

# NAME YOUR NEWSLETTER!

A Publication for Southwestern Michigan Education Association Members

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BURR OAK EA

BRANCH ISD ESP

CENTREVILLE EA

CENTREVILLE P

COLON EA

COLON P

CONSTANTINE EA

GOCC

GOSSE

MARCELLUS EA

MENDON EA

NOTTAWA EA

STURGIS EA

THREE RIVERS EA

TRESPA

WHITE PIGEON EA

## Name Your Newsletter



We need your help! Southwestern Michigan Education Association would like to develop a newsletter for distribution to all members. A prize will be given to the SMEA member who submits the winning title for this newsletter.

Suggestions may be sent to the Three Rivers MEA office at the address above, through your Local President, or you may email your Uniserv Director at [cculver@mea.org](mailto:cculver@mea.org). All entries must be received in the Three Rivers office by **Friday, October 31, 2003**. The winning title will be chosen at the November 11, 2003 SMEA meeting.

## **2003 Instruction and Professional Development Conference**

Hyatt Regency Hotel, Dearborn December 4-6, 2003

### Check it out!

- Over 75 sessions available
- Workshops for **all** education employees.
- Two and one half jam-packed days.
- Most sessions eligible for SB-CEU credits.
- Many sessions count toward the ESP Certification Program.

### Want more information?

Go to [www.mea.org/IPD](http://www.mea.org/IPD). This site contains the entire IPD Conference Announcement with more specific information about the sessions.

The Conference Registration, Hotel Reservation, and SB-CEU Application Forms are included. Just print them, fill out the information and send in (with payment for conference registration) to addresses provided.



## **St. Joseph County Insurance Crisis Update:**

WHO: Every member in St. Joseph County

WHAT: Employers are pursuing a risky self-funding scheme intended to erode our insurance benefits. This pursuit guarantees no savings to any district and puts all of our members at risk.

WHERE: St. Joseph ISD, Burr Oak already.

Currently being proposed at Constantine, Three Rivers, and Centreville. Who will be next?

WHEN: Since the employers collectively began strategizing together during the 02-03 school year.

HOW: Through a lie. School boards are being deceived by for profit companies and consultants from their own Association who claim they can provide equivalent benefits to what currently exists in employee contracts at reduced costs to the districts. The benefits aren't equivalent, and taxpayer dollars are being gambled with huge risks. This gamble has been tried and it has failed in numerous places throughout the state.

Look for **County-wide Crisis Updates** throughout this bargaining season. Just because you have good insurance now, don't think you won't be the next target.



# \$\$\$\$\$\$ **How Broke Is Your District?** \$\$\$\$\$\$ **Banking school surpluses stalls bargaining – hurts children.**

Michigan school districts are banking record surpluses At the same time they are pleading poverty and obstructing contract negotiations.

“Contrary to popular belief, school districts are not broke,” said Lu Battaglieri, President of the 162,000-member MEA. “They are behaving like banks—sitting on more than \$1.8 billion in savings. That money should be spent on children and programs.”

“Rainy-day funds are meant to be used when times get tough,” Battaglieri said. “Times are tough right now, and taxpayers and parents should be asking why districts are sitting on millions of dollars at the same time they’re cutting programs, charging fees, stalling

negotiations and hurting kids.

Though a lot districts will be hit quite hard this year, to simply declare gloom and doom for all is far from accurate. To use this year’s freeze in per pupil funding as a primary indicator of your district’s financial climate is akin to using last winter’s record cold spell as declarative proof that Global Warming can’t be possible.

As you can see from the following data, a large majority of countywide General Fund balances have grown since the passage of Proposal 1. This has happened in spite of contract settlements that have met state averages and record growth in health care costs.

This year’s freeze in state spending is not as chilling as some might say. The fact remains that, over the past 4 years, per pupil funding has increased \$1,000. This equals a 15% increase in most St. Joseph County districts.

## **SMEA (5-E/G) DISTRICT FUND BALANCES**

Code	County	District	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
75010	CASS	MARCELLUS	12.21%	13.75%	14.60%	22.59%	22.03%	23.11%	23.00%	20.53%

Code	County	District	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
75010	ST. JOSEPH	STURGIS	2.97%	8.94%	16.95%	24.31%	27.18%	31.12%	31.99%	32.08%
75020	ST. JOSEPH	BURR OAK	18.69%	24.74%	26.47%	26.31%	25.29%	21.94%	22.98%	24.76%
75030	ST. JOSEPH	CENTREVILLE	9.63%	14.68%	20.11%	28.61%	23.28%	22.02%	20.73%	19.26%
75040	ST. JOSEPH	COLON	5.96%	10.34%	14.81%	18.05%	19.38%	21.12%	19.91%	18.45%
75050	ST. JOSEPH	CONSTANTINE	18.56%	19.56%	19.24%	24.94%	22.47%	17.14%	17.36%	16.15%
75060	ST. JOSEPH	MENDON	1.00%	2.65%	5.05%	7.84%	7.57%	4.37%	0.73%	3.99%
75070	ST. JOSEPH	WHITE PIGEON	3.45%	5.78%	3.59%	4.33%	4.34%	4.53%	8.34%	6.04%
75080	ST. JOSEPH	THREE RIVERS	5.57%	4.64%	3.05%	11.89%	19.96%	22.60%	25.06%	27.20%
75100	ST. JOSEPH	NOTTAWA	49.44%	47.41%	49.65%	58.06%	49.56%	58.57%	55.36%	52.87%



## **HELP BACK PAC**



Fall brings new duties and obligations to all public education Employees. School buildings are full of students again. We begin winterizing summer play toys and exchanging that lightweight summer wardrobe for the heavy stuff that winter dictates. In addition, for MEA members throughout the state, PAC drives come to mind. For whatever reason, these things are viewed as obligations and duties.

The negative connotations inherent in those words, however, don’t fit the purpose of PAC contributions. To make a decision to contribute approximately \$.40 or \$.90 per week (the recommended MEA/NEA Contribution amount for ESP vs. EA members), means you’ve made a positive choice towards being a responsible advocate

for public school children and employees. Combined PAC contributions will secure our voice and political support for public education.

Since the vast majority of our districts’ revenue comes from money legislated by the state (roughly 85% for many districts), and our bargaining rights are directly linked to legislative decisions, it is imperative that we consider contributions to PAC as our responsibilities. We must do everything in our power to help elect leaders that will prioritize public education in their revenue spending decisions. Only through your voluntary contributions can we make a difference that will benefit our schools and the students we serve.



