

Des Moines Education Association

206 Center Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Alan Young
President
ayoung@dmea.org

Diana Richeson
Executive Director
dricheson@isea.org

Kathleen Crouse
Office Manager
kcrouse@isea.org

(515)471-8040
(515)471-8043 (fax)

IN THIS ISSUE

[IPD/HR: The Core of Our Profession \(p. 1\)](#)

[Member Empowerment \(p. 2\)](#)

[Coming Up – Page 2 Side Bar](#)

[President's Note \(p. 3\)](#)

[Governmental Affairs News\(p.5\)](#)

[DMEA Dept. of Assoc. \(p. 5\)](#)

[Election 2006: Why It Matters \(p. 6\)](#)

[ISEA Summer Conference Report \(p. 7\)](#)

[Des Moines' New Superintendent \(p. 7\)](#)

[Save with Your Access Membership Card \(p. 8\)](#)

[Pay a Little Now, Get a Lot Later \(p. 8\)](#)

[NEA Benefits Pay \(p.9\)](#)

IPD/HR: The Core of Our Profession

Welcome back to a new school year!! The IPD/HR committee will be working hard again for you this year on instruction, professional development, and human relations issues! Here are some updates on what our committee is working on for the 2006-2007 school year:

- DMEA Website
 - Our DMEA website has been updated, but we are working on making it even more user-friendly by adding features such as a blog, a password-protected members-only area, and a DMEA calendar.
- Evaluation Workshops
 - These were a big hit last year, and we are planning to continue these for the upcoming school year. Another group of teachers will be experiencing the new evaluation system for the first time, and we will be here to guide you through it! Stay tuned for dates, times, and locations!
- DMPS/DMEA Teacher Advisory Panel (TAP)
 - Last year, for the first time, the TAP met with district administrators to discuss the most pressing issues facing teachers in the district and proactive ideas to make DMPS the best district in the state and the nation! Our IPD/HR committee helps focus the discussion on the most important topics, such as creating a "lens" to help the district focus its programs & initiatives.
- Professional Development
 - We have representatives from our committee that serve on the district's Professional Development Advisory Committee (PDAC), and we plan to solicit DMEA members for their ideas on, and concerns with, professional development.
- DMEA Professional Library and Book Study Groups
 - We're in the exploration stage of creating a DMEA professional library and offering book study groups for those who are interested in learning something new or learning more about current district initiatives. Stay tuned!

As always, please feel free to contact any member of our committee about any IPD/HR issue or idea. We're also looking for committee members! We usually meet about once a month at the DMEA office downtown. Belonging to this committee presents a unique opportunity to work with both teachers and district administrators on the fundamental issues of our profession.

Have a great school year!!

IPD/HR committee members: Meggan Boyle, Linda Lewis, Andrew Rasmussen, Melissa Spencer (chair), Georgia Tucker, and Alan Young

Coming Up

August 17-18
First-Year Teachers
Report Per Contract

August 21 - 23
All Teachers Report

August 24
First Day of School

August 28
Deadline for Postmark
on Voter Registration
Forms

August 31
DMEA Rep Assembly

September 1
Last Day to Register for
Elections

September 4
Labor Day – No classes

September 5
DMPS School Board

September 6
Membership Enrollment
Deadline

September 7
DMEA Executive Board
Meeting

September 12
School Board Election

September 14
DMEA Rep Assembly

September 19
DMPS School Board

September 22
Staff Development – No
student classes

Member Empowerment!

With the beginning of the school year almost here, the membership committee has been busy attending the new hire orientations provided by the district. New hire orientations are a wonderful way to meet the new teachers and associates who are entering the Des Moines Public Schools. Many of our new hires are just beginning their careers, but there are also quite a few experienced teachers bringing their skills and expertise to the district. Whether or not the new hires come to Des Moines with experience, beginning a new job can easily be an overwhelming process for many people. Joining DMEA can offer support to these people at this important time. The eagerness and excitement brought to the district with these new people is a powerful resource for our schools and association.

