

**THE  
DES MOINES  
EDUCATION  
ASSOCIATION**

# **T DMEA** *Tempo*

**Volume 18 Number 5**

**MARCH 1994**

**CALENDAR**

**MARCH 8 & 9**  
DMEA Elections

**MARCH 10**  
Faculty Rep Assembly  
4:00 pm North High

**MARCH 14**  
ISEA Dlegate Orientation  
4:00 pm DMEA Office

**MARCH 16**  
DMEA EXEC Board  
4:00 pm DMEA Office

**MARCH 17 & 18**  
Elementary Conferences

**MARCH 21 - 25**  
Spring Recess

**MARCH 23**  
Lobby Day  
State Capitol

**MARCH 28**  
IPD & Human Relations  
Committees  
4:00 pm DMEA Office

**MARCH 31 / APRIL 1**  
Middle School Conferences

**APRIL 4**  
GA/LA Committee  
4:00 pm DMEA Office

**APRIL 5**  
DMEA EXEC Board  
4:00 pm DMEA Office

**APRIL 7 & 8**  
ISEA Delegate Assembly  
Ames, Iowa



## **WALT GALVIN SCHOLARHIP AWARDED TO CINDY RINGGENBERG**

Cindy Ringgenberg is the recipient of the first Walt Galvin Scholarship to be awarded by the DMEA. Cindy is the daughter of member Helen Ringgenberg, an associate at Meredith Middle School. The \$1,000 Scholarship was established in honor of

long-time DMEA Executive Director, Walt Galvin as a tribute to his contributions to the teaching profession and the Association. The scholarship is awarded to a college senior who has been admitted to a pre-service education program and demonstrates the potential for future success as a teacher.

Members of the Scholarship Committee based their selection on each applicant's academic record, college activities, volunteer and employment experience with children, financial need, written recommendation from a current educator, and personal statement of why he/she is pursuing a career in teaching.

Cindy is majoring in Early Childhood Special Education/Elementary Education at the University of Northern Iowa. Her activities and experiences include state president of the Iowa Student Council for Exceptional Children, Teacher Education Student Advisory Council, several honorary societies, UNI Marching Band, peer advisor, and experience in day care and day camps. Cindy states in her application:

*"My desire to become an educator stems from my sincere love and commitment to children of all ages, races, backgrounds, and abilities. I want to help build a solid foundation in which children are motivated to learn and grow within and beyond the classroom."*

**CONGRATULATIONS CINDY! We look forward to having you as a member of our profession!**

Special thanks also goes to the members of the DMEA Scholarship Committee for their time and effort in establishing the Walt Galvin Scholarship guidelines and making this selection. Committee members include: co-chairs Virginia Mortenson, Jim Cocks, Judy Lindquist, Cecil Brewton, Nancy Butler, Mary Dilts, Susan Kotecki, Lowell Perry, Cheryl Shroyer, Carolyn Thune, Toni Walling, Pat Paenheim, and Griff Reese III.

## ***From the Executive Director...***

Contract negotiations between the DMEA and the school district are just beginning. Two public sessions have been held and the first closed session will be held during the first week of March.

Bargaining is later than it used to be. The change came two years ago when the State changed its budgeting procedures. The Iowa Legislature now decides on the growth rate for local schools in February and the law requires that bargaining be completed by May 31. The old law gave us the growth rate earlier and bargaining needed to be completed by March 15.

So we are not behind. Bargaining will now begin in earnest and in several weeks we could reach a voluntary agreement if one is possible. If it is not possible to reach agreement, we will use mediation and possibly binding arbitration to complete the master contract.

The following is a summary of what we will face during bargaining with the district. The positive is mixed with the negative:

1. The Iowa Legislature and the Governor have again failed to fund schools at a reasonable levy. They have approved a growth rate for 1994-95 of only 2.85%. However, schools get different rates depending on enrollment. Des Moines is declining so its actual growth for next year is only around 1.5%.

2. The Des Moines District has other revenue sources available including savings due to staff turnover, unspent reserves from prior years and savings from lower health care costs for employees. This last point is significant because health care costs have increased sharply in prior years and has negatively impacted what was available for salaries and other employee benefits.

3. The district has proposed the elimination of the early retirement option from certificated employees contract. Our goal will be to retain the provision and include an option for payment of health insurance during early retirement for Associates and Secretaries.

4. There are other issues. The Association has proposed improvements in the Supplemental Schedule, improvements in Life, Dental and Disability insurance benefits for the certificated, associates and secretaries and a just cause provision for the Associates and Secretaries who are without statutory protection.

**We intend to keep DMEA members informed about the status of bargaining through regular reports to the Faculty Representatives.**

## ***John Vint***

The following is a list of your bargaining team members who are facing many hours of hard work during the coming weeks.

### **TEACHERS**

Mary Channell  
Russ Fisher  
Chris Gammell  
Kris Mesicek  
Garrett Nyman  
Jean Phillips  
Russ Poggemann  
Patty Trump  
Barbara Wiggins  
Paul Mann

### **ASSOCIATES**

Rhonda Anderson  
Lois Blum  
Trellis Johannsen  
Durene Kasner

### **SECRETARIES**

Mary Lou Briles  
Dee Chambers  
Holly Knause  
Carol Lang  
Marilyn Matzke  
Shirley Mitchell

## **Health Benefits Advisory Committee**

The Health Benefits Advisory Committee has already reaped rewards for Association members. There is a projected savings of \$2.3 million dollars in health care insurance premiums in the 1994-95 District budget. These savings are the result of a combination of factors:

- reduced claims on the part of District employees.
- pressure from the health care reform efforts of the Clinton Administration.
- the work of the Health Care Advisory Committee.

