

Des Moines Education Association

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Teacher Contracts

It's that time of year when there are many questions regarding contract renewals and resignations. Chapter 279, Code of Iowa governs the individual contracts of Iowa teachers. The following are some of the more important points to consider:

- ◆ **Contracts shall be in writing and shall state the number of contract days, the annual compensation to be paid, and any other matters mutually agreed upon.**
- ◆ **The president of the board must sign the contract before it is tendered.**
- ◆ **A teacher cannot be under contract with more than one school district at any time. The teacher must be released from his/her current contract prior to signing a contract with another district.**
- ◆ **A contract is automatically continued for equivalent period except as modified or terminated by mutual agreement of the board of directors and the teacher or as terminated in accordance with the provisions specified in Chapter 279.**
- ◆ **A contract shall not be offered to a teacher prior to March 15 of any year.**
- ◆ **A teacher shall not be required to return a contract to the board or to resign less than twenty-one (21) days after the contract has been offered.**
- ◆ **Beginning teachers must complete two distinct probationary periods: licensure probation and employment probation. The licensure probation is two (2) years in length and culminates with the teacher's Comprehensive Summative Evaluation. A teacher can be recommended for a third year of licensure probation. Employment probation consists of the first three (3) consecutive years of employment in the same school district. However, if a teacher has successfully completed a probationary period of employment for another school district located in Iowa, the probationary period in the current district is one year.**

Coming Up

April 11
DMPS School Board

April 13
DMEA Rep Assembly

April 18
DMPS School Board

April 20
DMEA Executive Board

April 27
DMEA Recognition Dinner

May 2
DMPS School Board

May 4
DMEA Executive Board Meeting

May 11
DMEA Rep Assembly

May 16
DMPS School Board

May 18
DMEA Executive Board Meeting

May 26
Names of DMEA Reps due in office

May 29
Memorial Day – No classes

President's Note

Some could argue the more things change, the more things stay the same. It is true that some fundamental things are still grinding us. The push of corporate-led, top-down, standardized “reform,” while imploding has not gone away. We are still shackled with the so-called “No Child Left Behind” legislation and the so-called “Teacher Quality Act.” We are still jumping through more “hoops” and set up for more “traps” that impede more than improve our ability to make a difference. And there are more efforts to privatize and control us coming, while the poverty that affects so many of the ones we educate is ignored. All the while, the district often compounds, instead of buffers us, from these effects, while not including us deeply in problem solving and decision-making.

But wait. Before you get too mired down in the depressing status quo, there are some changes that are occurring beneath your surface experience that are real. And DMEA is leading change efforts on the local, state, and national level. Change is happening via being able to meet earlier and more often to collaborate, think, challenge, research, plan, work, etc. with district administrators, school board members, legislators, community leaders, union leaders, and especially with more of our own new and emerging leaders. DMEA is finding, organizing, and utilizing bright, passionate, and thoughtful members to begin addressing deep, systemic problems in our district by positioning ourselves strategically in ways where we can be better heard. Are you one? What is your passion, concern, or expertise?

This year alone, we have greatly increased our influence on district committees. The DMPS Teacher Advisory Panel is just one fine example of a DMEA-led initiative that is trying to bring focus and perspective on teaching and learning back to the district through the 22 of our outstanding teachers. We are increasing our presence and influence on many other district committees on professional development, bell times, curriculum mapping, cultural competency, curricular textbook adoption, and more. While our success varies and is young, our influence is undeniably growing due to our increased capacity to represent and advocate. The push to find a new superintendent presents even more opportunities for influence and change into next year, as does a new district focus on relationships, relevance, personalization, and learning environments and cultures. Change is underway.

We are also reenergizing our own DMEA committees and growing strong emerging leaders. Internally, we are beginning to increase our efforts to support and empower reps and members at the building and district level. We responded to the new evaluations concerns with trainings and were there for early retirement through advocacy. We will have more initiatives in more areas in place for next year, especially targeted to help reps advocate and organize to improve building environments.