At all of the orientations the new hires received a folder with information about DMEA, ISEA, and NEA, along with a membership form. We have already collected membership forms from some of the new hires, but we will need DMEA representatives to continue the recruiting process within their buildings. Representatives are the strongest link between our association and potential members; A link that will be vital to the success of this year's recruitment, since many new hires are split between two buildings and/or were hired to work with very specific (often isolated) programs within buildings. Because of these circumstances, some of the new hires may not have an automatic connection to his/her building. Therefore, representatives are encouraged to look to other members in their buildings to help build connections and relationships with their new colleagues. DMEA representatives play an irreplaceable role in the association's growth, but they cannot be expected to reach all potential members on their own. The number one reason still given by potential members as to why they have not joined is that they were never asked. The goal of all members needs to be to ask every potential member to become part of the association that believes in creating the best environments and situations for all teachers and students – DMEA!

The goal of the membership committee is to empower all DMEA members. Growth in membership is a major aspect of empowerment, but it is not the only reason the committee exists. We are currently working on finding ways to further the visibility of DMEA through clothing and promotional items, as well as finding ways to thank and honor our members. We hope to have some ideas finalized and in place by late fall. As always, we welcome and value member input, so please continue to share your concerns, thoughts, and ideas.

Finally, it is important that we no longer think of people who have not joined DMEA as non-members but as **potential members**. We have the ability to grow in numbers and strength if we all take the time to establish a relationship with every potential member.

Please feel free to contact the membership committee to help with member empowerment in your buildings. We are looking forward to a new and exciting year and wish everyone the best of luck at this busy time!

Committee members: Rhonda Anderson, Meggan Boyle (co-chair), Deborah Coltrain, Paul Mann, Lesley Martin (co-chair), Jon Richeson, Melissa Spencer, and Alan Young



**“Keep in mind
always the
present you
are
constructing.
It should be
the future you
want.”**

Alice Walker

President’s Note

I want to take this opportunity to welcome you back from what was hopefully a restful and rejuvenating summer. I know that some of you have already been back with students for a bit now and that most of us work much throughout the summer on things that will benefit our incoming students or that will make us better at what we do. Still, summer break often serves as a critical time for reflection, creativity, and rejuvenation.

The beginning of school is a time of great anticipation and expectation, a time of change and hope. It is a time for new beginnings. This school year is no different except that we may have more reasons to be hopeful in terms of our ability to influence and reestablish our voice regarding what is best for our students, ourselves, and public education.

This has not just happened. We have helped to create it. DMEA’s *proactive, constructive, and systemic engagement* and approach to **leading change** is working. It has improved our ability to resist changes that would harm and lead changes that will help. We are a presence on the local, state, and national level, going to the source of problems and decisions so that we make a difference where it counts most - at the classroom and school level. We are beginning to turn the tide on those who seek to “improve” schools via threats and bribes and by reducing learning and public education to that which is measured poorly on flawed standardized tests. This work is critical in terms of helping our union secure the kind of working conditions, professional culture, and compensation that education professionals deserve and students need to prepare for tomorrow.

While transition takes time and the destination is not yet assured, there are hopeful signs and real changes afoot that should embolden you to keep pouring your very lives into making significant differences in the lives of the students you touch. Locally, with DMEA’s influence, we are starting the year with a new superintendent, Dr. Nancy Sebring. She brings new energy, ideas, and priorities that signal a change in direction and emphasis away from the fixation on testing ourselves to improvement. She appears to be very much in agreement with our focus on educating our youth in more real-world, authentic ways to be critical, creative, and caring human beings who will thrive in our democratic society and a diverse, changing 21st century world. She brings a willingness to work with us constructively and collegially as professionals.

