



THE DES MOINES
EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Tempo

VOLUME 17, NUMBER 6

FEBRUARY 1993

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Monday, February 1
GA/LA Committee
DMEA Office, 4:00p.m.

Tuesday, February 2
Associates Executive Board
Associate Representatives
DMEA Office, 4:00p.m.

Thursday, February 4
Executive Board
DMEA Office, 4:00p.m.

Monday, February 8
IPD Committee
DMEA Office, 4:00p.m.

Tuesday, February 9
Associates' Valentine Party
North High Library, 4:00p.m.

Thursday, February 11
Faculty Representatives
North Cafeteria, 4:00p.m.

Monday, February 15
Human Relations Comm.
DMEA Office, 4:00p.m.

Wednesday, February 17
ISEA Lobby Day
DMEA nomination papers due,
DMEA Office, 4:30p.m.

Thursday, February 18
Executive Board
DMEA Office, 4:00 p.m.

Thursday, February 25
Dept. of Nurses
DMEA Office, 4:00 p.m.

HEALTH BENEFITS PROTECT EVERYONE

Sometimes we have heard individuals bemoan the unfairness of our health insurance providing for full family coverage. The argument has been made that single people or those whose families are covered by another policy are not receiving the same benefit that a family taking advantage of District insurance receives. Recently, DMEA Negotiations Cadre Chairperson, Patty Trump, discussed the Association's rationale in bargaining this benefit.

"There was an era when working people only received a salary. Insurance was purchased by the individual, based on their own medical history. The danger which organized labor recognized was that the risk was too great for individuals to bear alone. They banded together and demanded equal protection.

"We not only have equal, but quite excellent protection. We don't have to worry about financial disaster if we are ill or our families are ill. We can each go to work in the morning, knowing that whatever luck, or lack of luck, we have, we will be *protected*.

"Instead of focusing on the fairness or the unfairness of the District payment of premiums, I hope that our family is so healthy that we never have to have a dime in benefits. I want to know that whatever happens, I can support myself. Equal salary for equal work is not the same as equal protection. We will never have equal benefits because people are not actually equally healthy.

"The key word in this discussion is 'protection'. Payment of health insurance premiums by the District is not a benefit such as salary, but a 'protection'."

Your DMEA Executive Director's husband, Lenny, understands this concept better than most. For several years he was a single teacher in Burlington. During that time he very seldom needed to take advantage of the protection of health insurance by claiming benefits. He ran three times a week, almost never even had a cold, didn't miss school, and generally was an active, healthy individual. One might make the argument that, during that time, he did not receive the same "benefit" as some of his colleagues with families. However, he ~~always~~ had that *protection*. Then the impossible, or at least, improbable, happened. Suddenly, he had to have brain surgery. Fortunately, he was protected from financial catastrophe. There are no guarantees in this life for health, so we must be protected from that great risk of the improbable event that might make one unable to support oneself.

Also on the subject of health insurance, in response to questions that have been asked, we found that your HMO covers nicotine patches if prescribed by a physician.

NEA TAX GUIDES

The DMEA Office has a few copies of the NEA Federal Income Tax Guide for Educational Employees. This publication includes tips for paying less this year, learning the latest IRS rules and changes, and making the most of exemptions, deductions, and business expenses. If you would like to check out a copy of the guide, please call the DMEA Office.



MARY D. LANGE

From the Director...

Bargaining: DMEA has presented our initial proposal to the District. In doing so, I read the following opening statement:

The Des Moines Education Association is proud to represent the teachers, secretaries and associates who work with

and for the Des Moines Public Schools. Not only does this District provide quality education to a diverse community, but it is also responsive to its employees and their representative association. In preparing for this presentation, we have appreciated the District's providing relevant information. This cooperation is further evidence of the recognition given to the Association's commitment to the mission and goals of the District. However, the Association is cognizant of the District's duty in representing not only its mission for students, but also its responsibility to other constituent groups in maintaining fiscal accountability. It is the latter duty that the District must now perform in approaching the bargaining table. Our awareness of these objectives and our commitment to the District does not preclude our providing representation that employees require to secure the most positive work environment possible. Although our ultimate goal of delivery of education according to the District's mission is identical, our perspectives on the allocation of funding are from vastly different viewpoints.

To state that education is primarily a people business may seem obvious. However, when we are addressing the dividing of the District funding pie, it behooves us to restate that indeed, education is primarily a people business. Therefore, it is natural and desirable that the largest percentage of that pie be allocated to salaries and benefits for employees. The District has another concern in balancing its obligations to its mission and its constituencies: to attract and retain the most competent staff possible. To that end, the Des Moines Education Association proposes the following changes for the 1993-94 Comprehensive Agreement between the Des Moines Independent Community School District and the Des Moines Education Association. *We then summarized the proposal. However, because we have provided copies of the entire proposal to your faculty representatives, we will not include all of that text.*

We have proposed that we include non-discrimination and equal employment opportunity language in the definition article; increase long term disability coverage from 60% to 70% and provide it for all regular employees; include Section 125 language in the Insurance Article and exclude underwriting for eligible employees regardless of the length of employment prior to participation in the health insurance plan; set the lane 1 base salary at \$20,400; provide an additional \$2,000 for teachers with earned doctorates; increase by 1% each lane's percentage for those who have reached the maximum; provide for equalization of coaching assistants' compensation in all academic and athletic positions; add early retirement benefits for both secretaries and associates; increase secretaries' salary schedule by \$52.00 biweekly; increase the extra compensation for additional education for secretaries to \$10.00; provide maximum starting salary limits at the third step for secretaries; increase daily salary of associates by \$3.85.

