

K-16 ADEQUATE FUNDING PETITION DRIVE

Thousands of concerned parents, teachers, and school employees (including members from MPEA) rallied at the state Capitol on June 21st to support efforts to provide adequate funding for public education. The event was the largest demonstration at the Capitol in more than 30 years. More than 11,000 turned out for the rally organized by the K-16 Coalition for Michigan's Future.

Earlier this year Senate Bill 246 and House Bill 4582 were introduced to address the funding needs of education in Michigan. During this time of a stagnant economy, K-12 funding hasn't increased in 3 years, and has been cut mid-year twice. Meanwhile, lawmakers continue to ask for more cuts, for parents to pay more, and for ***school employees to sacrifice more pay and benefits***. Although politicians tell us that education is the number one priority, the lawmakers have refused to vote on Senate Bill 246 and House Bill 4582. The K-16 Coalition for Michigan's Future organized this petition drive to force the Legislature to vote on the proposal. MEA is a member of the coalition along with several other education and parent groups.



MPEA members Phyllis Marshall, Linda Louisell, Jane Ogger, Mary Bentley, Kathy Ling and Jane Leroux-Evans at the petition rally in Lansing.

We are asking that all MPEA members get at least 5 signatures on petitions. The 5 main points are:

1. Voters agree that schools must have more adequate, annual, guaranteed funding increases.
2. The petition initiative calls for an annual funding increase to equal inflation for K-12 schools, community colleges, and universities.
3. We need to collect 254,000 signatures of registered voters to force the Legislature to act.
4. If a majority of lawmakers approve the plan, it becomes law.
5. If the Legislature rejects the plan, it will be placed on the Nov. 7, 2006 general election ballot for voters to decide.

You have one more week to collect signatures.

Adequate funding for Michigan education directly affects your salary, your working conditions, your benefits, and the quality of education for all of the children in Michigan.

For more information go to: www.michigank16.org

From The President

I welcome our new members to the MPEA. This year we have 12 new faces, with new members at nearly every level in the district.

Despite the fact that we return for a third consecutive year without a Master Agreement in place, there are at least three elements from which we can take encouragement.

The new kindergarten program appears to have stopped the hemorrhaging of students at the early elementary level. It has been a long time in the making. We first proposed this at the bargaining table in the late 90's and have been told for at least the last five years that we would only gain a handful of students. We are up two sections of kindergarten, clearly more than anyone would admit we were losing in each of the last several years. While we can't predict that the result will be as promising next year and beyond, it certainly appears to be a step in the right direction. A big THANK YOU to our MPEA members and community members who served on the Kindergarten committee, and helped to make the recommendation happen.

Our alternative education program at Oasis continues to both retain current students and attract new students. The count will be up, possibly as many as 40 students from last year. Our colleagues in alternative ed continue to provide opportunities for over 300 students to complete their high school education in the Mt. Pleasant Schools.

We have more "newer" members stepping up and taking active roles in the Association than we have had in many years. Michelle French and Katherine Hughes from Ganiard, Julie Price from West, Ron Ahrens from Fancher, Chris Knapp, Rebekah Eichorn, and Kerry Lockwood from Mt. Pleasant High School have all stepped into building rep or committee positions. This is a promising development as a number of our current leaders are nearing the end of their careers in education. The next generation is stepping up to be counted.

In August we conducted our first MPEA "leadership" meeting in over three years. Committee chairs and officers met and discussed the state of our Association and individual ideas and concerns. We are going to continue to work throughout the year to develop a clear vision for the MPEA. I expect that we will work closely with the MEA and its Full Capacity Locals initiative as we work on our plan of action. You should see a concentrated effort to refocus and reenergize a number of our traditional activities. During the last two years, the bargaining crisis has overshadowed virtually all of our other activities. I am looking forward to

working with the other leaders as we pursue not only a fair and equitable contract, but also as we work to make our work environment more rewarding and at creating a positive image of teachers in our community.

-Rick Trainor

Contract Corner

In Article VI: Rights of the Association, Section I, our contract states, " AT the beginning of the school year, the Association shall provide a list of all Association meeting dates to the Administration. Time after the regularly scheduled school day on these dates shall be reserved for Association meetings."

These dates have been established and provided to the Administration for this school year. Please jot down these dates in your calendar, give a copy of them to your administrator, and protect them from building meetings, TAT meetings, school improvement meetings, IEP meetings etc. Then attend General Membership meetings and get involved with a committee. The contract is only as strong as its members!

General Membership - MPHS room 111 4:30

pm

November 17, 2005

February 16, 2006

April 20, 2006

May 18, 2006

MPEA Executive Board Meetings -

MPHS room 122 4:30

October 6, 2005

November 3, 2005

December 1, 2005

January 5, 2006

February 2, 2006

March 2, 2006

April 6, 2006

May 4, 2006

May 25, 2006

Welcome New Members!

Kelly Buchanan

Kelly is a graduate of Saginaw Valley State University and a native of Bay City. This is her first year teaching for a public school, previously she taught the "Think First" and "Buckle Your Brain" youth programs for the Field Neurosciences Institute of Saginaw during her college years. These are brain and spinal cord injury prevention programs that are brought into schools and community events. As the PE teacher at Sacred Heart she loves living an active life. She played college basketball, hiked the 210-mile Midland-to-Mackinaw trail, and loves long walks with her dog. Kelly is very excited to be teaching in Mt. Pleasant!

Joyce Castellon

Joyce did her student teaching with Jan Eversole just a few years ago. Since then she married Orlando, and they have a 5 month old baby boy, Marcus. Joyce taught for 2 years at Morey Charter School in 5th grade before coming to Mt. Pleasant. Joyce is the new Kindergarten teacher at Ganiard.

