons for "TO," "CC," and "BC." Be sure "**TO**" is pressed.
- **Double-click** the names of people to move to the group under the "TO" button.
- After placing all the names you want in the group, click the **Save Group** button below that list.
- Name the Group.
- Click **OK**.
- Click **Close**.

When you want to send one email to all the people in this Group:

- Start a new email
- Click **Address**
- Scroll until you find the name of your Group.
- **Double** click it – it will appear in your **To:** list
- Write your email.
- Send it and everyone in the Group will receive it!

Hint – you might want to add your own address to each Group so you also get a copy of the email!

Contract Corner

Our new contract is finally available to us! You may access it by going to the MPEA website at:

www.iammea.org/mpea

Then go to "Documents" and you will find a PDF version. Marilyn also posted a link under "Documents" for you to download Adobe Acrobat if you don't already have it.. You can also access the contract by going to

<http://mtpleasant.edzone.net/mpeacontract.pdf>

You will be getting your contract in the version that you requested, hard copy or on a CD, by interschool mail as soon as the MEA office has made the copies, which should be in the next week or two.



VIVA MEXICO AND MPHS!

With 13 Spanish II and III students in tow, Mt. Pleasant High School World Languages' teachers **Lorrie Murray** and **Rosa Johnson** are preparing for an action-filled, hands-on exploration of our neighboring country to the south, Mexico. On June 14, 2006, the group will set off, partnered with the National Educational Travel Company (NETC), on an eight day adventure beginning in Mexico City. While in Mexico, the group will travel by bus through San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Guadalajara, and end up in beautiful, sunny Puerto Vallarta.

NETC's philosophy is "Learning by Exploring and Actively Participating". The students will visit museums and Aztec ruins, tour historic cities and lush country sides. They will also experience first hand the lifestyle, language, and culture (key curricular components) by learning how to dance like the ancient Aztecs, cook authentic tortillas with Mexican chefs, and work with local artisans to create ceramic pieces on traditional pottery wheels.

This will be a life-changing experience for students and chaperones alike.

Welcoming the Class of 2119

What does MPEA have to do with Kindergarten Roundup? During 4-5 days, 13 MPEA members participate in the district's "roundup" process. This includes all seven kindergarten teachers (Lisa Auker, Erica Burns, Joyce Castellon, Ruth Ann Handziak, Cheryl Moe, Diane Shinaver, Judi Swartz), speech and language teachers (Nancy Black, Kit Connaughton, Stephanie House-Hovey, Beth MacGregor, Karen Turnbull), and the Title I Parent Involvement Coordinator (Gail Mitchell). MPEA provides a FREE book to each incoming kindergartner. This is an ongoing activity of the External Communication Committee. A bookplate is placed inside each book that includes a picture of a kindergarten teacher giving a book to an incoming kindergartner (the pictures varies; all of our kindergarten teachers are represented in the bookplate series). After 2 days of roundup, we have distributed over 140 books. At last year's Roundup, MPEA distributed almost 300 books to incoming kindergarten students. A Family Resource Bag is also distributed to all families at Roundup. This collection of "Getting Ready for Kindergarten" activities is coordinated by Gail Mitchell, who received a 2% grant to fund the project. Kindergarten teachers assisted in the development of activities included in the bag.

This book belongs to:

Welcome to Kindergarten!



This book is a gift from the teachers of Mt. Pleasant Public Schools.

Mt. Pleasant Education Association

Murphy's Laws for Teachers

Yes, there is a set of Murphy's Laws for teachers. You've probably already discovered that no matter how well you plan—if something can go wrong, it will.

Don't let these missteps trip you up. With each year you teach, it will get easier to deal with the unexpected. Remember—there's always next year!

1. The more important the occasion or the larger the audience, the greater the chance that the bulb on the projector will burn out in the middle of the film.
2. Students with behavior problems are never absent - not one day - all year.
3. After 27.5 hours of intense creative work, your bulletin boards—the best ever—are finally complete. Ten minutes later you're notified that you are assigned to another classroom.
4. The day the cafeteria serves mini-missiles—raisins, peanuts, peas—is the day the superintendent has lunch at your school and decides to eat with your students.
5. Once your notebook is full of good ideas, tests, sample lessons, films and a list of 500 library books for supplemental reading, and all of this is correlated to the textbook you are using, you get the message: "We will be adopting new textbooks next year!"
6. Your first experience with a vomiting child will take place with a guest speaker in the room.
7. The larger the mistake in your paycheck (in the district's favor), the longer it will take to straighten it out.
8. News of what you failed to do travels at 1,000 times the speed of news of what you did well.
9. The week after you have completed your lesson plans that will keep you on schedule with the curriculum and allow you to teach all you need to before the school year ends, you will lose four days of school because of snow.
10. PTO Open House will be held on the night of part two of the best three-part TV show of the year.
11. The percentage of absenteeism on any day is directly related to the number of tests being given on that day.
12. The only time you are a few minutes late all year is the time your principal will be waiting in your room for you. . . looking at the clock.

Busy Political Action Committee

The Political Action Committee (PAC) has worked on electing candidates for the Board of Education. They felt it was time to step back and examine how this strategy has worked. Kathy Ling and members of the PAC have interviewed some of the Board members, and wish to interview all. They are gathering information which will hopefully help improve the communication between MPEA and the Board of Ed.

Two Board positions (Shelley Hinck and Paul Kramer) are up for election this November. The deadline for candidates to apply will be in August. Be thinking about people in the community who may be interested. Teachers should give suggestions on possible candidates to members of the Political Action Committee.

Judi Swartz - PAC Chairperson/Ganiard
Claudia Lang - Pullen
Kathy Ling - High School
Linda Spycher - High School
Julie Price - West Intermediate
Kathy Primeau - Mary McGuire
Susan Horgan - PSC rep.
Stacy Yost - Fancher

NEA Urges Members to Share Views on NCLB

NEA is encouraging members to let a new independent commission know what they think about the No Child Left Behind Act and how the federal education law is impacting what happens in classrooms.

With the goal of influencing the upcoming 2007 reauthorization of the federal No Child Left Behind law, a bipartisan and independent Commission on No Child Left Behind was recently launched with high level leadership — and supporters.

Joel Packer, NEA's manager for ESEA/NCLB policy, said he is optimistic that a classroom teacher will be named to the Commission. Packer said NEA is encouraging its members to let the Commission know their views on NCLB and its impact in classrooms around the country by taking advantage of the Commission's interactive comments page on its Web site. "The Commission wants to hear from America on how the No Child Left Behind Act affects their lives," said Governor Barnes. "Only with this input can we effectively strengthen the law."

Your input really does matter! To voice your opinion go to:

<http://www.nea.org/esea/nclbcommission.html>