

# DMEA Tempo

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## A Message from KRIS MESICEK

Throughout my twenty years of Association involvement, I have always been guided by the belief that we must continue to keep the Des Moines Public Schools the best place possible for teaching and learning. Education is a "people business" and there are no people more important than our students and our members. The past six years, serving as your President has been an enormously challenging and satisfying experience!

The role educators and the Association is becoming more complex. Advocating for the dignity and professional recognition of all of our members will always be a key part of what we are about. But social changes and the increasing needs of students requires that we must also be strong advocates for quality education. Restructuring our schools dictates that we must be informed and equal players in the decision-making process that impacts our students and members.

Over the past few years we have strengthened the working relationship between DMEA the Administration by becoming more actively involved in the decision making process. In many of our schools, our members have successfully mirrored this process of shared leadership at the building level. While SBM/SDM is still not what I would like it to be, we are making progress. One of the many lessons I have learned while in this job is an understanding of the change process and patience.

As an Association, we have worked through many tough issues at Faculty Representative meetings, in Executive Board sessions, in Committee and Task Force discussions. (One of my greatest pleasures has been the opportunity to work with so many fine professionals!) We have dealt with Phase III cuts, DM Plan cuts, and budget cuts. We have dealt with the issues of Safety, Time, Discipline, Health Care, Special Education, Technology, and Vision 2005.

We have made significant gains in these areas. Yet, there is still much to be done. The shared leadership process incorporated over the past few years in DMEA will continue to serve us well in the future. Grass roots involvement will continue to strengthen our Association, expand our membership, broaden our participation in complex issues and enhance our professionalism.

I am truly looking forward to having more time with my family, but I want to thank each and every one of you for your support, your friendship and your confidence over the past six years. My involvement with DMEA will now be in a different role, but I know that working together, we will continue to make a difference!

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your vote of confidence in me as your DMEA president for the next two years.

For the past 4 years, I have enjoyed working cooperatively with Kris and the members of the Executive Board and various committees to greatly improve member salaries, maintain excellent fringe benefits, to sensitize administrators to our concerns for safer schools, and to build a strong DMEA. Many of those goals have been achieved!

DMEA membership is now at an all time high! We have maintained excellent health insurance and won impressive salary increases! Last year's settlement was perhaps the best ever and certainly the best since the last year of my DMEA presidency in 1980! This year's settlement continues to reflect the strong commitment of our cadre and elected leaders to make our "total package" the best in the state! We need to recognize and thank Kris, our negotiations cadre, and our chief negotiator, John Vint, for the excellent progress they have made.

Over the next two years, I hope we can:

1. Help pass Vision 2005.
2. Revitalize our political action efforts.
3. Elect supportive candidates for school board, state legislative, and national offices.
4. Raise DSM teacher salaries and fringe benefits to the best in Iowa.
5. Achieve paid medical insurance for early retirees.
6. Improve school safety through full implementation of the Safe Schools Act passed 2 years ago.

I am committed to working as hard now as I did as your DMEA president 20 years ago to help make things better for you and our students. I will need your help and active involvement over the next two years, so that together we can achieve the important goals listed above.

Thanks for your support!

Teacher Appreciation Week

May 6-10

## TIME

The School Board received a report from the district's Task Force on Time for Collaboration. It included the new bell times for all buildings and guidelines for the use of the collaboration time. Your Faculty Representative has a copy of the full report. Use of the time is to be determined at the building level and plans developed cooperatively. The following items are in the report to the Board:

**2. A building committee, selected by the democratic process, will plan, coordinate, and evaluate the specific school improvement activities for each building. Buildings will determine if this is to be a separate committee or an existing building committee, such as The School Improvement Committee. Suggestions for committee members:**

**Elementary** - Representatives for each grade level

**Secondary** - Each team or department selects a representative, 8-10 people would be maximum size of committee

**4. All staff will have the opportunity to request time.**

**5. All staff will have the opportunity to contribute ideas.**

**7. Activities may be a blend of large group, small group, or individual.**

A second issue that needs attention involves employee hours. The employee day is defined in the Master Agreement as 7 hours and 45 minutes in length. That includes a duty free 30 minute lunch break. The employer can set the starting time but cannot require elementary teachers to report earlier than 55 minutes before the start of class. It's 30 minutes for High School and Middle School teachers.

### \* ANNUAL RECOGNITION \*

May 23rd is the date for the DMEA Annual Recognition Dinner. Hotel Ft. Des Moines is the location. The social hour is 5:30 p.m., dinner 6:30 p.m.

DMEA Retirees will be honored. Volunteer of the Year, Friend of Education, Ruth Foster Award Recipient and Fischer Scholarship winners will be recognized.

Make your reservations through your Faculty Rep. The price is \$18. Deadline for reservations is May 17th.

### CALENDAR

May 2	Executive Board	DMEA office	4:00 p.m.
May 6	GA Committee	DMEA office	4:00 p.m.
May 8	Associates Dinner	Gino's	5:30 p.m.
May 9	Faculty Rep	North High	4:00 p.m.
May 13	IPD	<b>CANCELED</b>	
May 16	Executive Board	DMEA office	4:00 p.m.
May 20	Human Relations	DMEA office	4:00 p.m.
May 23	Recognition Dinner	Hotel Ft. Des Moines	

## Things You May Want To Know About

- There will be no change in employee fringe benefits in 1996-97 as a result of the bargaining just completed. However, you are reminded that the district offers 3 health plans. If you want to switch plans, contact Darlene Christensen at 242-7711 before the end of the school year.

- Both the Association and the District have ratified the 1996-97 Master Agreements. We were told that individual contracts for teachers should be out during the second week in May.

- The DMEA Faculty Reps have approved the 1996-97 DMEA budget. Slight dues increase are in store for ISEA and NEA-dues but the DMEA local dues will remain the same as in 1995-96. Additional rebates will be returned to DMEA from the ISEA and NEA as part of their increases. The bulk of the DMEA operation is funded from ISEA and NEA dues rebates.

- The legislature has finally agreed on IPERS legislation. It is expected to be signed by the Governor. It includes a number of desirable features including 1) earlier retirement without a penalty; 2) the removal of the salary ceiling on contributions; 3) additional credit for years worked beyond 30 years. The ISEA lobbyists will provide a more detailed account of the legislation in the final legislative bulletin.

### A Tribute to Teachers

The following is reprinted from an ISEA publication.

Give me your hungry children, your sick children, your homeless and abused children.

Give me your children who need love as badly as they need learning.

Give me your children who have talents and gifts and skills.

Give me your children who have none.

Give them all to me, in whatever form they come, and the people within these walls will help.

Give you the doctors and the engineers and the scientists and the lawyers and the ministers and the teachers of tomorrow.

We will give you the mothers and the fathers, the thinkers and the builders, the artists and the dreamers.

We will give you the nation of tomorrow.

We will give you the future of Iowa.

We will give you the American Dream.

**Carolyn Warner,**  
former Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction