



United, Protected, Connected

Des Moines Education Association

DIMEA TEMPO

Rally at the Capitol on January 27th

Iowa schools were faced with trimming about \$50 million from already tight budgets earlier this year after a 2.5% cut in state spending ordered by Gov. Tom Vilsack. Textbooks, technology, school supplies and even extracurricular activities continue to be on the chopping block. Schools have been forced to dip into cash reserves to avoid staff reductions, resulting in higher property taxes for many areas.

The cuts came at a time when:

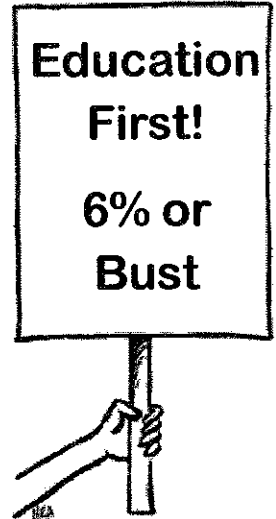
- The growth in per-pupil spending for the past three years is lower than it has been for the past 30 years.
- The state has already cut \$30 million for technology and another \$9 million for Phase III.
- Schools are trying meet the demands

placed on them because of the No Child Left Behind requirements.

- Health Insurance premiums and energy costs are having major impacts on school budgets.

Faced with these facts a group of concerned Des Moines area parents, community members and educators have formed a group called Education First. The group believes that the state is failing our public schools by not providing adequate funding. As part of a year long series of activities

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Tips on Contacting Your Legislator

We will be asking members to contact legislators this year on a regular basis. When communicating with legislators it's a good idea to follow a few simple rules to make sure that your message is heard. Each legislator has a preferred way of communicating. If you get a chance ask them if they prefer to communicate by phone, e-mail, or if they prefer receiving letters.

Phone

When using the phone make sure you identify yourself by name and also identify the organization/district you represent. Try to identify one or two talking points in advance. Identify the issue you are calling about and then support it with your talking points. Be polite and concise.

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Anything is possible if the public is adequately incited.

Author Unknown

Wellness Corner



Fighting Fatigue

Do you feel tired all of the time? Here are five methods you can use to fight fatigue and stay healthy.

1. **Adopt a regular bedtime.** If you routinely deprive yourself of sleep you are going to be tired. Get 7-9 hours of sleep daily. If you don't sleep well, try establishing a regular bed time.
2. **Eat for all-day fuel.** Start with a low-fat high-fiber breakfast. To maintain energy throughout the day, eat small amounts every 3-4 hours.
3. **Set a reasonable pace.** To balance your energy and manage your time, make a daily to-do list, setting priorities for the things that must be done.
4. **Reduce stress.** Try stress reduction techniques throughout the day like deep-breathing, meditation and progressive muscle relaxation.
5. **Exercise moderately each day.** Experts now recommend 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day. Don't beat yourself up if you miss a day since any physical activity is better than none at all.

Did you know?

- In 2001, 53% of U.S. patients visiting health care providers were over the age of 45. That compares to 42% in 1992.
- The leading primary diagnosis for visits in 2001 included high blood pressure, arthritis, joint disorders, colds and diabetes.

Rally at the Capitol

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the group plans to hold a rally on the west steps of the Capitol on Tuesday, January 27th from 4:45-6:15 p.m. Educators, parents and legislators plan to speak to the group from the Capitol steps to encourage lawmakers to continue their push for a 6% allowable growth figure.

Educators and parents from around the state are planning to participate in this rally. The Cedar Rapids schools plan to bring a bus full of educators to participate in the rally and a group in Ottumwa plans on bringing three buses.

Education Issues for the 2004 Legislative Session

Contacting your legislators can be intimidating if you don't have a good grasp of the issues. We're including the following talking points to use when you contact legislators.

Allowable Growth

The ISEA is supporting increasing the allowable growth rate for next fiscal year from two percent up to six percent. The two percent proposed by the Legislature and the Governor for next year would leave 166 Iowa schools with a lower budget than this year and 79 with no budget growth.

