

we remember



DMEA TEMPO

Early Retirement Update

The DMEA office has been deluged with calls concerning the new Early Retirement Plan. In an attempt to clarify the issue we will address some of the concerns that have been sent out way.

As this newsletter goes to press, the IRS has yet to approve the new retirement plan. If this approval does not come by October 1st, DMEA will work with the district to move back the deadlines for retirement. At this time anyone who wants to retire this year (2001-02) must notify Human Resources in writing by November 1st. A simple letter indicating that you plan to retire is all that is required.

If you retire at the end of this year (2001-02), you are not covered by the new retirement plan. Teachers retiring at the end of this school year will still receive 30% of this year's salary and paid health insurance until age 65 or coverage by another program, whichever comes first. If a Des Moines teaching couple retires, they are covered by one program. If the person with the coverage should die, the insurance will be activated on the survivor as part of their retirement.

People who retire next year (2003) or later are affected by the new program. The accumulated sick leave that a retiree had as of July 1, 2001 will be banked at \$200 per day. In case of a catastrophic illness the banked days can be used for sick leave. The District and the Association are working to have

Disability insurance kick in without having to use those days in the bank, but at this time that has not been approved. In addition, beginning with the current school year, teachers will accumulate additional funds by not using sick leave, emergency leave or special leave. Everyone should have received a flyer from the district that shows the rates at which these days will be compensated. Any sick leave days that are not used will be allowed to accumulate to a total of 100 days. New hires to the district will not be allowed to accumulate more than 100 days. The \$200 buyback does not apply to these days. Those retirees who need health insurance coverage will be allowed to buy health insurance with "pre-tax" dollars through the district plan. We are working to see that a choice of plans will be available.

To figure the retirement payout, divide the total amount of money you will receive by the number of years between your age at retirement and age 65. For example a person who retires at age 60 with a retirement fund of \$50,000 would receive \$10,000 per year.

In an effort to provide answers to the many questions about retirement the District will hold meetings for those people who are considering retirement. They will be held on October 3rd at 3:15 p.m. and 4:15 p.m. at North High School. The split start times will help accommodate the different dismissal times of elementary and secondary teachers.

Teacher Contract Ratification Vote in October

Ballots will soon be sent to all FR chairs for the upcoming ratification vote on the changes to the Master Agreement for certificated staff. Last spring the negotiations team completed bargaining by agreeing to changes in the early retirement plan and to several other language changes in the master agreement. Because of the complexity of the early retirement issue, it was decided to vote on that issue separately and then to vote this fall on the remaining changes.

Members will be voting on changes to the transfer language, military leave and bereavement leave. Complete texts of the changes will be sent to each building for members to read. In addition each member will receive a summary of the changes.

Elections will be held in October in each building. Please contact your FR for more information. Your negotiations team worked very hard to make these changes. It is very important that we ratify the changes.

Nominate a Coworker for Excellence in Education Award

ISEA, Younkers, WHO News Radio, 1040 and Fox 17 are sponsoring the third annual Excellence in Education Award Program. Iowans are urged to nominate a teacher who has made a difference in their lives.

Every nominee will receive a certificate along with an invitation to attend a November 13th banquet at the Younkers Tea Room in downtown Des Moines. The banquet, scheduled during American Education Week, is tentatively slated to feature NEA's Reg Weaver as a speaker.

A panel of judges will select finalists and a grand prize winner. All finalists will receive a plaque, with the winning teacher receiving a \$1000 cash prize and an additional \$1000 for his or her school.

Nomination forms can be downloaded from the ISEA web site (www.isea.org) or you can use the convenient online form. Deadline for nominations is September 30th.

ASSOCIATION OFFERS RESOURCES, ASSISTANCE

While dealing with their own shock and grief, Association members across the state and nation are working to help children come to grips with the terrorist attacks America recently experienced. ISEA now has a number of helpful resources for parents and educators alike. Those resources are now available on the ISEA Web site at <http://www.isea.org>. The NEA Web site, <http://www.nea.org>, also features the NEA's Crisis Communication Guide as well as additional information and links. "Times like these remind us that we are one Association family," said ISEA President Jolene Franken. "We are one American family. And we will continue to reach out and care for our students and for each other."

Newspapers from around the world provide some of the best resources to see how the international community is reacting to this tragedy. One of the best resources for this is the Online Newspapers web site. By visiting <http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/> you can read many of the world's newspapers.

Teacher Quality/Teacher Pay?

The Iowa Association of Elementary Educators is hosting a meeting to learn how our new legislation could affect teacher quality and teacher pay in Iowa. Jeff Berger from the Department of Education will be speaking and answering questions on this VERY IMPORTANT subject. The meeting will be October 25th at 7 p.m. in the East High School Auditorium. Anyone interested in becoming a member of this active and forward thinking organization should contact Vern Hansen at: HansenVLee@AOL.com.

From the Executive Director What's DMEA Doing For Me?

Since I started this job in August I've had the pleasure of visiting a number of schools and have met with a many of our members and several potential members. One of the questions that I'm often faced with is "What is DMEA doing for me?"

Let me assure you that the DMEA staff and leaders are keeping very busy. I log every call that comes to me in the office and at last count I was rapidly approaching 100 members that had asked for and received our services. DMEA has been instrumental in two major decisions that have effected our members paychecks and their service year.

Following up on a complaint from a third year teacher DMEA discovered that the Career Path aspect of the Teacher Compensation bill had been incorrectly interpreted by the district. Changes are in the process of being made that will slightly increase the paychecks for several teachers in this position.

Thanks to the tenacity of our Associate's President, Rhonda Anderson, DMEA was also able to convince the District that it had incorrectly counted the number of days Associates were being required to work. Those changes have now been made and our members will be working one less day.

These are just a few of the little "victories" that we have achieved. A great deal of our success can't even be discussed since it involves confidential discussions with members, but be assured we are working to support our members.

Of course, there are limitations on what we can do. The Iowa Code outlines those issues that are mandatory for the District to discuss with the Association. In some instances, members have contacted the office with a concern that falls outside of this area. Regardless, it is important to contact the office when problems arise. The sooner that we are informed of an issue the greater our ability to deal with it.

DMEA Executive Board Attendance

September 6 (*ex-denotes excused absence*)

Present: Chris Miller, Paul Mann, Lesley Martin, Pat Papenheim, Jan Bannister, John Eller, Rhonda Anderson, Kris Mesicek

Absent: Toni Austin (ex), Hance Throckmorton (ex), Carmen Winters (ex), Alice Boyd (ex), Phyllis Suttek (ex)

September 20

Present: Chris Miller, Paul Mann, Lesley Martin, Pat Papenheim, Jan Bannister, Rhonda Anderson, Kris Mesicek, Hance Throckmorton, Carmen Winters, Alice Boyd, Phyllis Suttek

Absent: John Eller (ex), Toni Austin (ex)