



February, 2006

Volume 31, Issue 3

Coming Soon

- February 21
DMPS School Board Mtg
- March 2
DMEA Executive Board
- March 9
DMEA Rep Assembly
DMEA ELECTION
- March 10-12
ESP National Conference
- March 13
Delegate Orientation
- March 13-18
UniServ National Skills Session
- March 30-31
ISEA Delegate Assembly

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PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Some say, "all politics is local." That may be so, but "local" has grown larger during the last few years it seems. It is fair to say that much of what we deal with on a daily basis in schools and classrooms is directly related to sometimes well-intended, often misguided, yet always underfunded mandates imposed by those who know little about public education at the state and national levels. The lines are becoming quite blurred between the many national, state, and local initiatives that tear at our souls, wear us down, and lower the quality of public education for students.

But complaining, while justified, does little to stop this growing phenomenon. It **is** vital that we stop or change policies that are misguided from shackling us, but insufficient. It can be exhausting to clean up messes after they

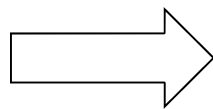
are made. You often can't truly clean up everything. When you are through, you are tired and, at best, all you have done is gotten back to where you were before the mess was made. What a waste of time, money, and energy for little gain. Our students deserve better. WE deserve better.

This "too little, too late" approach can become an entrenched organizational mindset. We often settle for "its not as bad as it could have been or as bad as someone else has it." But ***the absence of bad is not the same as the presence of good.*** To truly improve, we must seek the good, not just avoid the bad. DMEA is dedicated to working smarter, not just harder, by increasing our capacity and ability to influence proactively and constructively so we might realize the changes ***we*** seek. We can no longer passively hope

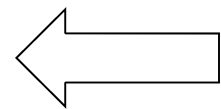
for others in power to "see the light" and make the changes we know would be best for students and public education. We can no longer afford to just "shut the classroom door and teach," no matter how nostalgic and appealing that may sound. Change, much of it detrimental, from the school board to the state legislature to Congress has invaded our classrooms. If we want future changes to be more to our liking, we must influence and construct them. We must be creators, not just critics and spectators, of change in public education.

In this spirit, DMEA took the lead at the recent Fall Conference of the National Council of Urban Education Associations (NCUEA) with a siren call to the NEA and its newly formed committee on

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STAY INFORMED



The legislature is in session. The following is a list of websites that 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.

ISEA

<http://www.isea.org>

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

MY IOWA SCHOOLS

<http://www.myiowaschools.org>

“We must be creators, not just critics and spectators, of change in public education.”

PRESIDENT’S NOTE (continued)

the 2007 reauthorization of ESEA (currently so-called NCLB) for a fundamental overhaul of the law and a restoration of public education to its purpose of educating and empowering individuals and citizens. (See included text.) Melissa Spencer (North) Andrew Rasmussen (Callanan), and myself, along with five others from across the nation, were pivotal in the creation and passing of this motion which urges NEA to **lead** in designing what kinds of public schools our children deserve.

These are not just words. This is not just a call to end “so-called” No Child Left Behind. Rather, this motion puts forth a bold, authentic, and holistic vision regarding what kind of public schools children deserve and need in our democratic society according to urban education professionals. It purposefully avoids assuming “NCLB’s” distortive and reductionistic terms, frame, and language. It

was passed with no dissent and is already influencing how NEA is responding on the national level.

So you see, DMEA is not just reacting or participating. We are leading . . . at the district, state, and national level. Why not join our effort to construct positive change. If not us, who? If not now, when? Help DMEA help you! By working for change at the building or district level, by participating in state legislative lobby efforts, gubernatorial election efforts, or by lobbying Congress, you can make a difference. By serving on one of our active DMEA committees, you can help us create the kind of teaching, learning, and working conditions that students and public education professionals deserve.

Alan

NBI #9 (Text of New Business Item adopted overwhelmingly at the NCUEA Fall Conference)

The NCUEA shall inform and urge NEA leadership and the NEA committee addressing ESEA to ensure that the 2007 reauthorization of ESEA replaces the current fundamentally flawed version of the ESEA with a comprehensive overhaul that

- Promotes public education as a civil and human right and conceives of education as the foundation of a free, democratic, and just society
 - Truly supports all children and their holistic learning, growth, and development as individuals and critical, creative, and constructive citizens with the qualities and capacities to function productively in our democratic society
 - Values the critical roles that public education professionals, parents, and schools play in developing our nation’s most valuable resource, its citizens
 - Recognizes the unique and diverse backgrounds, needs, strengths, interests, and experiences of each student and focuses on developing the potential of all students and not just addressing their deficits
 - Supports and empowers with a non-punitive system of funding that is ample and equitable and assures that public education professionals have the resources necessary to create rich, meaningful, and empowering learning experiences in safe, caring, and enriching environments that all students need and deserve
- Acknowledges, considers, and seriously addresses the many opportunity gaps and contributing factors beyond and within schools, especially those associated with poverty, which affect and impede student learning and the ability of public education professionals to create the quality learning experiences and environments vital for student growth
 - Respects and values the importance of local control, community ownership, and the input of those closest to the student, the parents and public education professionals, in matters of critical education problem-solving and decision-making.
 - Assesses students in multiple, authentic, real-world ways that promote and foster, not impede, meaningful learning, growth, and development
 - Fully funds the law to ensure its successful implementation

RATIONALE FOR MOTION: The current version of the ESEA is fundamentally flawed, cannot be fixed, and must be replaced with a version that truly values the role of public education in the life of students and this nation.

