

# DMEA Tempo

Volume 21 Issue 3

Des Moines Education Association

October 1966

## Student Abuse

Each year a few DMEA members are accused of child abuse. Those accusations are normally false but that does not seem to diminish the agony created by the accusation.

We want to remind you what the law says about student abuse and describe some things you can do to protect yourself.

The law clearly prohibits corporal punishment. So does the Des Moines District's discipline policy. While the law bars corporal punishment, it also defines some exceptions. You may use reasonable and necessary force as long as it is not designed to cause pain. You can restrain a student in order to quell a disturbance, defend yourself, protect school district property, remove a disruptive student from class or to protect a student from harming himself or another.

Corporal punishment is designed to inflict physical pain. Don't use it! When it is necessary to intervene, simply try to restrain the student and at all times use only reasonable force.

The law also prohibits school employees from abusing students either physically or sexually. A parent or guardian must file a complaint and the complaint must be investigated. The District will interview all parties. It is critical that the teacher be represented during the process. If the investigation determines that the complaint is founded, a second hearing will be held by an official outside the school district.

Take the accusations seriously. When an incident occurs that you think would likely turn into an abuse complaint, notify the DMEA and the principal and document all versions of the incident and identify witnesses. Accusations come as a result of active imaginations, misunderstandings between parent and child or the parent's anger with the school district.

Teachers are also listed in the law as mandatory reporters of child abuse. If you suspect that the child is being abused by a parent, guardian, or another adult in charge of the youngster, you must report it to the Iowa Department of Human Services. Failure to do so can result in a criminal complaint being filed against you. However, if you make the complaint in good faith you are protected against any civil liabilities should your report turn out to be in error.

The best advice is to be aware of child abuse signs and to work with others in your building who work with the same child including the principal, the nurse, and the counselor. All school nurses have the guidelines for reporting child abuse and the forms that are to be sent to the Department of Human Services.

To protect yourself, follow these guidelines:

1. **Never discipline in anger.**
2. **Use only reasonable force in restraining a student.**
3. **Use good judgment and refrain from situations that could be misinterpreted.**
4. **Keep your classroom door open.**
5. **Keep accurate records about all incidents that could be misunderstood.**

### Calendar of Events

Oct 17	Faculty Reps	4:15 pm
Oct 23	Executive Bd	4:15 pm
Nov 4	GA	4:15 pm
Nov 7	Executive Bd	4:15 pm
Nov 11	HR/IPD	4:15 pm
Nov 12	Associate Reps	4:15 pm
	Executive Bd	
Nov 14	Faculty Reps	4:15 pm
Nov 21	Executive Bd	4:15 pm

## Briefly:

- School Calendar for 1997-98: State law poses a problem for next year's calendar development. Since September 1 falls on a Monday in 1997, the district is precluded by law from starting school until September 2. The result will be that students will attend classes through June 9, 1998. It would probably force spring break into April. The district has requested that the Department of Education provide an exception to the law to allow a more traditional Des Moines calendar with a starting date in the last week of August and an ending date in early June. We will keep you posted.

- NEA Valuebuilder representative Shirleen McCord left to take another assignment. Valuebuilders have been interviewing potential replacements and hope to have someone in place soon. Until then, clients can direct calls to Mike Mimick at 1-800-360-6258.

- Congratulations to Jim Patch and Marijean Sears. Jim (Central Campus) was elected by DMEA High School members to serve an unexpired term on the DMEA Executive Board. Marijean (Windsor) was elected to serve as secretary for the Department of Associates.

- Scholarships are again being offered to dependents of school employees by Horace Mann Insurance Company. Applications are available by calling the DMEA office at 277-6271.

- Phase III The following buildings returned excess (unused) funds to the district following the 1995-96 school year: Edmunds, Garton, Jackson, Madison, Moore, Perkins, Pleasant Hill, Stowe, Wallace, Willard, Windsor, Wright, Callanan, Goodrell, Weeks, North, Roosevelt, Scavo, Van Meter, Orchard Place.

