

APRIL CALENDAR

April 4

GA/LA Committee
DMEA Office 4:00 p.m.

April 5

Executive Board
DMEA Office 4:00 p.m.

April 7-8

ISEA Delegate Assembly
Hilton Coliseum, Ames

April 11

IPD/HR Committees
DMEA Office 4:00 p.m.

April 12

Dept. of Associates
Ex. Board & AR's
DMEA Office 4:00 p.m.

April 14

Faculty Representatives
North Cafeteria 4:00 p.m.

April 19

Pay Equity Project Meeting
Associates & Secretaries
North Cafeteria 4:00 p.m.

April 21

Executive Board
DMEA Office 4:00 p.m.

April 28

Dept. of Nurses
DMEA Office 4:00 p.m.

National Teacher Day

May 3, 1994

**Plan your building
activities NOW!**

**Ideas and clip-art are available
from the DMEA office.**

MULTI-CULTURAL PIN WINNERS

The Booth at the March 7 In-Service was a big hit!! Human Relations Committee members were present handing out multi-cultural book lists and math scores based on gender. A drawing was held every hour for 20 Multi-Cultural Pins. The following is a list of the winners in the order in which they were drawn:

Ann Marie Barclay - Jackson Elementary
Karen Munch - Edmunds Elementary
Elaine Schlafle - Harding Middle School
Carmella Higgins - Willard Elementary
Sherry Wilkinson - Roosevelt High School
Betty Arndt - Greenwood Elementary
Patricia Clark - Park Avenue Elementary
Deb Rochon - North High School
Carol Corrigan - Callanan Middle School
Rachelle Coomes - Stowe Elementary
Jeanne Mark - Jackson and Howe Elementary
Ruth Carnahan - North High School
Kathleen Murphy - King Elementary
Dick Craven - Weeks Middle School
Tina Olson - Hillis Elementary
Veola Perry - Perkins Elementary
Deslonde Alexander - Windsor Elementary
Stephanie Floyd - Hiatt Middle School
Teri Bishop - Smouse School

***Congratulations to all
the winners!***

RECOGNITION DINNER

The Annual Recognition Dinner will be held May 19, 1994 at the Des Moines Golf and Country Club, Social Hour at 5:30 p.m. and Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

The Association will be honoring Retirees and recipients of the Friend of Education Award, Volunteer of the Year Award, Ruth Foster Award and George Fisher Scholarship winners. Come join the festivities!

From the Executive Director...

John Vint

I have been officially on the job since March 1st but also spent some time here between December and February. That is enough time to for some early impressions and here they are.

The DMEA is a strong organization. They exists to serve members and to organize for collective action. It has a rich history of doing both and the expectations of members for the future are appropriately high.

As importantly, the DMEA is a strong organization because members participate and members control the organization. The organization runs on democratic principles with the Faculty Representative structure and their monthly meetings serving as the cornerstone of that democracy. Member concerns are heard and DMEA positions on major issues impacting employees are determined. I've been most impressed with the vigorous debate shown at F/R meetings and the desire of individual F/R's to represent their constituents.

Your volunteers throughout the organization are dedicated and work very hard to serve members. As with most organizations, the DMEA does not have enough of them.

I do not yet have a full understanding of the 1800 Grand machinery but each day I inch closer to that understanding. Mostly I need to find out who can make decisions.

I have been attending your school board meetings for the past month. Those are interesting affairs. It will be awhile before I begin to understand the political alignments that exists in your school board. So for now I am just watching and listening.

It's also my early impression that Des Moines employees are not paid well enough for what they do. That's true of all educational employees through the country. You perform difficult jobs during difficult times and you need to be compensated for them. We all need to work hard on that.

I'm impressed with the office operation that you have at the DMEA. I am pleased that you own the building free and clear and particularly pleased with the support personnel that you have here at the DMEA. Carol and Bev are the people who respond positively to your requests and help serve the organization in a general way. They have been in the process of training me to serve as your Executive Director and that training will go on for some additional months.

I also want to express my appreciation to Kris Mesicek for her decision to run for another term as the DMEA President. I know serving a third term is difficult but had she not decided to run, we would have had a new president and a new Executive Director. That was a little frightening. But Kris knows this organization, knows the issues, and provides quality leadership to the organization. She serves as valuable counsel to me.

I am also pleased that most of our Executive Board members have decided to retain their respective seats on the DMEA Executive Board for the same purpose of providing some continuity in leadership as we move into the coming association year.

The school district has a number of initiatives that I am trying to catch up on. Vision 2005, Technology in the Classroom, Neighborhood Schools and Site Based Management Through Shared Decision Making are just a few that come to mind immediately. No doubt all of these initiatives have and will have their value in future years. The DMEA must insure that there is a staff component to each initiative to allow proper staff input and subsequent staff development for those who will have to make sure the initiatives work.

Finally, let me just say that I'm happy to be here. Please call me when you have questions, suggestions or complaints. My job is to assist the DMEA in achieving the goals established through your democratic process.



From the President...

Kris Mesicek

"The major obstacle to the widespread development and execution of excellent lessons in America is the fact that American teachers are overworked. . . . We

must ask how we can institute reforms that will make it possible for American teachers to practice their profession under conditions more favorable for their own professional development and for the education of children."

This is the conclusion drawn by Harold Stevenson and James Stigler who reported the results of their research of the Asian educational systems in The Learning Gap: Why Our Schools Are Failing and What We Can Learn From Japanese and Chinese Education. Stigler and Stevenson point out that there are weaknesses in the Japanese and Chinese schools, but there is much that we can learn from them regarding the professional role of teachers.