While it may not be fair to expect drastic change overnight, Dr. Sebring has already been working constructively with us and has recognized and welcomed our voice and leadership. She appears to have both the vision and courage to **not** be *driven* by the current testing/accountability frenzy. Still, change won’t happen without our involvement and leadership. Instead of being the last to follow down the “student achievement test score obsessed” path, we can help be the first to lead the nation out of it.

In addition to the local changes that yield hope, nationally the wheels continue to come off of the so-called “No Child Left Behind” fiasco. It was the DMEA again who took the lead nationally at this summer’s NEA Representative Assembly in Orlando by helping our national organization have a stronger strategy, conceptual frame, and message than our previous “Fix and Fund” approach with yielded the impression that there were only a few “fixable” flaws in the law. We pushed the NEA, first through our efforts at the National Council of Urban Education Association’s pre-conference, to adopt an “overhaul” approach to next year’s reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA – of which the current version is commonly referred to as “No Child Left Behind”)

**We are not
creating a nation
of test-takers, but
thoughtful,
caring,
empowered
human beings and
citizens.**

National decisions about education are now local. They affect our students, our classes, our schools, and us daily. If we want our new opportunity on the local level to work, we cannot ignore how changes in the federal law might affect this.

Finally, on the state level we have an historic opportunity to put pro-public education legislators in office at the statehouse and to elect a pro-public education governor. This will take your help and its importance cannot be overstated. If our work is to not be thwarted, it will take the presence of substantial increases of state funding and support without “hoops” to create the kinds of schools and education systems that students and education professionals deserve. We cannot afford to be politically inactive and miss this opportunity to change things at the state capitol. Our chance to restore public education and secure our future is related to our efforts on the state level.

We are at a turning point . . . a watershed moment in history. The winds of change are blowing, but are not as strong as they could be. You can help. Collectively, uniting as education professionals, we can do so much more than we can individually. You have a critical part to play. Speak up, speak out, speak often, but mostly speak together by initiating dialogue for constructive change in your buildings and communities. Reducing the amount of time you spend in your classes on distractive and shallow test prep curricula alone, even in the face of pressure by administrators, is a first step but will not suffice. The absence of bad is not the presence of good. Instead, create rich, meaningful, challenging, relevant, empowering activities and experiences for your students. Help foster caring relationships and democratic learning classroom and school environments in which students learn. Help make our schools laboratories for life. We are not creating a nation of test-takers, but thoughtful, caring, empowered human beings and citizens.

Doing this alone is hard. But you are not alone. Unite with your DMEA colleagues in your buildings to lead the change that you seek. Call us for help on how to unify and organize your building to lead on these professional matters. Help us help you create the schools that all deserve. For ours is more than just helping you cope with and adapt to a present that is harmful to students and education professionals. Ours is to empower you to work together to create the future that our students, our profession, our community, and our nation needs and deserves.

Hoping you will join us to create a great new beginning to this school year.

Alan

DMEA Refocuses NEA’s Approach to NCLB

The following text was approved and inserted into the NEA’s ESEA Reauthorization Strategies document at this summer’s NEA Representative Assembly:

NEA will focus its conceptual framework for ESEA reauthorization to emphasize that our children are America’s future. This framework will advance the association’s great public school’s mission and message, acknowledging that great public schools are a basic right for every child and will empower every child to become a critical, creative, and caring human being who thrives in a democratic society, and a diverse, changing world.

Governmental Affairs News

Your Governmental Affairs committee met Monday with the three candidates for school board. After interviewing all three, the committee chose to recommend Teree Caldwell-Johnson. We felt she was very knowledgeable, and we were impressed by how well thought out her answers were.

Thanks to those members of the committee who gave their time for this process: Christine Maxwell, Dave O'Connor, Karen Person, Andrew Rasmussen, and Alan Young.

There are two open seats on the board this fall. Be sure to make your voice heard and VOTE!