MAKER: Alan Young **ASSOCIATION:** Des Moines Education Association

SECONDER: Kim Ursetta

ASSOCIATION: Denver Classroom Teachers Association



MEMBER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

DMEA member Howard Kulzer of Capitol View elementary recently earned National Board Certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

He became one of only 489 Iowa educators to earn the distinction since it began in 1993. Howard said that the three year process “was a very rewarding experience...that would not have been possible for me...without the support I received from other classroom teachers, administrators and support staff from the Des Moines School District.” Howard, who has taught in the Des Moines district for 21 years stated that “...my certification reflects well on the job all teachers in the district do to meet the growing demands placed on us at the state and national levels.” In particular he acknowledged the role played by Capitol View’s Literacy Leader Nancy Ward (who is also nationally certified) whose guidance and encouragement were critical when the going was the toughest. How-

ard’s main motivation for achieving national certification was the desire to “move up in the teaching profession without having to leave the classroom. The process provided me the opportunity to reflect and self-examine my teaching and to provide evidence that what I do in the classroom met the standards established by the NBPTS.”

The process, which teachers are allowed a maximum of three years to complete was rigorous. “The six assessment center exercises that you complete at Sylvan Learning Center were the most challenging to me because you could not prepare for them. You were given a scenario such as establishing a four week lesson on a topic of your choice then you would have to write out the lesson and have it meet the five core standards. This process took approximately three hours and you only had thirty minutes to complete each assignment.”

Howard believes that the certification process carries not only intrinsic , but extrinsic rewards

as well. “I see this as an opportunity for us to validate what we do as teachers to the rest of the world—okay, except for David Yepsen.”

Congratulations, Howard. Your accomplishments reflect well upon yourself, your profession and your Association.

If you are interested in pursuing National Board Certification, the state of Iowa will pay for half of the \$2,300 registration fee. Once an Iowa teacher receives certification, they receive \$2,500 a year for 10 years and the other half of their registration is reimbursed. ISEA also offers a support network for National Board Certification candidates that includes course work designed to explore the certification process. For information about these classes visit the ISEA Web site at www.isea.org and look under “What’s New?”

Dave O’Connor/DMEA Secretary/Public Relations Committee Chair

“I see this as an opportunity for us to validate what we do as teachers to the rest of the world—okay, except for David Yepsen.”

ISEA/NEA DELEGATE ELECTION

In the approaching DMEA elections we will be electing 20 people to attend ISEA Delegate Assembly and 15 to attend NEA Representative Assembly. Why? What does it matter?

Delegate Assembly is the major policy making body of ISEA. The Assembly will es-

tablish a budget, Legislative Agenda, and policies to govern ISEA for the next year. Our involvement gives members a chance to directly influence the direction our state organization takes in the next year.

Representative Assembly, which is touted as the largest

democratic meeting in the world, works much the same way at the national level. Delegates from across the country come together to map the path of our national organization. Our delegates will also have a chance to elect some of the leaders of the NEA

Our elected ISEA and NEA

Representatives give us a chance to make sure DMEA has a role in decision making at the state and national level. The ISEA Delegate Assembly will be held at the Hilton Coliseum in Ames, Iowa March 30th and 31st.

Vote wisely for our next group of ISEA/NEA delegates.

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Legislative Reception Draws a Crowd

The DMEA/Polk Suburban Legislative Reception drew a crowd in January. Around 100 people attended this event. It was a chance for members to meet area legislators and to share their feelings on a variety of issues.

Legislators attending the reception included Senator Paul McKinley, Senator Dick Dearden, Representative Mark Davitt, Representative Bruce Hunter, Senator Daryl Beall and Representative Janet Petersen. Opportunity was given to each legislator to make a brief statement after which they visited with DMEA members.

Plan to Attend!



HELP US HONOR
OUR RETIREES!

DMEA RECOGNITION DINNER

Thursday, April 27, 2006

HOTEL FORT DES MOINES - GRAND BALLROOM

Cash Bar 6:00p.m. Dinner 6:30p.m.

LETTER FROM A MEMBER...

Greetings –

I am Jan Carey, Office Manager at Greenwood School since May of 1992. Prior to Greenwood, I was the secretary at Meredith Middle School. For those who have been around awhile, I was recruited to join DMEA by two of the best, Art Long and Merlin Pappenheim (sadly to say they are both now deceased).

I was also an FR for Meredith and am proud to say that I wrote the initial proposal to add child care expenses to the Tax Saver benefit that was presented at an FR meeting.

I work with a wonderful group of incredibly dedicated teachers who, as we all know, are grossly underpaid for duties that are ex-

pected of them. They are to be teacher, mother, social worker, problem solver, etc., etc., and the list goes on and on. My hat is off to all of you. My children went through DMPS and I have met some awesome teachers who have gone way beyond the call of duty.

I do not know how your office manager treats you and deals with your needs, but I know that Greenwood is my second home and we are a family concerned about each other. And, I think I do my job very well.

I recently attended a very poorly represented meeting of my DMEA group. (Diana Richeson attended that meeting to help answer some questions. (*Thank you, Diana.* She suggested that any of us submit a letter to The Tempo talking

about our position.) I am sort of doing that, but my main issue is lack of representation.

I am asking for your help. Our group is in dire need of representation. If your office manager or any clerical member in your office (gee, what would it be like to have extra help in my building?) are not DMEA members, please work on that! (Or, find out why they are not interested in becoming a member and what we can do to change that.) Our group needs representation, and immediately! "There is force in numbers."

Thank you for your time and consideration. Recruit someone!

Jan Carey/Office Manager-
Greenwood Elementary
Proud DMEA member

MORE GOOD NEWS

DMEA member Michael Walag, choral director at Lincoln High School, served as guest director of South Central Iowa Choral Festival held at the Simons Estes Auditorium in Centerville, Iowa on November 1, 2005. He directed the mass choir comprised of 350 students from seven schools in the conference.

CONGRATULATIONS MIKE!