



United, Protected, Connected

Des Moines Education Association

DMEA TEMPO

Members Overwhelmingly Approve Changes to Contract

DMEA members overwhelmingly approved changes to all three comprehensive agreements last week. The teacher's bargaining group approved changes by a vote of 1296 to 46 (97%). The Associates bargaining group approved changes to their contract by a vote of 149 to 9 (94%). The Secretarial bargaining group approved their changes by a vote of 25 to 3 (89%).

Changes to the contract were minimal this year and primarily involved salary increases and changes to health insurance. Information on those changes have been sent to each building. If you need details on the settlement, please contact your FR.

At the time this newsletter went to press, the ISEA reported that 206 school districts had reached a settlement on next year's contract for teachers. The average salary

increase for teachers across the state is 3.59% (DMEA negotiated a 4.2% increase).

Starting salaries continue to vary wildly across the state with salaries for next year ranging from a low of \$19,400 to over \$30,000. In fact, 114 schools negotiated new contracts for next year that will have some teachers making below the statewide minimum of \$24,500.

Insurance also continues to be a hot topic. While premiums declined in Des Moines, some school districts saw premiums increase by over 100%. To save money many of those local associations bargained contracts that increase deductibles to as high \$2000 annually for a single

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Recalls Begin from Staff Reductions

Fifty-eight teachers received staff reduction notices before the April 30th deadline. Thirty-six of those people were DMEA members. The hardest hit areas included elementary teachers, counselors, English, and fine arts.

There is a silver lining for some of these members, however. Almost as soon as the staff reductions were announced, some teachers began to receive recall notices. At this time all of the elementary and social

studies teachers who received notices have been recalled. In addition a number of counselors have been recalled. As the Tempo goes to press a total of 20 DMEA members have been recalled. Four DMEA members who have yet to be called back have requested a hearing before the school board on their reductions. The Comprehensive Agreement allows the district to recall members for up to one year from the date of termination.

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When we say all children can achieve and then not give them the additional resources...we are creating a fantasy.

Susan B. Neuman
Former US Assistant Education Secretary

Wellness Corner



Wellness on the Web

Next year all DMPS employees will be insured through one of two plans provided by Wellmark. Since it is likely that health insurance premiums will continue to increase (and be an issue), we need to continue to do all we can to become better consumers of health care.

One of the newer features offered by Wellmark is a web site called My-Health@Wellmark. The web site can be found at <http://myhealth@wellmark.com>. The web site has a number of features that will help members stay well and to assist you in making wise decisions when you seek health care. Among the features offered on the site are:

- Daily news features on health issues.
- Information about drug pricing
- A "symptom checker" that helps you diagnose your health issues.
- Over 20 health calculators that allow you to determine everything from predicting your child's height to the number of drinks it takes to get a person legally intoxicated.
- Quizzes to help you learn more about health issues.
- Self-care centers that allow you to find information about a specific illness or condition.
- The ability to check the status of claims you have filed with Wellmark.
- The ability to customize the page based upon your specific health concerns.

Members Approve Contract Changes

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person (compared to our \$200). Teachers in some districts are contributing as much as \$700 per month to the cost of family health insurance. In some instances the actual take home pay for teachers has decreased over the past three years.

Increases in salaries for both the Associate and Secretarial bargaining groups also exceeded expectations. Associates saw salaries increase by 4.95%, while the clerical group saw its salaries increase by over 5%. Seventeen ESP groups have reported settlements around the state at this time.

Good News for Associates

The No Child Left Behind law required that all associates working in a Title I building be highly qualified. Associates could become highly qualified by taking a series of courses offered by the district. In the past, DMPS employees only had to pay \$25 total for registration for the courses.

It appeared as though next year was going to be different. Heartland AEA, who provides the classes, increased the cost to \$25 per course, or \$75 total. This would have resulted in a significant increase in costs to associate staff.

Through the hard work of Lisa Negus in Human Resources, the district was able to find sufficient resources to provide a reimbursement for associates and paraprofessionals who need to take the three courses composing the Paraeducator Certification. The \$75 now charged for registration will be reimbursed once associates submit their three transcripts.

DMPS employees still have the option of taking the COMPASS as an alternative that allows them to work in a Schoolwide Title I school. This option is free of charge.

Virginia Proposal to Pay More to Top Teachers at Needy Schools

The nation's schools need to find new ways to pair the best teachers with troubled schools—including paying teachers for performance rather than experience alone, Virginia Gov. Mark R. Warner (D) told a national gathering of educators last week. Speaking at an education forum in Washington sponsored by the Milken Family Foundation, Warner said low-income children too often have the least qualified teachers, a situation he termed a "national embarrassment," reported Rosalind Helderman. Warner called for a comprehensive strategy in Virginia to attract proven teachers to difficult class-

rooms by paying bonuses and basing salaries on students' success, among other things. "I believe that a nation that has planted its flag on the moon and is now sending robotic scouts to Mars can figure out how to get good teachers into the schools that need them the most," he said.

For complete details of the story visit the following web site:
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A5392-2004May5.html>

Health Insurance Changes Ahead

During the recently completed collective bargaining process, the DMEA agreed to some significant changes in health insurance coverage. For many years the district had offered health insurance through both Wellmark and Coventry. For the 2004-05 school year the district will only offer plans provided by Wellmark.