Deb Henry
GA chair

To All ESP - Educational Support Professionals

DMEA Department of Associates

Welcome back! I hope your summer went as you had planned and you are relaxed and ready to return to our students and fellow staff members! Enjoy your first days! If you find any concerns or difficult issues, please feel free to call me at 242-7724 (East High) or 266-1952 (home).

I will be working on a newsletter, if you have any information to share with your co-workers, please feel free to e-mail it to me at rhonda.anderson@dmeps.k12.ia.us.

Your board members are Rhonda Anderson (President), Colleen Whitson (Vice President), Joan Mickle (Secretary), Anne Backstrom (Treasurer). We need more members to serve on our board and on DMEA committees. Consider this!!

Have a great start to the new 2006-07 school year.

As always yours,
Rhonda E. Anderson
Department of Associates President



REGISTER

VOLUNTEER

VOTE

**TOGETHER WE
CAN HOLD
THEM
ACCOUNTABLE**

Election 2006: Why It Matters

Your career in education, your classroom instruction, and your students are all affected by political decisions. Allowable growth determines the amount of "new money" increase available to districts for salaries and benefit increases.

Note the following:

- Allowable growth and education budget – set by the state legislature with a new Governor leading the way with a proposed budget in January.
- IPERS benefits and contribution rates – set by the state legislature.
- Evaluations and teaching standards are Iowa law - set by the state legislature.
- Resources that take from public education, tuition tax credits/vouchers for private education – set by the state legislature.
- The mandates of NCLB – set by the federal legislature.

The list of affected areas goes on with class sizes, student contact days, and licensing requirements.

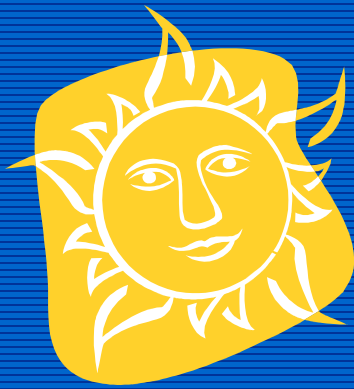
This is why DMEA, ISEA, and NEA are committed to supporting candidates who make public education a top priority and vote to support our students, schools, and our members. For Iowa Governor, Iowa Legislature, and for Congress, your ISEA-PAC Committee representatives have interviewed candidates on key education-related issues to determine those who truly support us. DMEA has two Republican representatives and two Democrat representatives that are part of the ISEA-PAC Committee. You can view ISEA-PAC recommended candidates from the ISEA website, www.isea.org. From there, go to the "Legislative Action Center," and then to "Elections and Candidates" to view the recommended candidates.

What can you do?

VOLUNTEER. Join the ISEA Grass Roots Education Action Team. Go to www.isea.org then click on "Election 2006 - Why it matters," and from there click on "Volunteer." DMEA will also be sending out lists of scheduled events/fundraisers for recommended candidates.

VOTE on November 7 for ISEA-PAC recommended candidates.

CONTRIBUTE TO ISEA-PAC. Your dues money does not go towards the election of any candidates. Only ISEA-PAC donations will go to a candidate if they have been interviewed by the ISEA-PAC Committee and found to be in agreement with most of what we feel is best for education in our state. A mere \$15 annual contribution is less than 60 cents per pay period.



ISEA Summer Conference Report

This year set a record attendance for the ISEA Summer Conference held at Buena Vista College, August 1st – 3rd, 2006. In all, there were 380 ISEA members, from around the state, who attended the event. Six DMEA representatives participated in the conference: Alan Young (DMEA President), Paul Mann (ISEA Executive Board), Rhonda Anderson (ISEA Executive Board), Andrew Rasmussen (ISEA Committee/Building a Better Teaching and Learning Environment), Jon Richeson (ISEA Committee/Membership Rights), Georgia Tucker (SPARKS participant), and Deb Coltrain (DMEA Rep/McCombs).