Teacher Quality Compensation

The ISEA supports increasing the funding for the Teacher Compensation/Quality program to \$300 million from the current \$43 million. The legislation, which was originally passed in 2001, was supposed to be fully funded in seven years. The funding for 04-05 should be \$171.5 million.

In addition to the rally, the group is planning a year long, state-wide letter writing campaign. In Des Moines this activity will be coordinated through our Governmental Affairs committee.

The DMEA will also be sponsoring a series of lobby days in March. Schools will be assigned a particular day to come to the Capitol just as we did last year. Assignments should be made shortly.

Members should also mark their calendars for another state-wide rally on March 20th. Although this is the first day of spring break, we hope a number of members will participate.

IPERS

The ISEA supports increasing the contribution rate from the current 9.45% to 13.45% with the contribution rate increasing by one percent each year for four years starting July 1, 2005.

Health Insurance

The ISEA and NEA are promoting a review of health insurance at both the state and national level.

Class Size/Reading Initiative

The ISEA supports maintaining the current \$30 million for the class size/reading initiative. If this program ends class sizes will increase and have a negative effect on student achievement.

Community Colleges/AEAs

The ISEA supports restoring the cuts made to both AEAs and Community Colleges.

Polk County Legislative Contacts

This is a "do or die" year for education in the Iowa General Assembly. The very future of education in our state is at stake. The list below contains the names of Polk County legislators that we will be asking you to call often during the legislative session.

House of Representatives

District 42-- Geri Huser
Home Telephone: 967-7846
E-mail: geri.huser@legis.state.ia.us

District 59-- Gene Maddox
Home Telephone: 225-1390
E-mail: gene.maddox@legis.state.ia.us

District 60-- Libby Jacobs
Home Telephone: 223-1225
E-mail: libby.jacobs@legis.state.ia.us

District 61-- Jo Oldson
Home Telephone: 255-2805
E-mail: jo.oldson@legis.state.ia.us

District 62-- Bruce Hunter
Home Telephone: 256-8010
E-mail: bruce.hunter@legis.state.ia.us

District 63-- Scott Raecker
Home Telephone: 276-5987
E-mail: scott.raecker@legis.state.ia.us

District 64-- Janet Petersen
Home Telephone: 279-9063
E-mail: janet.petersen@legis.state.ia.us

District 65-- Wayne Ford
Home Telephone: 271-0605
E-mail: wayne.ford@legis.state.ia.us

District 66-- Ed Fallon
Home Telephone: 243-8828
E-mail: ed.fallon@legis.state.ia.us

District 67-- Kevin McCarthy
Home Telephone: 953-5221
E-mail:
kevin.mccarthy@legis.state.ia.us

District 68-- John Connors
Home Telephone: 262-3345
E-mail: john.connors@legis.state.ia.us

District 69-- Kent Kramer
Home Telephone: 276-1613
E-mail: kent.kramer@legis.state.ia.us

District 70-- Carmine Boal
Home Telephone: 964-3335
E-mail: carmine.boal@legis.state.ia.us

Senate

District 21-- Dennis Black
Home Telephone: 641-527-3172
E-mail: dennis.black@legis.state.ia.us

District 30-- Mary Kramer
Home Telephone: 224-7613
E-mail: mary.kramer@legis.state.ia.us

District 31-- Matt McCoy
Home Telephone: 282-4510
E-mail: matt.mccoy@legis.state.ia.us

District 32-- Jack Holveck
Home Telephone: 277-5064
E-mail: jack.holveck@legis.state.ia.us

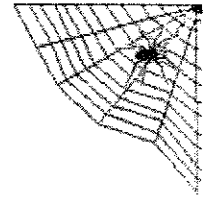
District 33-- Jack Hatch
Home Telephone: 243-2033
E-mail: jack.hatch@legis.state.ia.us

District 34-- Dick Dearden
Home Telephone: 262-1203
E-mail: dick.dearden@legis.state.ia.us

District 35-- Jeff Lamberti
Home Telephone: 965-1067
E-mail: jeff.lamberti@legis.state.ia.us

It is often easier to contact your legislators by calling their offices at the Capitol. You can contact the Senate switchboard at 281-3371, and the House switchboard at 281-3221. You can then ask to speak to your representative. The phones are usually answered by staffers. If you leave a short, clear message the staffers will see that your representative receives it.

