

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

February 1
Dept. of Associates
Exec. Board only
DMEA Office 4:00 p.m.

February 3
Executive Board
DMEA Office 4:00 p.m.

February 7
GA/LA Committee
DMEA Office 4:00 p.m.

February 8
Dept. of Associates
Valentine's Party
North Library 4:00 p.m.

February 10
Faculty Representatives
North High 4:00 p.m.

February 14
IPD Committee
DMEA Office 4:00 p.m.

February 16
LOBBY DAY
Nomination Papers
due in the DMEA
Office by 4:30 p.m.

February 17
Executive Board
DMEA Office 4:00 p.m.

February 17
Human Relations
Committee
DMEA Office 4:00 p.m.

DMEA HIRES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: JOHN VINT

At its December 16th meeting, the Executive Board of the Des Moines Education voted with unanimous consent to offer the position of Executive Director to John Vint. The vacancy occurred as the result of Executive Board action in November to unanimously accept Executive Director Mary Lange's resignation due to health reasons. She anticipates a full recovery and we wish Mary well in her future endeavors.

John brings twenty-five years of Association staff experience to the DMEA position. Many members know John from his longtime service as Associate Executive Director for Field Services for the Iowa State Education Association and his previous experience as an ISEA lobbyist. Since November, John has been assisting DMEA as an interim Director and will assume the Executive Director's position on a full-time basis March 1.

John is also familiar with the Des Moines Schools. His wife, Corrine, is a Gifted and Talented consultant teacher for the district and their son is a graduate of the Des Moines Public Schools.

Members of the Executive Board carefully deliberated the course of action to be taken in filling the Executive Director position. One option was to hire an interim Director through the rest of the year while conducting an active employment search. Consideration was given to the caliber of candidates that had applied during the last search and the expense involved in carrying out such a search. Another option was presented to the Board when John Vint expressed his interest in the job. The Board came to the conclusion that even a nation-wide search would not result in any candidates who could surpass John's qualifications, talents, and experience. Hiring John at this point would also ensure continuity in the collective bargaining process and the delivery of services to members.

Since November, John has been actively involved with the Teachers, Associates, and Secretaries Negotiations cadres as they prepare for bargaining. John will serve as Chief Negotiator for all three groups during the upcoming collective bargaining process. Other Association members who have already had an opportunity to work with John have been impressed with his skill and expertise.

The DMEA welcomes John as our new Executive Director!

From the Executive Director...

John Vint

For years a small group has attempted to amend the Iowa Constitution in an effort to limit taxes and spending. The amendment would impact the State of Iowa and all local units of government, including school districts.

The small group has been led by David Stanley, a Muscatine businessman and attorney, and a former state legislator. He has cleverly labeled the proposal as the Taxpayers Right Amendment.

That label masks the true intent and impact of the proposal. A new analysis of the proposed amendment is now available. It is sponsored by the Coalition to Protect Iowa's Constitution which includes the ISEA. The work was done by the Levin & Driscoll consulting firm which specializes in state tax policy. A copy is available at the DMEA office. Here are just a few of the conclusions:

- Spending for elementary and secondary schools would have been reduced by \$330 million (23%) had the amendment been in place during the past ten years.
- The Stanley tax limitation proposal represents a radical solution to a problem that does not exist. Between 1965 and 1991, taxes in Iowa fell from 11.6% of personal income to 11.4% of personal income. Per capita state and local taxes in Iowa are \$131 less than the national average. Iowa ranks 23rd among the states in state and local tax burden.
- It takes four to six years to amend Iowa's Constitution. It must be approved in two successive legislative sessions and then approved by the voters. If an error is made, it takes the same four to six years to correct it.
- The proposed amendment would limit government's flexibility to deal with emergencies or to take advantage of opportunities.

The analysis shows that taxes are not out of control in Iowa. Watch carefully for the re-emergence of the Stanley Amendment during this Legislative session. If it comes up, get involved in helping to stop it.

We know it is difficult enough to get the resources needed to educate elementary and secondary students. We do not need additional roadblocks in the form of Constitutional amendments.

