



THE DES MOINES
EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Tempo

VOLUME 17, NUMBER 7

MARCH 1993

MARCH CALENDAR

Monday, March 1
District In-Service

Wednesday, March 3
ISEA Lobby Day

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

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

Tuesday, March 9
DMEA Elections

Thursday, March 11
Faculty Representatives
North Cafeteria, 4:00p.m.
DMEA Ballots Counted

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

Tuesday, March 16
Secretaries' Problem Solving
Team, Howe, 3:30p.m.

Wednesday, March 17
Executive Board
DMEA Office, 4:00 p.m.

March 22-26
Spring Break

Monday, March 29
ISEA Delegate Orientation
DMEA Office, 4:00p.m.

OUTSTANDING MEMBERSHIP

DMEA membership counts have been reported with exciting news received from eleven areas. The best news of all comes from **Jackson** and **Stowe** which each have **100%** membership! Close behind with **92%** is **TAG**, followed closely at **91.4%** by **Brooks** and at **90.6%** by **Hillis**. The next level of recognition goes to **Willard** at **88%**, **Alternative North** at **87.9%**, **McKee** and **McCombs** at **87.8%**, **Monroe** at **87%**, and **Douglas** at **86.1%**. Congratulations to all of you for your fine effort and commitment to the profession and the Association!



PHASE III

Cuts in Phase III funds last year necessitated the readjustment of the program in the fall. You remember that DMEA members were fortunate in that there had been a carry-over which helped to maintain some of the previously agreed to programs. Now we are facing additional cuts in Phase III without the cushion of carry-over funds. Responding to this difficult situation, the Comprehensive School Transformation Task Force has developed an initial draft of a plan.

This has been a long and painful process. The Task Force has been struggling to develop something which will be on target for the limited budget and combine it with some form of school transformation. Teacher members of the Task Force are Rhonda Beakler, Willard; Jeff Bock, East High; Mary Channell, (DMEA IPD Chairperson) Findley; Shirley Daniels, Willard; Karen Howard, (DMEA Executive Board) Brody; Garrett Nyman, (DMEA Negotiations Cadre) Roosevelt; Pat Papenheim, (DMEA Executive Board) Hiatt; Linda Schlak, Lincoln; and Katie Starostka, Studebaker. Dave Wilkinson, DMEA member who is Phase III coordinator, Kris Mesicek and Mary Lange also serve on the Task Force. We will continue to solicit input from members and represent your interests in this process. Please contact members of the Task Force with your questions and concerns.

LOBBYIST REGISTRATION

Based on information received from ISEA counsel, Jim Smith, we believe that it is not necessary for DMEA members to register as lobbyist in order to participate in ISEA Lobby Day or other Association lobbying efforts.

CORRECTION...

In the last issue of the TEMPO, we stated that nicotine patches were covered by HMO Iowa. According to Jean Birlingmair of that company, our policy does **not** include this.



MARY D. LANGE

From the Director...

Letter to TV 8

At the direction of the Faculty Representative Assembly, in response to the recent feature on "Abusive Teachers" on channel 8, we have sent the following letter to the News Editor there.

The Des Moines Education Association is disappointed with the one-sided coverage of your recent feature story on "Abusive Teachers". Even the title of the series sends a message to your viewing audience that assumes these teachers were guilty of abusing students. One of the individuals featured in the series was Virginia Boys, a long-term member in good standing of the Des Moines Education Association. Neither Miss Boys nor the Association were contacted in a timely manner to respond to the issues which were presented by parents. The coverage was premature because the process had not yet been completed. Until the process is complete, both the Association and the Des Moines Public Schools Administration must remain silent.

The next step in this process will be determined by the Board of Educational Examiners. That board will work to resolve this matter. At the time of its consideration by this board, the issue will be before the appropriate forum at the proper time and the complete record will become public. When the process is complete, we believe that Miss Boys will be exonerated. We trust that you will continue to diligently follow this story to its conclusion and at that time give equal attention to Miss Boys' vindication.