# American Education Week

November 18 - 22

## DISTRICT TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE UPDATE

by President Mann

The newly appointed district technology committees will meet soon to begin the long overdue process of planning for the use of technology for curriculum and learning. The overall steering committee, called the Technology Coordinating Council, will meet on October 22 and will likely meet twice a month for the rest of the year. Four subcommittees on Standards, Curriculum and Evaluation, the Internet, and Technology Plan Design and Budget, will meet monthly after school for the rest of the year.

I would like to announce and formally recognize each of the DMEA members who have agreed to give up so much of their precious time in order to represent your interests. Our members on each committee are:

### Standards

Don Murphy - Hoover  
Ann Defenbaugh - Moore  
Salvador (Phil) Chia - Callanan  
Scott Schoneberg - Central Campus  
Mary Briles - Jefferson  
Gene Denny - Meredith  
Peg Doane - Elem/Early Childhood  
Wilma Gajdel - Lovejoy

### Internet

Sue Crook - Jackson  
Barb Donery - Hoyt

### Curriculum and Evaluation

Anna Marie Deskin - Meredith  
Gary Bagby - Lincoln  
Kris Mesicek - Staff Development  
Dick Craven - Weeks  
Linda Davitt - Staff Development

### Technology Plan and Budget

Paul Mann - Co-chair  
Rowena Schweizer - Lincoln  
Tim Schott - McKinley

### Technology Coordinating Council

Paul Mann, Kris Mesicek  
Barb Donery, Wilma Gajdel

They will all have a great deal of work to do and will be asking for your advice and support in many ways. Do not hesitate to contact us with your ideas. Together, we can help this district and our students move into those promising technological classrooms of the future that remain tantalizingly just out of our reach!

(Briefly continued)

• A district committee has begun to meet to study the elementary allocation formula. DMEA members serving on the committee are Paul Mann, Marijean Sears, Rhonda Beakler, Kevan Mulder, Kris Mesicek, Joyce McSorley, and Cindy Roerig.

In April of 1996, the DMEA Faculty Reps passed a resolution calling for "each school to be allocated a minimum of staff. A core group which along with administration and instructional staff would consist of a secretary, building associate, library associate, a counselor, and at least a half-time nurse."

• Thanks to Committee Chairs Janis Bowden and Joy Harvey for planning and conducting an excellent IPD/HR fall workshop on October 8th. Sessions on Special Education Rules and Lobbying Techniques were conducted. Following dinner, the entire group had a lively discussion with Dr. Wegenke about the Curriculum Audit released last summer. Thanks to Dr. Wegenke for attending the event, sharing his plans, and listening to suggestions.

## Early Released Time

Preliminary reports from members about the new collaboration time range from "great" to "this is just an extended staff meeting". In order to help focus in those buildings where it is needed, we are repeating below some highlights from the plan adopted by the School Board last spring. We hope it helps. Emphasis is added.

1. Activities will relate to school Improvement Plans, the District Improvement Plan, or to building initiatives as they relate to student learning.

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.

3. Copies of individual building schedules/agendas for use of released time will be sent to the Directors of Early Childhood and Elementary, or Middle and High School Programs. Buildings will do a semester evaluation that the building develops.

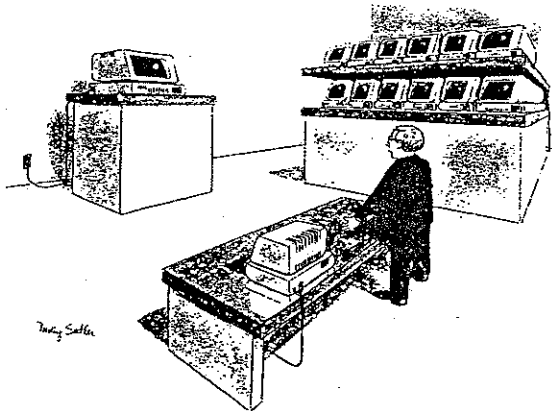
4. All staff will have the opportunity to request time.

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

6. All support staff who are not building based should be available to work with building staff in large or small groups at the building's request.

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

8. There will be no student activities during this time that require a coach, sponsor, advisor, or director. Early released times will provide excellent opportunities for community sponsored youth activities.



"Your Honor, my client pleads 'not guilty' to all counts of incompatibility."