The District will present its initial position on January 27. After that, our bargaining sessions will be closed. Representatives on your bargaining teams will provide you with updates as they become available. We appreciate the support and the input we have received from members thus far. If you have specific concerns, please contact me or someone on the bargaining cadres. Do keep in mind that the dates for completion of the process were altered drastically in last year's legislature. We will file impasse on January 31, then schedule mediation sessions subsequently. If mediation does not provide a settlement, an arbitration hearing must be held by April 15. We will advise you if that should become a necessity.

Snow Day: The recent cancellation of school because of icy roads created some problems and triggered some concerns. Because it was not a "District-designated holiday", secretaries who were unable to come to work will need to use emergency or special leave. Teachers and associates will make up the day on June 9.

We have received calls questioning why it was not a District-designated holiday when the U.S. Post Office did not attempt deliveries until late in the day because the Postmaster did not want to "endanger employees". In addition, there were many teachers who reported to school before the announcement was made. Therefore, many of them worked for about a half a day by the time they drove to school, heard the announcement, waited for the "rush hour" traffic to clear, and drove home. Although we realize that the ice did not start until after 6:30 a.m., the forecast had been quite convincing that a storm was imminent. The Association is very willing to work with the District to assist in its efforts to provide an appropriate process for responding to similar situations.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

DMEA members have a wonderful opportunity to become part of the solution to concerns of our association. Nominations are due at 4:30 p.m., February 17 at the DMEA Office. Elections will be held on March 8 and 9 in the buildings with FR's bringing ballots and results to the Faculty Representative Assembly on March 11. The following positions will be open:

DMEA Treasurer (two year term)

DMEA Secretary (two year term)

DMEA High School Representative (elected by members at high schools) (two year term)

One DMEA Elementary Representative (elected by members at elementary schools) (two year term)

Ten Delegates to ISEA Delegate Assembly, April 1-2, 1993 (two year term)

Twelve Delegates to NEA Representative Assembly June 30-July 5, 1993 (one year term)

Please note the following, from the DMEA Articles of Incorporation: a. Eligibility: 1) Any member of the DMEA may become a candidate for a position on Executive Board during or after his/her second consecutive year of membership in the DMEA ...2) A candidate for high ...or elementary school representative must be enrolled at the appropriate level. *All candidates shall complete a written statement of candidacy.* Any member of DMEA may become a candidate for NEA and/or ISEA Delegate.



KRIS MESICEK

From the President...

Last spring, the Association requested that the District explore the feasibility of a late start/early dismissal at least twice per month for the purpose of improving teaching and learning and supporting the school improvement/transformation process.

This fall, the secondary schools demonstrated an interest in implementing early dismissal for staff planning and in-service twice per semester. Elementary schools were not given such an option. In view of this inequity, and in light of the many positive things that have occurred at the secondary level as a result of the time provided through early dismissal, the Association requested that elementary staffs also be given this opportunity for professional development and collaborative planning.

In December, the District responded with the following proposal:

Elementary schools would start 10 minutes earlier and end 10 minutes later. In exchange, there would be a 2 hour early dismissal once a month.

To accommodate the buses, middle and high schools would start 10 minutes earlier and continue with the early dismissal twice a semester.

Keep in mind, this proposal is not the Association's idea! Nor does it bear any resemblance to the recommendations of the K-12 Instructional Day Design Committee issued in April of 1991. It also carries an unknown price tag for transportation. This is strictly a "top down" proposal made at a time when the District is supposed to be implementing SBM/SDM with the philosophy (and practice) that decisions be made closest to the students by those directly affected by the decision.

This proposal to lengthen the school day comes at a time when staff members are already at the breaking point when it comes to time and energy. High school teachers are bearing the burden of heavier student loads as a result of the seven period day. An increasingly diverse student population demands more and more time and energy from all teachers as we modify instruction and learn new strategies for the benefit of students. But rather than being able to focus on our classroom responsibilities, we find the time before and after school consumed with duties, paperwork, and meetings.

Once again it is a case of being expected to do more with less. And once again the words of Ernest Boyer come to mind: *"Educational Reform cannot be borne on the backs of teachers."*

Lengthening the school day is being billed as school improvement when in reality it is only tinkering. In view of the number of interruptions due to students being pulled out of class, tardies, discipline problems, administrative interruptions, the intercom, and on and on, we do not make the best use of the time we already have for instruction. The dollars spent on buses could be invested more wisely in reducing class size, purchasing technology, and addressing other immediate needs that would have a far greater impact on improving instruction.