DMEA has led the national effort to influence NEA to take a stronger stance in next year's reauthorization of ESEA (so-called NCLB). At the state level,

"I am calling upon you to get active and join our efforts to LEAD THE CHANGE! We have untapped power, if we only organize and work together."

The BOEE recently announced that they have begun to send electronic reminders of imminent expiration of certain licenses. Go online to find general license information, download licensure forms, and order a duplicate license and much more from the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners.
www.state.ia.us\boee

we led the efforts to fight against schemes to privatize public education and work against local control. It was DMEA that led the fight at the state legislature and the ISEA Delegate Assembly to resist efforts to privatize public education via performance-based pay schemes. It was DMEA that led the effort to protect local control and input over quality teaching and learning decisions by fighting against state-mandated content standards. And it will be our association that will LEAD at the NEA Representative Assembly to fight against the national attack on local public schools, teachers, and students and to fight for change that values the input of those closest to the students in all matters relating to public education. And this fall, we will be promoting pro-public education policies and candidates for school board and legislative office.

So some things really are changing. But much is at stake and we can no longer afford to wait for others to do the work. So I am not saying change is happening to get you to be patient or to help you cope until change is realized. We are only victims with no control or power if we choose to be. I am calling upon you to get active and join our efforts to LEAD THE CHANGE! We have untapped power, if we only organize and work together. DMEA has opportunities for you to give and grow through our committees. We have new initiatives that have great promise that will make a difference. But we need your hands, heads, and hearts. Join us. Things will stay the same only if we don't change them. We are the solution, not the problem. Help DMEA lead the change for you, students, and public education. Contact me for more on how to join our efforts to LEAD THE CHANGE.

Alan

Loan Forgiveness Program Expanded

If you teach math, science, or special education, and if you have taught for five years in a Title I school, you may be eligible for up to \$17,500 in loan forgiveness.

The Taxpayer-Teacher Protection Act (P.L. 108-409) authorizes up to \$17,500 in loan forgiveness to eligible highly qualified math, science, and special education teachers. This dramatic increase of \$12,500 above the previous loan limits is meant to ease the shortage of teachers in key subject areas.

The increased amount of teacher loan forgiveness is available to new borrowers (teachers with no outstanding loan balances prior to Oct. 1, 1998, who borrow eligible loans prior to Oct. 1, 2005). The additional loan forgiveness will provide substantial relief for existing teachers and an incentive for prospective teachers to teach in subjects and schools that have difficulty hiring highly qualified candidates.

For detailed information on the program and to find out if you qualify for the loan forgiveness, please call the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid Customer Service hotline at 1-800-433-7327. More information on the loan forgiveness limits is posted on the Web at <http://www.ifap.ed.gov/dpccletters/GEN0414.html>.

For more information on the Department's Teacher-to-Teacher initiative, go to <http://www.ed.gov/teachers/how/tools/initiative/about/information.html>.

DMEA RECOGNITION DINNER

Help us honor our retirees, Friends of Education, Volunteer of the Year, and Ruth Foster Award Winners.

Make your reservation today by calling the DMEA office at 471-8040 or by contacting your association representative.



Thursday, April 27th
Cash Bar - 6:00pm
Dinner - 6:30pm
*Tickets \$27.00

Election Results

DMEA PRESIDENT	Alan Young
DMEA VICE-PRESIDENT	Melissa Spencer
DMEA ETHNIC MINORITY REPRESENTATIVE	Toni Austin
ISEA EXECUTIVE BOARD REPRESENTATIVE	Paul Mann
DMEA MIDDLE SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE	Andrew Rasmussen
DMEA DEPT. OF NURSES PRESIDENT	Diane Gladson
DMEA DEPT. OF NURSES VICE-PRESIDENT	Vickie Ryherd
DMEA DEPT. OF ASSOCIATES PRESIDENT	Rhonda Anderson
DMEA DEPT. OF ASSOCIATES VICE-PRESIDENT	Colleen Whitson
DMEA DEPT. OF SECRETARIES PRESIDENT	Nadine Burton
DMEA DEPT. OF SECRETARIES VICE-PRESIDENT	Gwen Kee

