

DMEA Tempo

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Des Moines Education Association

April 1997

Teacher Evaluations

Formal evaluation procedures are intended primarily for rewards and for improving instruction. Most meet those goals. But evaluations can also be punitive. Here are some reminders if you are "up" for evaluation.

The standards you see on the form are found in the Master Contract. That makes the content of your evaluation subject to the Grievance Procedure. The same is true for Letters of Reprimand.

The test for determining if an evaluation is grievable is that it must be fair and accurate. That involves both objective and subjective appraisal.

Contact the DMEA office if you believe that anything in your evaluation is inaccurate or unfair. Inaccurate statements are relatively easy to identify and correct. Unfair statements are more subjective. Are standards the same for all employees or have you been singled out? Were you made aware of standards prior to the evaluation?

Other similar questions can help determine fairness. But don't forget that the grievance procedure has timelines. You must file within 10 working days to insure a fair hearing of your grievance.

Remember too that you have the right to place a rebuttal in your personnel file. There are no time restrictions to this avenue.

If uncertain about the route to follow, call DMEA and we will talk confidentially.

CALENDAR

April 14	HR/IPD Committee	4:15
April 17	Executive Board	4:15
May 1	Executive Board	4:15
May 5	GA Committee	4:15
May 8	Faculty Rep	4:15
May 12	HR/IPD Committee	4:15
May 14	Associate's Dinner	
May 15	Executive Board	4:15

Legislators Still in Town

This current legislature has done so little to help education that it's easy for educators to forget that they are still in session. But they are.

An increase in tuition tax credits for private schools is still very much alive. Calls to your legislators to oppose this plan need to be made now.

The plan calls for doubling the credit to parents of private school students at a substantial cost to the State.

Here are the Senators and Representatives to contact:

Representatives

Frank Chiodo (D) Mike Cataldo (D)
John Connors (D) Ed Fallon (D)
Wayne Ford (D) Jack Holveck (D)
Betty Grundberg (R) Libby Jacobs (R)
Janet Metcalf (R) Steven Churchill (R)

Senators

William Palmer (D) Matt McCoy (D)
Dick Dearden (D) Elaine Szymoniak (D)
Mary Kramer (R) Gene Maddox (R)

House 281-3221 Senate 281-3371



Time for Collaboration

A district wide committee has been reviewing the 1st year of the released time for collaboration. A report is scheduled to go to the School Board in May. At this time the recommendation looks like this:

• No major changes will be recommended. Elementary schools will have 90 minutes on 18 Wednesdays. High schools and middle schools will have half that number.

• Again, no waivers will be granted.

• Transportation is working on a plan to move the late start elementary schools to 9:15 instead of 9:20. That's not much but at least it's in the right direction.

The committee felt the plan was too new to recommend major changes. The group plans to meet early fall to start working on a plan for 1998-99.

Election Results

The following list of DMEA members were elected as officers or delegates on March 13, 1997 to serve one or two year terms:

DMEA Executive Board

Secretary Chris Miller
Treasurer Elaine Wilkinson
Elementary Rep Alice Boyd
High School Rep James Patch
ISEA Board Kris Mesicek

ISEA NEA

Kris Mesicek Kris Mesicek
Elaine Wilkinson Carmen Winters
Chris Miller Pat Papenheim
Marijean Sears Chris Miller
Rich Parker Alice Boyd
Rhonda Beakler Toni Austin
Rhonda Anderson James Patch
Martha Cumpston Merlin Papenheim
Rita Hill Rich Parker
Lesley Martin Rhonda Anderson
Linda Young Rhonda Beakler
Judy Carter Teri Ross

Dept. of Associates Officers

Secretary Marijean Sears
Treasurer Helen Ringgenberg

Dept. of Nurses Officers

Secretary Judy Creech
Treasurer Kay Tomlinson

DMEA Retired

Secretary Darline Brown
Treasurer Henrietta Wheeler

Recognition Dinner

The invitation will soon be in your school mail box inviting you to attend the DMEA Annual Recognition Dinner held Thursday, May 22, 1997 at the Savery Hotel, 401 Locust. The cost is \$20 per person. DMEA retirees and their guest will be our guests as well as Volunteer of the Year, Friend of Education, Ruth Foster Award winner and Fischer Scholarship recipients.

