

Des Moines Education Association

DMEA TEMPO

Faculty Reps Vote to Keep Phase III and Support Associates

During the recent Special Session of the legislature school budgets were cut by 4.3%. This resulted in a \$5.9 million cut to the Des Moines school district. The state legislature also allowed districts to soften the blow by moving Phase III money into the General Fund to balance the budget.

The district has managed to find enough money to offset all but approximately \$1.5 million of the budget reductions. This money could be found by dipping into cash reserves. This would force the school board to raise taxes by approximately 30 cents per \$1000 in property value. That would raise taxes on a \$100,000 home by \$30. Since Des Moines has the 14th highest property tax rate in the state, the district has decided not to follow this course.

Instead the district has proposed taking advantage of the loophole created during the special session to move Phase III money into the General Fund to offset

cuts. The money received by the district will almost exactly balance the budget.

This created a problem for DMEA members. Phase III is part of the negotiated Master Contract between the district and the teachers. DMEA leaders met with the district on Tuesday, December 11th to express displeasure with that decision. The district responded by implying that if Phase III were not used to offset budget cuts they would consider reducing the positions of all regular education associates. This could result in the loss of approximately 80 jobs.

Since this issue is of tremendous importance, it was taken to the FR meeting this past Thursday. At that meeting the FRs voted to retain Phase III funding for teachers and to oppose any actions by the district to lay-off associates. That message has been given to the district. As this issue of the *Tempo* goes to press we have received no further response from the district.

A Message from President Chris Miller

All members should be proud of the job done by your Faculty Representatives on December 13th. Regardless of how you felt about the issue, these people advocated for their positions and people in a professional, democratic way. This was not the easiest meeting to be a part of, but your FRs handled it with grace and dignity. It made one proud to watch democracy at work.

At the time of this writing, we don't

know what the fallout will be from our decision at the FR meeting to maintain Phase III and oppose layoffs of associates. There are some non-budgetary things the district could offer in exchange for Phase III, but we will watch, wait, and see.

We are faced with a budget crunch. The budget cuts made by our state lawmakers should highlight the importance

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Calendar of Events

- January 3, 2002
DMEA Executive Board
4:15 p.m.
- January 9, 2002
DMEA/PSUU Legislative Reception
ISEA Building
5:00-6:30 p.m.
- January 10, 2002
Faculty Rep Assembly
North HS Cafeteria
4:15 p.m.
- January 17, 2002
DMEA Executive Board Meeting
4:15 p.m.



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Growing Future Teachers

Everyone has heard the news about the coming shortage of teachers in America's schools. The Teacher's Academy at Central Campus is doing something about it. The Academy is in its first year of existence. DMEA member Cheryl Sypniewski provides instruction for students in the two-year program. In addition to classroom instruction, students are able to observe classrooms, participate in field trips and spend three days per week in the Spring with a master teacher.

Many of the students in the program this year were encouraged to participate by teachers in their own schools. Since it is in our best interest to steer the "best and brightest" students into our profession, we are encouraging teachers in Des Moines high schools to help identify and encourage students to participate in this program. If you know of a student with an interest in teaching that would make a great teacher, encourage them to contact Cheryl at Central Campus.

Teachers Get MLK Day Off

Due to an error in the calendar for teachers, Monday, January 21st (Martin Luther King Day) will be a day off for 9.5 and 10.5 month teaching staff, deans of students and speech language pathologists. All associates, including ESL and hearing interpreters, and campus monitors will be expected to report to work

Associates will attend a half-day in-service on Martin Luther King Day. Attendance is not optional. The other half day will be in their building. Associates can take comp time for the half day that is scheduled in buildings.

Coming Soon!
www.dmea.org

President's Report

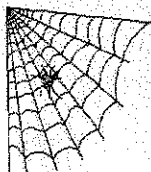
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of legislative action. ISEA has urged legislators to dip in the state's "rainy day" fund without success. It is time to let our lawmakers hear about the effect of the budget cuts and the impact they have upon our members.

On January 9th the DMEA and the

Polk Suburban UniServ Unit will co-sponsor a Legislative Reception for Polk County legislators. The event will take place from 5:00-6:30 p.m. in the Capitol Boardroom at ISEA Headquarters (777 3rd Street). If you have concerns about the recent budget cuts or about the teacher compensation law, this would be the time to visit with your legislator.

DMEA, the PTA, the school board, AFSCME, and the Administrator's Association also have a joint legislative group called BEST. Participants in the BEST Coalition will have a training meeting from 9:00-10:30 a.m. on Saturday, January 5th. If you would like to participate in this group please contact the DMEA office.



Caught in the Web

Martin Luther King Day

Martin Luther King Day is January 21st. Although school won't be in session that day, it's still important to note the contributions Dr. King made to our country. The following sites provide great resources for kids and teachers.

Martin Luther King Jr. Papers Project
<http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/>

This site from Stanford University is great for high school students doing research on King's life

Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute in the Seattle Times

<http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/mlk/>
Visit the interactive classroom for study

guides, quizzes and links to sites about King.

MLKDay.Com

<http://www.mlkday.com/>

This site from the Austin (TX) Heritage Council takes a while to download, but it has excellent resources on Dr. King's life and makes excellent use of media.