Caught in the Web



It's political season in Iowa. The caucuses are drawing near and the legislature is in session. The following sites will keep you up to date on issues throughout the year.

The Iowa Legislature

<http://www.legis.state.ia.us>

The home page for the Iowa General Assembly contains a wealth of information. You can find your legislator, track legislation and even listen to live audio from the House and Senate floors.

Office of the Governor & Lt. Gov.

<http://www.governor.state.ia.us>

Get the latest information on the positions of the Governor and Lt. Governor. You can download PowerPoint presentations and even a video of the Governor's Condition of the State address.

ISEA

<http://www.isea.org>

The ISEA web site contains a link to the Legislative Action Center where you can track legislation, look up your representative and send him an e-mail.

My Iowa Schools

<http://www.myiowaschools.org>

This site is jointly operated by the ISEA, Iowa Association of School Boards, School Administrators of Iowa and the PTA. It has a wealth of resources on our fight to increase funding for schools.

Iowa Democratic Party

<http://www.iowademocrats.org>

Iowa Republican Party

<http://www.iowagop.org>

If you want a more partisan view of the issues you can visit the home pages for both parties. The Democrats also have links to the home pages for all of the Presidential candidates.

**Des Moines Education
Association**

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Des Moines, IA 50309

Phone: 515-471-8040
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<http://www.dmea.org>

Chris Miller, President
christopher.miller@dmeps.k12.ia.us

Randy Richardson, Executive Director
rrichardson@isea.org

Sharon Nelson, Office Manager
snelson@isea.org

Negotiations Team Begins Work

The DMEA Negotiations Committee has been hard at work preparing for the bargaining of changes to current contract for the 04-05 school year. Only two issues are open in the contract for next year: salary and insurance. In addition, the teacher's contract talks will also include changes to the evaluation language.

The DMEA Negotiations Committee is chaired by Patty Trump, a teacher at Monroe Elementary. Other members include Suzy Case-Card (Goodrell), Carl Van Tuyl (Lincoln), Deb Isenhardt (Moulton), Hance Throckmorton (McKinley), Joan Anderson (Nurses-Brody), Becky McNew (Clerical-Granger), Phyllis Suttek (Clerical-Garton), Rhonda Anderson (Associates-East), Richard Bright (Roosevelt), Toni Eilbert (Associates-McKinley), and Travis Jacobs (Success-McKinley).

The first two bargaining sessions are open to the public. The first meeting to exchange initial proposals is scheduled for January 26th at 4:30 at Casady.

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If you speak directly to the legislator be calm, respectful and be prepared to educate since it is possible the legislator will not have knowledge of your issue. Keep the conversation brief.

E-mail/Written Communication

When writing to legislators remember that you represent not only yourself, but all educators in the state. Correct spelling and proper grammar are extremely important. The last thing

we want is an angry legislator waiving a letter with numerous errors in front of a TV camera and talking about the lack of professionalism among teachers.

Be polite when you communicate. You may feel passionately about a subject, but be professional and keep the communication positive.

Avoid mass generated letters. It's nice to have someone give you a sample letter, but legislators respond better to personal communication.

Be specific when you write to

legislators. They receive many letters from people and don't want to read a long, rambling letter.

State your position on the issue. Explain why you support or oppose this issue. Try to use an actual example of how this issue has affected you.

Ask for a response. Indicate to the legislator that you would appreciate a reply containing his/her position on the issue and thank them in advance for their response.



DMEA Calendar

- February 3, 2004
DMPS School Board Meeting
Open Forum 5:45 p.m.
Regular Session 6:00 p.m.
- February 5, 2004
DMEA Executive Board
4:15 p.m.

- February 11, 2004
90 Minute Early Dismissal
- February 12, 2004
FR Assembly
North High School Cafeteria
4:15 p.m.

- February 17, 2004
DMPS School Board Meeting
Open Forum 5:45 p.m.
Regular Session 6:00 p.m.
- February 19, 2004
DMEA Executive Board
4:15 p.m.