Make your reservations through your Faculty Rep. The deadline is May 16th. If you make a reservation and cannot keep it, you must call the DMEA office no later than May 21st to cancel the reservation.

Volunteer and Friend nominations are due at DMEA April 24th!

President's Report on the Des Moines Teachers Retirement System

by Paul Mann

Improving the Des Moines Teachers Retirement System (DMTRS) remains a slippery, elusive, enticing possibility that is no closer to fruition now than it was several months ago.

The DMTRS Advisory Board met at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, March 20, (YES, on our early dismissal day for spring break), to hear a presentation by IPERS officials and to consider various proposals for improvements in our retirement system.

Mostly the improvements involved options for ending the system and allowing active members to become part of IPERS.

The good news is that two changes were recommended to the Board of Education:

1. 55 would be the normal retirement age (optional, of course) for the DMTRS rather than 60 years of age.
2. Losses and gains from the sale of stocks would be spread over 6 years rather than 3 in order to stabilize retirement checks and reduce the annual fluctuations (significant drops and gains) in retirement income for those already retired.

The Board of Education received the recommendations April 1 and will act on the recommendations on April 30.

The bad news is that these changes will not entice new members to join DMTRS rather than go into IPERS. Only 10 of the 175 new hires joined DMTRS this year. There is no clear or easy pathway to "fix" the system.

The DMTRS spends hundreds of thousands more each month in retirement checks than it is taking into the system. Both retired and active members are concerned that our system may be unable to grow sufficiently in investment income to continue to pay more than is absolutely guaranteed.

Remember that ours is an actuarially-sound defined contribution system, not a defined benefit system, as is IPERS. All members are guaranteed a certain amount and, beyond that, the DMTRS Advisory Board can analyze the investment income and establish "excess earnings" retirement bonuses to partially offset the effects of inflation.

According to calculations made by retired members, in 1984 our system paid retired members 57% more than the amount guaranteed. This came from excess earnings. In 1996, the excess earnings could only support payments 25% above the guaranteed amount. This means a 1984 retiree has seen a \$480 reduction in his/her actual monthly retirement check, and this does not include inflation.

Both active and retired members have cause for concern. The news from IPERS was far worse than we had once hoped.

The cost to become a vested IPERS member (rollover all money in your own retirement account to IPERS) would be more than any DMTRS member has accumulated in the DMTRS. In addition, retired members are concerned about the effect it might have on their excess earning benefits over the next 10 - 15 years if all of the active money were to be pulled out for a "system to system" IPERS rollover or individual IRAs for active members.

Active members nearing retirement are concerned that active members who have less than 4 years remaining in teaching at the time that the DMTRS was ended would not have time to become vested in IPERS, so their required IPERS contributions for their last (up to 3) years would essentially be wasted.

Other options were considered, but none were recommended for consideration by the Board of Education or the general DMTRS membership. Much work remains to be done on this complex problem.

The annual general membership meeting date has not been set but will occur sometime in May. As this goes to press, we are in the election cycle to nominate and elect active members to the Advisory Board. Be sure to vote.

Our Advisory Board will meet again in the Board Room at 1800 Grand at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, April 25. Meetings are open to all active and retired members. It would be in your own best interest to become knowledgeable and involved in helping decide how our DMTRS can be improved.

Technology Update

The proposed Technology Plan for DSM Schools is alive and well and awaiting expected approval by the Board of Education on April 15! This means that all building staff should be in the process of making platform decisions, deciding which classrooms will receive multi-function stations this year, and should be indicating your hardware, software, and training needs to your building technology committee. A two-part technology survey instrument to help assess staff training and other needs is now available from Toy Kerr 242-8127. Immediately following final adoption of the plan, anyone may call Human Resources at 242-7736 to apply for one of the ten new Technology Instructional Support positions. Keep us informed of any difficulties you encounter in your site-based decision-making process.



Bargaining for the 1997/98 contract continues. We mediate April 10-11 and will notify Building Reps next week regarding the progress. Stay Tuned!