Special Education Funding

The Iowa House of Representatives Special Education Committee has been meeting the last three weeks on Tuesday and Friday mornings to listen to evidence that the various constituency groups present. Because this issue is of paramount importance to our district and our association, I have attempted to attend every one of the meetings. (At this writing, I have not missed any.)

At the first meeting the Department of Education and the Governor each presented their proposed legislation and the rationale for it.

Department of Education, Pre-file Bill

The Department's bill would establish a special education base cost for each school district for special education children currently weighted .68 and 1.35. This method is referred to as "percent weightedness" and is

calculated by taking the sum of the district's weights for .68 and 1.35 special education students reported on the December, 1992 count, divided by the district's September 1992 basic enrollment. Funding would then be determined based upon the percent weightedness calculated for each district times the district's actual enrollment times the district's cost per pupil. The section also establishes a "maximum" and "intermediate" percent weightedness for the state. **Districts whose percent weightedness is above 10.205% would be frozen** at the amount calculated for 1992-93. The Department also recommends adjusting these weights to .74 and 1.48.

The Governor's Proposal

The Governor's proposal calls for each district to receive **6.83% of its regular program** district cost for Special Education. In 1993-94 he proposes to mask the impact by taking money away from the schools gaining dollars and redistributing them to districts losing dollars. In addition he adds \$1.2 million to the schools losing funds. Thesecond year of implementation, however, each school would go up to the 6.835% figure. Eliminating the transition language and funds, the new formula would give Des Moines **\$1,972,385 less** than the current law, or a **loss of 20.70%**.

AEA Directors' Response/Position

The AEA Director's responded to these two proposals by stating that, **in order to provide the necessary services to students, the current formula must stay in place.** They see this as in support of the public policy mandates of the federal statutes and the state entitlements. They at the AEA serve as the gatekeepers of the programs, through testing, screening, and working with parents and school personnel. The process assures consistency through identification equalization and they also provide consistency through programs.

The AEA Directors believe that special education funding should be student driven, weighted depending on needs, provide equitable access regardless of location, include allowable growth, based on sound identification process subject to review, and provide for periodic review and adjustments.

They stated that there are no data that support the Governor's contention that special education students have been over-identified. They commended the regular classroom teachers for their willingness to provide and support having special needs students in the least restrictive environments.

Des Moines legislator, **Betty Grundberg**, is chairing the committee. **Please let her know your concerns.**

From the President...



KRIS MESICEK

Earlier this year, the School Board of the Des Moines Public Schools took a stand against Open Enrollment. Based on the action of the Faculty Representatives in February, we are supportive of this stand because of the social, financial, and educational issues involved in Open Enrollment. The following is a summary of the statement I presented at the February 16th School Board meeting:

Historically, the role of public education has been to create the foundation for a democratic society. James Garfield noted:

"Next in importance to freedom and justice is popular education, without which neither freedom or justice can be permanently maintained."

As we stand at the brink of the Twenty First Century, the role of public education also includes equipping our children with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable them to be successful adults. As adults, we know that our children will live in a future that will bring them in contact with a very diverse global population. To that end, education must deal with ignorance, not only in terms of eradicating illiteracy, but also in terms of eradicating prejudice and intolerance. Just as education must teach academic skills, it must also develop tolerance, understanding, and an appreciation of those who may appear to be different from us. The current Open Enrollment legislation undermines this responsibility.

The Open Enrollment law perpetuates a number of misconceptions about society and public education. I have been told by the proponents of Open Enrollment that this provides the opportunity for inner-city students to enroll in other, "better" schools outside of Des Moines. The statistics would indicate that this is not happening. I have also been told that Open Enrollment upholds the right of "Choice." There are 5 comprehensive high schools in this district along with Central Campus and two alternative high schools. There are 10 middle schools in this district and 3 self-contained special schools. There are 42 elementary schools, several of which offer a specialized focus: the traditional approach, emphasis on science and computer technology, and the fine arts.

In Des Moines, parents and students have a choice.

Many parents cite "convenience" as the reason for requesting Open Enrollment. Convenience at who's expense? When a student leaves the Des Moines Public Schools, the state funding and local property tax dollars follow, draining desperately needed resources from our schools. The potential exists for the Des Moines Public Schools to be left with disproportionate numbers of disadvantaged, disabled, and difficult-to-educate students without the financial resources needed to maintain the necessary programs.