The North High Cafeteria was a lively place on January 14th as the Faculty Representatives debated the District's proposal. Actually, "debate" is not an accurate description for it implies supporting arguments being made on both sides of an issue. There were no supporting arguments. I appreciate the time and effort representatives took to share the information with members and gather your input in the buildings.

The options were to 1) accept the proposal as presented, 2) offer modifications, or 3) reject the proposal. Your FRs were very eloquent in expressing the anger and frustration felt across the District. After all of the discussion, there can be no doubt in any one's mind that we stand united in opposition to this proposal with the passage of the following motion: *"To cast a unanimous ballot to reject the proposed lengthening of the Instructional Day."*

To the Lincoln High School Staff:

***The Des Moines Education Association
wishes to recognize your courage,
outstanding professionalism
and dedication to students.***

SCHOLARSHIPS

DMEA George Fischer Scholarship applications are available in all high school pupil service coordinators' offices. ISEA Scholarship applications are available from your FR or call our office. This scholarship is intended for members' children who are already enrolled in a college education program.

HEALTH SERVICES RULE

The Iowa Department of Education, in response to public comment, has changed the "health services" rule effective March 10, 1993. This rule allows teachers and other educational employees to refuse to perform intrusive medical procedures on students. The Department's summary states, "special health services and intrusive nonemergency medical services are routine insertion health procedures and do not include first aid and medication administration. Employees may refuse to perform special health services unless licensed to do so or have been hired to provide the service. When qualified designated personnel provide special services, consent is assumed unless they present a signed written refusal."

In a related issue, in a discussion with Mardelle Dallager, Supervisor of Health Services for DMPS, we learned that the Medical Emergency Plan for students does not apply to adult employees. There had been a concern expressed that the rule had been interpreted as applicable in some part to adult employees. However, Mardelle assures us that an employee may use the expertise of the school nurse to assess the situation, but then the employee may request additional assistance if desired.

HOUSE FILE 22

The Iowa House of Representatives voted on January 20, 1993 to set allowable growth for schools at 1.6% in House File 22. The ISEA position was opposed and our member, Art Ollie, attempted to amend to raise the figure to 2.3%. The final vote and the Ollie amendment were identical, with our legislators voting as follows:

Supported ISEA position:	Opposed ISEA position:
Cataldo (D)	Grundberg (R)
Connors (D)	
Fallon (D)	
Baker (D)	
Holveck (D)	

Your chance to convey your concerns to our legislators is every day by phone or letter and *ISEA Lobby Days, February 17 and March 3.*

The DMEA TEMPO is published monthly during the school year by the Des Moines Education Association, an affiliate of the Iowa State Education Association and the National Education Association.

DECATEGORIZATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Iowa Department of Education recently issued a memo requesting response to the Department's proposals to transform Special Education. DMEA President Kris Mesicek worked with the DMEA Executive Board to draft a response. This was then taken to the Faculty Representative Assembly for their reactions and additions. The following is a summary of the position taken by your representatives. This response was forwarded to the Department and Kris and Mary will be taking your concerns to a meeting with the Special Education Bureau chief at Salisbury House on February 1.

Potential benefits •Flexibility in identification •Child not labeled •Classroom space

Potential undesirable effects •Disrupting the regular classroom environment •Educational appropriateness for all students not supported by research •Reduction of services for special education students •Possible increase in drop-out rate of special students •Lack of self-esteem among special students due to being at bottom •Potential increase in suicide rate of special students •Teachers not trained and not supported for serving students with a broad range of disabilities •Extremes of abilities and needs in the regular classroom •"Regular" students' home/family/community foundations not providing support now •Gifted students not able to continue having needs met •Loss of support services •Loss of weighted funding and corresponding services •Lack of time for planning and collaboration for regular education teachers, special education teachers, and support staff •Lack of appropriate services •Lack of continuity of services for students as they move through the educational system and on to adult programs •Students would still be labeled as in need of special education •Liability issues •PL 942 requires individualized and small group instruction •Loss of special education teaching positions •Assurances necessary to ensure that appropriate services are provided for students •Class sizes of 20 or fewer students •Increase funding without depleting other education funding for:

- teacher training and support
- additional teacher associates
- curriculum materials and classroom resources
- support staff

•Medical services provided by school nurses in all buildings •Guidelines for the staffing process and development of IEPs will be followed •All teachers involved in serving the student will be informed of all pertinent information regarding the student •Physical accessibility to school buildings and funding for any needed modifications •Physical safety for all students •Removing the labels of MD, LD, BD, etc. and replacing them with a generic label of special education has not resolved the issue of labeling students

Recommendations for refinement •Greater involvement of regular classroom teachers •Sufficient funding to ensure students have the services and support •Create an environment in the regular classroom that will promote the success of special education students when they are mainstreamed into the classroom. •Class sizes of twenty •Taking into account the weighting of the special education student •Additional teacher associates •Appropriate curriculum materials

Comments •What implications does this have for teacher certification? •What impact will this have on pre-service training for teachers? •What assurance is there that this is not a reduction in funding and services for special education students at the expense of both regular education and special education students?

We will certainly convey the message that our members are very, very concerned about the effects of this proposal.