ISEA DELEGATES –

Toni Austin, Deb Coltrain, Deb Henry, Steve Loew, Paul Mann, Deb McMahon, Dave O'Connor, Karen Reese, Jon Richeson, Christine Schaefer, Linda Sibley, Rhonda Anderson, Meggan Boyle, Melissa Brinkman, Jennifer Gelner, Licia Hammer, Max Knauer, Lola Mann, Andrew Rasmussen, Melissa Spencer, Deb Waltz & Alan Young.

NEA DELEGATES –

Rhonda Anderson, Toni Austin, Alice Boyd, Meggan Boyle, Amanda Clark, Deb Coltrain, Theodora Jn Baptiste, Steve Loew, Paul Mann, Andrew Rasmussen, Christine Schaefer, Linda Sibley, Melissa Spencer, Georgia Tucker & Alan Young.

Why Become Involved in DMEA?

Although they may join for different reasons, Des Moines Education Association (DMEA) members and representatives all seem to agree on one thing.

There is safety in numbers.

That's certainly the consensus of DMEA Representative Steve Koch. Koch, who's been a member for 39 years, and has volunteered his time as an Association Representative for 35 of those years.

"I think it helps teachers to know that they belong to a large group that could possibly help them at any time," Koch said. "Things arise concerning pay, classroom problems, political clout, etc."

Joan Mickle, a 15-year member who is the secretary of the Associates, agreed. "The best benefit we have," she said, "is the protection that we have if anything should arise, from legal to building problems. There is power in unified numbers"

But that benefit comes with a price: involvement. Becoming an association member is only the first step to a successful DMEA relationship. It is in the commitment of the members donating their time that the strength of DMEA lies.

One of the easiest ways to become involved is as a DMEA Building Representative. Elections are held each spring, and members are encouraged to become candidates. Meetings take place on the second Thursday of each month, and attending representatives discuss policy and vote on issues that directly affect them.

Members can also run for elective positions on the Executive Board, with most positions requiring a two-year term. This allows those who wish to effectively chart organizational direction to become more 'hands on'.

DMEA Representatives and other members are also provided numerous opportunities throughout the year to attend professional development workshops and conferences, including the ISEA (state) Delegate Assembly in Ames, and the NEA (national) Representative Assembly. Both assemblies implement resolutions which chart the directions of the organizations as a whole.

Another way to become involved includes joining one of the many pro-active DMEA committees, including Membership, Governmental Affairs, Instruction and Professional Development or Public Relations. A difficult, yet popular, committee is Negotiations, on which members collectively bargain the master contract with the District.

According to Koch, collective bargaining is easily the best benefit of an association membership.

"The gains they have achieved for teachers over the years" have been substantial, he said.

-Timm Pilcher

The ISEA 2006 SUMMER CONFERENCE

August 1 – 3, 2006
Buena Vista University, Storm Lake

Activities – Training sessions, interest sessions, social activities, and keynote speakers, including Senator John Edwards

- ◆ Strengthening Local Associations
- ◆ Protecting Member Rights
- ◆ Building a Better Teaching and Learning Environment
- ◆ Building Support for Public Education
- ◆ SPARKS
- ◆ Re-licensure Credit Courses

Contact Alan Young if you are interested in attending the 2006 Summer Conference.

Iowa Department of Education

Check out <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/> for information on No Child Left Behind, school profiles, legislative updates, and newsletters. You will also find a directory with contact information, programs and services, laws, rules and legislation and other education news.

20th Annual ISEA “Design a Decal”

The deadline for entering student produced artwork for the 20th Annual ISEA “Design a Decal” competition is April 15th. For more information call Lora at 556-1692 or 1-800-378-6297.