State Legislature to Set Allowable Growth

What do school budgets, class size, negotiations, and your pay check all have in common? The State Legislature. This month, the Legislature will be determining the amount of funding available to schools for the 1994-95 school year. This is the money that your Teachers, Associates, and Secretaries negotiations cadres will be bargaining for at the table. This is the funding needed to hire additional teachers to reduce class size and provide the resources needed to for a quality education.

Governor Branstad has recommended an increase of 2.5% in allowable growth for school budgets. The Senate is considering 3%. Even this is not enough to address the critical needs of education. We need your help!

**Call your Senator or Representative today.
Join the Governmental Affairs Committee at
the State Capitol on Lobby Days.**

Iowa Senate.....	281-3371
Iowa House.....	281-3221
ISEA Hotline.....	1-800-330-4732

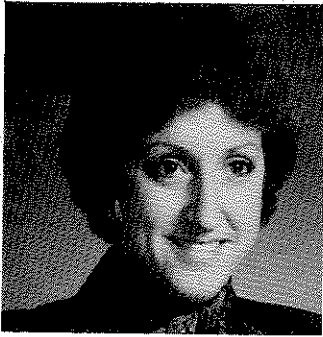
ISEA LOBBY DAYS

February 16 March 2
March 23

NEA TAX GUIDES

April 15th will be here before you know it! As a special service to our members, a number of NEA Tax Guides are available for your use in preparation of your federal income tax return. The TAX Guide is filled with information tailored to meet the needs of teachers and educational support employees.

To check out the NEA Tax Guide for one week, call the DMEA Office at 277-6271.



KRIS MESICEK

From the President...

Where are we with the Committee on Creating Positive Teaching and Learning Environments? In the last issue of the *Tempo*, I shared with you the letter that I had written to Dr. Wegenke regarding

the frustration felt as a result of the process used to appoint the members of this committee. Dr. Wegenke listened to our concerns. I then met with Dr. Armstrong. As a result of that meeting, the committee has been expanded to include key Association members who have been actively involved in exploring this issue since last year.

The following staff members were originally invited to serve:

Elementary

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|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Gloria McCrorey Co-chair | Bob Wells Co-chair |
| Deb Chido* Co-chair | Stephanie Floyd* Co-chair |
| Karen Rubin* | Joyce Bruce |
| Marion Eppright | Steve Seid |
| Gene Stephany | Christopher Miller* |
| Anita Allen | Ev Fensterman* |
| Maggie McGill | Lois Vincent |
| Dinh Vanlo/ | John Mathis |
| Jennifer Shedd | |
| Shelly Bosovich | Phil Wiggins |
| Tonya Long (Parent) | Nancy Clark (Parent) |
- (*Teacher representatives recommended by the DMEA)

Secondary

on teaching. Students who care about learning, want to be freed from the disruption and intimidation tactics of those few students who create the majority of the discipline problems.

It is important to note that the vast majority of our students are "good kids" who do not create problems. What we are most concerned about is that small majority of students who are responsible for the majority of discipline referrals. The current system is not effective in changing the behavior of these repeat offenders at the elementary and middle school level. A positive first step in improving the learning environment would be identifying new strategies for dealing with these difficult students.

All staff members and parents have a shared responsibility in holding high expectations for positive behavior for all students. We also must present a united front in holding students responsible and accountable for their behavior. This means consistently enforcing consequences for negative behavior and reinforcing positive behavior. Obviously, administrators play a key role in all of this.

There seems to be some reluctance on the part of the administration to acknowledge that student discipline is becoming more of a problem in our schools. Des Moines is certainly not unique in this situation. It is a reflection of what is going on in our society and in schools all across the country. However, ignoring it, or trying to downplay it will not make it go away.

As a result of the meeting with Dr. Armstrong, the following Association members have been added to the committee:

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|----------------|------------------|
| Ronnene Harris | Merlin Papenheim |
| Barb Hans | Maggie Crawford |
| Roz Ansher | Kris Mesicek |

Instead, we have an opportunity to demonstrate to our community that the Des Moines Public Schools are committed to taking a very pro-active approach to ensuring a safe and orderly environment for students and staff. Given the current sentiments of the State Legislature and the interest in strengthening the juvenile justice system in this state, we also have an opportunity to work together with the community in taking a more broad-based approach to dealing with these difficult students.