In his book, *Savage Inequalities*, Jonathan Kozol documents what has taken place in schools across this country in cities such as New York, East St. Louis, San Antonio, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. in comparison to schools in the more affluent suburbs. Kozol observes:

"the rich get a richer quality of education while the children

of the poor get less - less real education, less hope, and less of our concern."

Again I have to ask, "Open Enrollment for convenience at who's expense?"

I have also been told that Open Enrollment is a way to improve quality. I would invite anyone to consider:

- the number of National Merit Scholar Finalists who come from our high schools each year.
- the number of Des Moines graduates who go on each year to college or other post-secondary training
- the number of students who are staying in school as reflected in our reduced dropout rate.
- the excited faces of our students who, no matter what their ethnic background, or their level of readiness for school, or their academic ability, each day see a whole new world open up to them through learning in the Des Moines Public Schools.

There is indeed quality in the Des Moines Public Schools.

There are those who would say, "That's all well and good for other people's children, but not for my child." I applaud their concern for their child's education. We

President's message continued...

need that concern in education. But as educators, our concern must be for **all** children, for there is no resource more precious to this state and this society than our children. We can not afford to short change a single child in equipping them with the education needed to lead a productive life. For if we do, we will all pay the price later on in terms of economic costs and wasted talent.

We can not for the sake of convenience, or intolerance, or choice allow any system that would create the conditions of savage inequalities.



MEMBER BENEFITS DOES NOT COST!

NEA Member Benefits does not cost. There are absolutely no dues dollars used to support these programs. If every single program were discontinued tomorrow - no more no-cost DUES-TAB coverage, no more life insurance programs, no more magazine discounts, and no more credit cards - your dues wouldn't go down one single penny! Participating in these money-saving programs has never cost anything, and never will.

You can learn all about this tremendous opportunity of membership in the Association at the March 1 In-Service. Look for the DMEA booth. For further information, call **1-800-637-4636**.

Another service of NEA Member Benefits is there series of publications, "Consumer Guides". The latest in the series is *Guide to Buying a Personal Computer*. If you are interested in having a copy for yourself, please call the DMEA Office by March 15 and we will place an order for bulk quantities if there is sufficient interest.



**MEMBERSHIP IN DMEA
PAYS IN MANY WAYS**

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.

**MARCH IS
NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**
*Discover A New World:
Women's History*

Section 125 Plans...

Recently, an *NEA Members Benefits Financial Awareness Bulletin* listed some reminders of rules of Section 125 Plans which cannot be overlooked.

The Use-It-Or-Lose-It Rule Applies

This rule requires careful planning by the employee. At the end of the plan year, if anything is left in the employee's benefit account, it is forfeited. If an employee fails to incur enough eligible expenses during the plan year, the employee may not receive a return of any excess funds, either as taxable or nontaxable benefits. The IRS allows the plan to refund a uniform per-capita amount of premiums if total outlays by the plan are less than total employee premiums in any year.

The Employer Risk-of-Loss Rule

Even if the claims for medical reimbursement exceed what the employee has contributed through payroll reduction at any point in the plan year, the employer is responsible for paying the entire medical reimbursement applicable to a full year of employee contributions. Payment must be made in full at the time the claim is submitted. The employer must pay the entire amount and has no recourse against the employee for amounts not deducted should the employee terminate employment the day after the claim was incurred.

The Lock-In Rule Applies

Unless the employee suffers a "life changing event", such as the gain or loss of a dependent, divorce or loss of employment by the employee or spouse, cafeteria plan flexible spending account salary reductions are locked in for the entire plan year.

NOMINATIONS DUE APRIL 15

March 31, Faculty Representatives will be sent the nomination forms for DMEA's Friend of Education and Volunteer of the Year for 1993 awards. Be thinking about the candidates you would like to nominate and talk with the members in your building.

We earnestly solicit nominations and appreciate your concern and cooperation. Forms will be due April 15.