For the 2004-05 school year, those district employees currently covered by Coventry will be required to shift coverage to a new health insurance product called Wellmark Blue Access. The Blue Access program offers benefits very similar to those currently offered by Coventry Comprehensive. Blue Access is an open access HMO type of product. It provides a prescription drug copay of \$5/\$15 compared to the \$5/\$25 currently being offered through Wellmark Alliance Select.

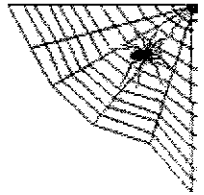
The Blue Access provider network provides coverage within Iowa that includes a far larger number of providers than did the Coventry network. Coverage is limited to the network.

Only emergency care is covered for services provided outside the network. There is, however, a feature, that many families with children in college will find attractive. Blue Access offers the Blue Card that allows out-of-state college students to be treated as though they were in the network while attending college.

Some members have expressed concern that those people on Coventry were not allowed to select which insurance program they wished to be covered by. We have reached an agreement with the district that allows a certain number of people who are currently on Coventry to switch to Alliance Select. The number of people who can select will be limited.

Those people who wish to apply for the Blue Pass, or who wish to change insurance from Alliance Select or Blue Access should contact the district's Risk Management office (242-8131) during the Open Enrollment period from May 19-June 4.

Caught in the Web



Summer is just around the corner and, except for a handful of people working an alternative calendar, it's time to think of doing some serious relaxing.

Educators Bed and Breakfast Network

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

Since 1986 this site has matched current and former educators who are willing to host visitors for as little as \$34 per night. If you want a cheap vacation, check this out.

Site 59

<http://www.site59.com>

This site specializes in last minute weekend get-a-ways. Trips can be purchased from 14 days to as little as three hours prior to departure. A three day trip to Miami, including air and hotel, costs only \$350.

Trip Advisor

<http://www.tripadvisor.com>

If you're planning a vacation and aren't sure if you believe the information you've been reading in magazines, then this site is for you. In addition to the normal reviews by travel writers, this site contains reviews written by the travelers themselves.

Bored.Com

<http://www.bored.com>

So you can't afford to get away this summer and your friends are busy? This is the perfect place to waste time on the computer. If you're really bored try the virtual bubble wrap.

In The Spotlight



Two DMEA members were recently recognized as Walmart teacher of the Year. Both teachers were selected by local Walmart store. They each received a plaque and a check for \$1000 goes to their building. Winning the award was:

- **Granville Williams**, a chemistry teacher at North High School, was honored on May 4th. Williams, who is retiring this year, was nominated by a former student.
- **Jackie Aguiniga**, a 2nd grade teacher at Willard Elementary, was

nominated when one of her current students wrote an essay nominating her.

The Rotary Club of Des Moines chooses an elementary, middle and high school Teacher of the Year each Spring. This year's winners received the awards on Thursday, May 20 at 12:00 noon at the Hotel Fort Des Moines. The winners were as follows.

Elementary - **Trudy Mayo**, Adams

Middle - **Holly Welch**, Goodrell

High - **Melinda Collins**, Van Meter

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Now Is the Time to Volunteer for DMEA Committees

Alan Young, president-elect of DMEA, recently names the new committee chairs for the 2004-2006 terms. The following people have agreed to serve as chairs:

Government Affairs-Deb Henry (Brody)

Instruction and Professional Development (IPD)-Kris Mesicek (Grant Writer)

Membership-Pat Papenheim (retired) and Leslie Martin (Garton)

Negotiations-Patty Trump (Monroe)

The Governmental Affairs and IPD Committees meet on a monthly basis. Membership and Negotiations Committees meet on different schedules. Getting involved with a committee is a great way to network and to learn more about the organization. It requires a minimal amount of time and allows for some flexibility in involvement. If you're interested please contact the DMEA office at 471-8040.

Did You Know?

- Iowa State University is offering six graduate level special education courses this summer. Four of the courses are available on the ICN. For more information and immediate registration, contact Phyllis Kendall at 515-294-7021 or pkendendall@iastate.edu.
- Slots remain open for the ISEA Summer Conference held August 3-5 on

the Buena Vista University Campus in Storm Lake. DMEA members pay a \$50 fee to attend the conference which is reimbursed if you attend. For more information call the DMEA office at 471-8040.

- Members who haven't registered this year's ISEA Access membership card are missing out on big savings and

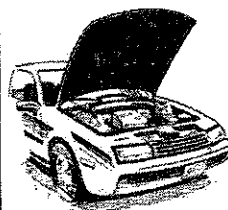
the chance to win a free getaway. To activate the card, just visit our new "For Members Only" area of the ISEA web site at www.isea.org/members/restricted and log in using the number embossed on your card. Each time you log in, you'll be entered to win one of the monthly prizes—a free three-day, two-night stay at one of 16 vacation resorts across the country.

Summer Dates to Remember



- June 15, 2004
DMPS School Board Meeting
6:00 p.m.
- August 3-5, 2004
ISEA Summer Conference
Storm Lake
- August 13, 2004
School Board Interviews
DMEA Office
- FR Workshop
August 18, 2004 (tentative)
Location to be determined

NEA Members Auto & Home Insurance Program



- special negotiated rates for DMEA members and their families
- unlimited towing and roadside assistance available
- 24 hour emergency claims
- special educator coverages
- convenient payment plans, including a summer skip option

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