The Health Care Industry is in a state of flux. Insurance companies and health care providers are working more collaboratively to design systems that are more cost-effective while maintaining high quality care. The members of the Health Care Advisory Committee have spent over a year researching and studying these issues in an effort to become more informed consumers and better purchasers of health care. The modification of the Worker's Compensation program is an example of these efforts.

There is still much to do as the Committee examines issues such as: mental health and substance abuse coverage, prescription drugs, and the wide variety of health care insurance programs that are now available. In all cases, your DMEA representatives on this committee have high quality care delivered in a cost-effective manner for the benefit of our members as their number one priority.



**KRIS MESICEK**

## *From the President...*

"...Violence is as American as apple pie," observed H. Rapp Brown in 1966. However, there comes a point when enough is enough. We have reached that point with

violence, crime, hatred, and racism in this country, in this state, in this community, and in this school district. The federal government is contemplating legislation that will "get tough on crime." The state legislature is working on a "Safe Schools Bill" and discussing other options, such as boot camps, for juvenile offenders. The community has responded to recent hate crimes and the desecration of a Jewish Temple with an outpouring of support and a message that clearly states the citizens of Des Moines will not tolerate such hateful acts.

School personnel have also quickly acted in response to white supremacist literature and propaganda in a way that conveys there is no room for such trash in the Des Moines Public Schools. While this is a sad commentary on our society, it is heartening to see government, the community and schools coming together in support of diversity and demanding respect for human dignity.

The Des Moines School Board also has taken a positive step in improving the discipline and school climate with the creation of the Youth Offender Program. This is a collaborative effort between the Des Moines Public Schools, the Polk County Juvenile Court and other County agencies, the Des Moines Police Department, and the Department of Human Services.

Students in grades 7 - 12 who are alleged to have committed serious criminal acts on school premises or at a school related activity would be removed from the regular school setting. These students would receive intensive services in a classroom located in the Polk County Juvenile Court with class size limited to seven students. The program would also include counseling, life skills instruction, and a family component. While this does not completely resolve the complex issues of student discipline as raised by the Association, it is a positive step.

Attitudes towards violence and student behavior are interwoven. Anne Parry, in the *Prevention Forum*, Fall/Winter 1993, describes how parents and teachers in the Chicago Head Start program have developed an approach known as **Choosing Non-Violence**.

Parry states:

*"Violence is a learned response that moves in a cycle from one generation to the next. To effectively break that cycle, the identification of alternatives and a positive education approach is essential.... Children are our best hope for tomorrow. The way we live, day to day, and the decisions and choices we make equip our children for life."*

**Choosing Non-Violence**, seeks to break the cycle of violence by helping young children understand:

1. What violence is and to be able to identify it in their lives, their toys and games, and in their own behavior.
2. Violence can hurt or destroy any person, place, or thing.
3. People have power to make choices about how they will act and how they want to be.
4. Feelings are OK, but how we act on these feelings becomes important—there are alternatives to violent responses.
5. The power of language so that they can use it to express their feelings and to protect themselves without being violent.

These key concepts are not presented to children as a self-contained curriculum or add-on program. Instead, they are integrated into the daily life of the classroom. Teachers take advantage of regular curriculum content and day-to-day situations to reinforce the concepts. For example, Cinderella becomes an opportunity to include a discussion about verbal abuse and appropriate ways of responding to such abuse.

**Choosing Non-Violence** recognizes that our children are constantly exposed to violence via the media, video games, and their personal lives. It also recognizes that prevention at an early age is far more effective and productive than installing metal detectors in high schools and building more prisons for adults.

While schools play an important role in combating violence, they can not do it alone. It must be a community wide effort. Parents can examine their own attitudes and behaviors toward violence with the following questions:

## QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- How do I support or buy into violence in our society?
- What violent TV shows do I watch and say I enjoy?
- What violent TV shows and movies do I allow my children to watch?
- What toys that portray violence do I buy for my children?
- Do I believe there may be a connection between TV, toys, games, and the violent responses that I see in children?
- How do I use my age, size, or voice to intimidate or control children.
- What words expressing violence do I use with my partner? My children?
- Do I discuss violence with my children and support alternatives?

## COMMITTEE ON CREATING POSITIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

After much discussion, the following four priority areas have been identified by the committee for study and the development of recommendations:

- I. Chronically Disruptive Students
- II. School Issues
- III. Outside Influences
- IV. Family Support

## A SYMPOSIUM ON VIOLENCE

Thursday, May 26, 1994  
8:00 am - 4:30 pm  
Des Moines Convention Center

Sponsored by the Des Moines Area  
National Council on Alcoholism  
and the Des Moines PTA

## Safe Schools Legislation

The Legislature is currently considering the "Safe Schools Bill." Key components of the bill include:

- school board expulsion hearing required for any student assaulting a school employee.
- paid leave for any school employee injured in an act of violence. School employees should not have to use sick leave in these cases.
- limited immunity from civil and criminal action for any school employee having physical contact with a student for any reason that is an exception to the ban on corporal punishment.
- requiring the sharing of information on students between juvenile courts, law enforcement agencies and schools.
- locker searches and patrol of school parking lots.

**Legislators need to hear from you!** Let them know how important this bill is in maintaining a safe school environment.

Call and leave a message at:

**Representatives.....281-3371**

**Senators.....281-3221**



Illustration: Jane Zwinger