The committee spent time in the initial meetings wrestling with information gathered by the Association's survey and the DMEA Ad Hoc Committee. It is now in the early stages of more clearly defining the problem.

A safe and orderly environment in all of our schools is important to all of us -- teachers, associates, secretaries, parents, and students, as well as, administrators. Teachers want to focus their time and energy

The Association representatives on the Committee on Creating Positive Teaching and Learning Environments will continue to advocate for ways of making the Des Moines Public Schools the best place possible for students and staff.

VISION 2005: Planning Continues

Teachers, support personnel, parents, and administrators continue to refine individual building plans as part of the VISION 2005 project. School Based Councils and school staffs are examining their school buildings in light of:

- Learning environments
- Technology
- Safety
- Accessibility
- Expanded Community Usage
- Site
- Building Exterior
- Energy Conservation
- Security

Given the fact 88% the schools in the Des Moines District are more than 50 years old, it has become apparent that the district must create a comprehensive plan for building maintenance, repair, and upgrading to meet the educational needs of the next century.

Some DMEA members have expressed a concern that funds used to upgrade buildings will reduce the amount available for teaching positions and salaries. It is important to remember that district operates using several different funds that are dictated by state law. The bulk of the operating expenses come from the general fund. Salaries, health care benefits, curriculum materials, and classroom equipment are all paid for out of the general fund. A separate fund, the capital improvement fund, exists for the purpose of building improvements. The moneys raised through bond issues for specified improvement projects go into this fund.

Linda Schlak, from Lincoln, serves as the DMEA representative on the VISION 2005 Steering Committee. In this capacity, Linda has spent countless hours working to refine the district plan and present the perspective of our members in this decision-making process. Members' reactions have ranged from "Will this really happen?" to "There are so many other things we need." to "Let's get this done today!" All the work that has gone into this planning will pay off as the district moves forward in building community support to VISION 2005 a reality.

Linda notes that community leaders are saying, ***"Vision 2005 is not an optional thing. It must happen in order to protect the quality of education and the quality of life in our community."***

HEALTH BENEFITS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

For the past two years, members of the Teachers, Associates, and Secretaries Negotiations Cadre along with representatives of AFSCME and administrators have been studying ways to contain the rising cost of health care for all employees of the Des Moines Public Schools through the Health Benefits Advisory Committee.

Workers' Compensation was one of the first areas tackled by the Committee. In light of the amount of money paid out by the district each year, it was identified as an area for potential savings. Requests for Proposals were developed, and a sub-committee examined a number of proposals to provide managed-care for the Workers' Compensation Claims in the district. It was recognized that under state law, an employer has the right to arbitrarily assign physicians to provide care for Workers' Compensation claims. The district elected to use the Health Benefits Advisory Committee to make recommendations in this area.

DMEA members on the committee were committed to ensuring a high quality of care as the number one priority. After studying the proposals, the Health Benefits Advisory Committee determined a managed-care approach to Worker's Compensation would provide the following benefits to employees and the district:

- **Improved quality of care** through physicians specializing in Occupational Medicine and working with a case manager. This system would coordinate the care of employees and facilitate the appropriate referrals for medical treatment, physical therapy, surgery, and "work hardening."

- **Fewer Workers' Compensation claims** as a result of care-providers studying the variety of work environments and making recommendations to prevent future on-the-job injuries.

- **Reduced absenteeism** and less time away from work as a result of appropriate medical care which means a savings to the district (and means more money for us to bargain for).

There was a swift implementation of the School Board's action in the form of a letter received by all employees indicating that the new policy would go into effect January 1, 1994.

As in the past, anyone injured on the job must contact their school nurse. That has not changed. The school nurse will assist the injured employee in receiving care from one of the two Iowa Methodist Corporate Health Clinics, Neighborhood Clinics, or the Iowa Methodist Medical Center.