For instance, teachers in Beijing teach no more than three hours per day. In Japan, teachers spend only 60% of their time instructing students. This results in teachers having more opportunities to learn and plan with colleagues. This professional environment facilitates Asian teachers in refining their teaching skills through interaction with other teachers. Time is provided during the school day for teachers to meet in school-based and district-wide self-directed study groups. Teachers new to the profession, learn many of their pedagogical skills during their first year of teaching through this support system.

This is in stark contrast to how American schools are structured and how the role of teachers is perceived. Mary Anne Raywid notes in *Educational Leadership*, September 1993:

"Ultimately, a change must occur in both public and professional conceptions about teacher productivity. It has long been assumed that teachers' productive time consists of contact time spent with students. Time spent otherwise has been seen as either a bureaucratic necessity (such as faculty meetings), an individual professional obligation (as in lesson planning), or a job amenity or benefit (such as a prep period). What must change is the idea that for a teacher, it is only in the classroom with students that 'the rubber meets the road.'...The time necessary to examine, reflect on, and

redesign programs is not auxiliary to teaching responsibilities — nor is it 'released time.' It is absolutely central to such responsibilities, and essential to making school succeed."

We have made some progress in the Des Moines Public Schools in providing time for teachers to work together. Schools may request an early dismissal two times per semester and many staffs have taken advantage of this option. Adams Elementary has also demonstrated how instructional time can be rearranged to allow for early dismissal one day per week. Yet this time does not even begin to offset the increased workload of teachers brought about by additions to the curriculum, increasing numbers of students with special needs, integrating technology into the classroom, the seven period day at the high school, school based management through shared decision making, and the list goes on and on.

Given the tasks involved in bringing about positive change, this time is critical. The research is very clear in identifying time to plan and collaborate as a vital element of staff involvement in successful school restructuring. Schools cannot become self-renewing learning communities without a structure that supports the development and collaborative efforts of professionals. This structure must include time.

Raywid reaffirms what is already taking place in our district as she writes, *"Often teachers are willing to contribute some of their own time—but quite reasonably are unwilling to shoulder the full cost of what, after all, is a system responsibility—and what research confirms must be a continuing one. Even if teachers are willing to assume the full costs of the new requirements, their efforts would probably prove insufficient to the task. Ten minutes before the kids arrive, and conversational snatches during the day, are only enough for news flashes and crisis—meeting—not for analyzing and planning and creating."*

The attitude that teachers are only productive when they are in front of students or that teachers must be in administratively-structured activity during non-instructional time is clearly evident in the Des Moines Public Schools. Consider how the time before and after school the days in August before students return, and Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday are utilized. It is time for the district to recognize that the current workload placed on staff members is counter-productive to quality education.

PAC CONTRIBUTIONS

We were pleased to learn that members of the DMEA contributed to the ISEA PAC fund a total of \$14,470 during the membership drive last fall. That is the highest dollar amount of any of the 19 uniserv units in the State. On a per member basis, a few of the other uniserv units contributed slightly more than did Des Moines. But even on a per member basis, the DMEA ranked 7th among all of the 19 uniserv units.

That record of contributions to ISEA PAC is a proud one and one that is apparently consistent with your performance over the past several years.

It is obvious that the members of the DMEA recognize the need for members to fully participate in the political process so that we elect public officials that are sympathetic to the needs of the educational community and will act on their words. Again, congratulations for the high level of participation in ISEA PAC.

ISEA PAC CENTRAL COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

You can be a part of the action. All decisions on political candidate campaign recommendations are made by Association members of the the ISEA PAC Central Committee. Elections for the Democratic and Republican DMEA seats on the Central Committee will be held at the April 14th Faculty Representative Assembly meeting. You need not be an FR to run for PAC Central Committee.

ISEA PAC to MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS in the GUBERNATORIAL PRIMARIES

ISEA PAC Central Committee will make recommendations in both the Democratic and Republican primary races for governor. Interviews will be held with Bonnie Campbell (D), Bill Reichart (D), Fred Grandy (R), and Governor Terry Branstad. Based on the interviews, the PAC Central Committee will take action at the April 23 meeting. This will be an important meeting for those Central Committee members elected at the April FR meeting.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING UPDATE

At this point, we are still bargaining with the School District over the terms and conditions of employment for 1994-95. Bargaining for the teachers, the secretaries and the associates are all proceeding on the same timeline. We have had several meetings with the District to discuss issues and exchange positions. Your Faculty Rep has been given periodic updates as to where we are with the major issues. Members should feel free to talk to F/R's to get additional details.

We are ready now to move to the first step of the impasse machinery that is provided in Iowa Law. During the week of April 11, we will meet with the District with the assistance of a mediator whose responsibility will be to try to move the parties closer together on their positions on the major issues and perhaps even end mediation with contract settlement.

The DMEA bargaining teams remain optimistic about our prospects. The School District is in very good financial condition and the case to be made for increased compensation for all employees in the Des Moines School District is strong. We will maintain that optimism until a settlement is reached or until we have to go to the next step of the impasse procedure which is final and binding arbitration.

Our goal and the goal of all bargaining teams is to achieve a voluntary settlement with the District before having to resort to that final step. Maintain contact with your F/R for additional details as we move through the process.

OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT

The office space in the lower level of the Des Moines Education Association building is available for rent as of June 1. This office consists of 800 square feet of space, private entrance, and parking space. Utilities and cleaning services are provided.

Contact the DMEA office at 277-6271 for additional information and a private showing.