Along with current committee members and association leaders, the conference is geared toward members who are new to association work and are interested in becoming active in their associations. Member rights, understanding your contract, bargaining, and health insurance are just a few of the subject areas covered in the courses offered.

Senator John Edwards was the featured speaker at Tuesday night's dinner. Secretary of State Chet Culver and State Senator Co-Leader Mike Gronstal also delivered addresses at the conference. Throughout the conference, the theme of discussion was the need for members to get involved in the 2006 election and support the candidates who support public education.

Next year, consider attending the conference as a DMEA representative.

Des Moines' New Superintendent

DMEA welcomes the district's new Superintendent, Dr. Nancy Sebring. Dr. Sebring was selected from a number of highly qualified candidates. She began her position on July 1, 2006.

Dr. Sebring was formerly the Deputy Superintendent of the Douglas County School District in Colorado. A native of Iowa, she began her career in education here, first as a teacher in Madrid and Nevada, then as a Curriculum Director in Webster City, and later as Human Resources Coordinator in Humboldt. In Colorado, she also held positions of middle school principal, assistant high school principal, and Executive Director of Curriculum and Assessment. Dr. Sebring graduated from Iowa State University and received her M.A., Ed. S, and Ed. D from Drake University.



MEMBERSHIP NEWS FLASH

Save With Your ISEA Membership Access Card

This fall, do not forget to check out the potential savings available with your ISEA membership card. As an ISEA member, your card saves you up to 50 percent on purchases from hotel rooms to restaurants and from vacation packages to retail purchases. Caseys, Best Western, target.com, and Eddie Bauer are just a few of the many merchants offering discounts to our members.

To activate your card or, to view discounts available, go to www.isea.org/members/restricted and click on the picture of the Access card. Once there, enter your member ID number and follow the prompts



ISEA/NEA
Retired
Are you a
member?
"I AM!"

Pay a Little Now, Get a Lot Later!

ISEA active members can invest just a little each year now in order to maintain their Association membership and many benefits of belonging when they retire.

Under the "I AM" program, current ISEA members pay only \$46.30 a year for ten years to become "prepaid subscribers" to an NEA/ISEA Pre-retired Lifetime Retired membership. That means that after retirement, there will be no additional cost to main your membership and benefits, including our insurance and discount programs.

If a member retires or leaves education before the ten-year period is up, he or she can simply pay the remaining balance in order to maintain membership.

Members can join at any time, but it pays to do so right away. That's because the cost increases to \$57.50 a year for ten years on September 1.

NEA BENEFITS PAY

GET YOUR FREE MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION

In appreciation of your membership, NEA Member Benefits is offering you a FREE subscription from the NEA Magazine Service. *Family Digest*, *U.S. News*, and *Parent and Child* are just a few of the included titles. A subscription postcard was mailed to each member. You may also order online and receive a second FREE subscription:

www.neamag.com/member.

Take advantage of other services and programs available through NEA Member Benefits:

- \$1 million in liability insurance for on-the-job protection.
- For personal matters, you may seek the advice of legal counsel through the NEA Attorney Referral programs and receive two free 30-minute consultations with hourly rates thereafter, discounted up to 30 percent.
- Discounted auto and homeowners insurance through A+ Auto and Horace Mann.
- Special incentives through Wells Fargo for those people who wish to purchase or refinance a home.
- Special rates on money market accounts and CDs.
- Special rates on life, health, accidental death and disability insurance, plus NEA now offers long term care insurance.
- Special rates on car rentals through Alamo and Hertz.
- Discounts on the purchases and monthly service plans of cell phones through Sprint, Verizon, Cingular, Nextel and T-Mobile.
- NEA credit cards with special lower interest rates.
- Discounted rates on magazine subscriptions.
- In conjunction with the new NEA bookstore, discounts and special promotions at Barnes & Noble online:
www.neamb.com/bn

To learn more about these services, visit the NEA member Benefits web site at <http://www.neamb.com/index.jsp>.