Beth Conway

Beth graduated from WMU, and has a Master's Degree from Spring Arbor University. She has taught for 12 years in first grade and as a Language Arts specialist in the Northwest Community Schools near Jackson. Her husband, Jim, is our athletic director. They have two daughters, Maureen (4th grade) and Alison (1st grade) who both attend Ganiard Elementary school where Beth is teaching 2nd grade. The family loves to ride their bikes and they also attend lots of sporting events!

Cathey Crooks

Cathey graduated from CMU in May of 2005. She has been substitute teaching in Mt. Pleasant, Lansing, and for the GIRESD for the past 3 years. Her husband is the soccer coach at Grand Valley State University. They have an 18 month old daughter. Cathey loves to play and watch sports. She is very excited and honored to be working for the MPSD. Cathey is the new Special Education teacher at Vowles working in the MoCI classroom (Moderate Cognitive Impaired).

Karen Lee

Karen was a Paraprofessional for 12 years at the Mecosta Osceola Career Center in Big Rapids. She received her Bachelor's Degree from Rochester Institute of Technology in New York and her Masters Degree in Technical Education from Ferris State University. Karen resides in Stanwood, MI with her husband Dan and three daughters. In her spare time (none right now) she enjoys gardening, camping and fishing. Karen expressed that she is really enjoying her time here at the MPATC. The people are GREAT!

Tyler Cline

Tyler Cline has been hired as gym teacher serving both Pullen and Sacred Heart. He graduated from CMU and this is his first teaching position, however, he served as a permanent sub for gym last year. He loves all sports and coaches 1) boys wrestling at HS; 2) women's varsity track at HS; 3) JR High Flag Football; and 4) he is the strength and conditioning coach at the HS.

Johanna Raymond

Johanna is the new 2/3 split teacher in Rosebush. She is originally from Battle Creek. She moved to the Beaverton area about 7 years ago. Since then she married her husband, Travis, has a 4 year old daughter, Hannah, and went back to complete her teaching degree at CMU. Johanna, Travis, and Hannah live on a large family farm and spend their time with family activities like camping and taking care of the farm.

Last year Johanna substitute taught and worked as a Language Arts teacher in the Harrison Sparks program (similar to our PEAK program). She is excited to be teaching in Rosebush.

Rhonda Lundsted

Rhonda graduated from CMU and is taking her last grad class before her capstone. She has been teaching at Morey Charter School since 1998. While there she taught 2 years in a 1/2 Multiage classroom, and 2nd grade since this year. She loves spending time with her family and friends. She also loves fishing, biking, and camping/boating. And she is truly enjoying being in the Mt. Pleasant Public School district!

Brett Fidler

Brett is a native of Ithaca, Michigan. He taught in Hurley, Wisconsin for the past five years in 1st grade. He and his wife, Jeannie, moved back to Michigan to be closer to family. He also has two daughters, Clare (3) and Jamie (2). Brett's passion is the study of nature. He is teaching a 3/4 split at Ganiard.

Jeannie Fidler

Jeannie is also a native of Ithaca and her high school sweetheart was Brett. She also taught in Hurley, Wisconsin in 3rd grade and 6th grade. Jeannie has her hands full, being hired the day before school started - plus having two little girls at home! Jeannie loves scrapbooking. She is teaching 6th grade at Fancher.

Rheanna Cooper

Rheanna grew up in Mt. Pleasant. She graduated from CMU in May 2004 with an degree in elementary education. Her major is language arts and her minor is math. She spent the last year subbing, working in the PEAK program at Vowles, and tutoring. She enjoys spending time with her family and friends, running, reading, and traveling. She is busy as a first year teacher and looking forward to her wedding day which is October 1.

Jonnie Taton

Jonnie earned her degree at Winona State University, Masters from the University of Texas-Pan American, and Specialist degree in School Psychology from CMU. She has 12 years of teaching experience in general and special education (grades 2-12). Jonnie is happily married to Matthew (our band director), and they have two children: Gina (attending CMU) and Jon (4th grade at Ganiard). Her interests include music, poetry, and cycling. Before teaching, she competed internationally as a USCF licensed Road and Track Cyclist.

Building Reps

Thank you to all who have volunteered to be building reps. This is an integral part of our organization.

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

Amy Ouellette
alt. Kelly Hovey

Ganiard

Michelle French
alt. Kathryn Hughes

Pullen

Kit Connaughton
alt. Jeanie Butka

Rosebush

Sue MacPherson

Vowles

Cindy Cooper

Advertising space available

Do you own a business that you would like to advertise in the Chalkdust? In order to defray the cost of printing, we are offering advertising space to members and retirees. The rates are as follows:

business card	\$20
1/4 page	\$35
1/2 page	\$70
full page	\$130

If you are interested please contact Lisa Johnson at ljohnson@mtpleasant.edzone.net. There are also discounts available for multiple issues.

Check your Pay Check

Several of our members have had mistakes with their paychecks. The turnover of personnel at Central Office has been significant and you need to check everything carefully. Be sure that your gross pay when divided by the number of pays equals the amount on your check. If you don't understand how Schedule B, recess, and extra duties are figured in, call for help (either Rick or payroll).

Be especially diligent to know each line item in your deductions.

MIP 3.9 - Deduction made for everyone in the MIP.

MPSERS TAX-DEFERRED PAYMT - If you are buying years toward your retirement.
AMERICAN FUNDS SERVICE (or another company) - denotes funds going toward a tax deferred annuity or 403-B plan.

125 FLEX MEDICAL SPENDING - If you have elected deductions for medical expenses, to save yourself some tax money.

Check out the updated MPEA website at:

www.iammea.org/mpea