



December 1998
Volume 1, Issue 3

CALENDAR

December

- 7 GA Committee Meeting
4:15 p.m.
- 8 Dept. of Assoc. Holiday Party
4:00 P.M. East High School
- 10 Faculty Rep Assembly Meeting
4:00 p.m.
- 15 IPD Committee Meeting
4:00 p.m.
- 15 Human Relation Committee
4:00 p.m.
- 15 Executive Board Meeting
4:00 p.m.

☞ Carol and Bev will be leaving the DMEA effective Dec. 18th. They have provided excellent and dependable services to members for many years. We all wish them well.

There will be a retirement reception for Carol on Dec 14th from 4:15 to 5:30 at the Salisbury House 4025 Tonawanda..

☞ Welcome to Sharon Nelson as she begins her employment at DMEA. Sharon was a school district employee for approximately 15 years, most recently as the building secretary at Phillips Traditional School. Sharon started on Nov. 30 and will spend 3 weeks with Bev and Carol to get acclimated to her new job. You will soon be hearing her voice at the end of the phone line.

DMEA LEADERSHIP REPORT

☞ This mailing includes the DMEA initial bargaining proposals for the certificated, associate and clerical units. These should be distributed to DMEA members only. The package has been developed by the DMEA bargaining team and approved by the DMEA Executive Board. We will present these proposals to the district on Dec. 2 and the district will respond with their proposal on Dec. 10. The two parties have tentatively set aside each Wednesday evening through January and February for additional bargaining.

State generated growth for 1999-2000 will be down in Des Moines because of our declining enrollment and a stingy 3% allowable growth approved by the legislature. Des Moines budget increase will be only 2.4%. We will be going to the table to discuss budget and personnel priorities that have been followed in the past. We will keep you updated.

☞ Note in the above article and in the bargaining proposal that we are not seeking any changes in the supplemental pay schedule. Instead, the DMEA is engaged in a joint study with the district in an effort to find a meaningful and objective way to assign value to the supplemental jobs. That committee is not likely to complete its work in time for beginning the 1999-2000 contract.

☞ Paychecks scheduled for Jan. 1, 1999 will be available to employees in respective buildings on Dec. 30.

They will be dated the 30th so they can be deposited or cashed. This of course will throw more income into the 1998 tax year. However, the DMEA Board thought that less severe when given the opportunity to get the check early. Otherwise, it would have been Jan. 4th before anything could be posted or deposited.

☞ The Iowa Department of Education has updated the statistical composite of Iowa teachers. Average age is now 42.3 years compared to 39.9 in 1985-86. Over that same span of time, the percent of female teachers has risen from 63.5% to 68.9% and 1.6% are minorities, up slightly from 85-86.

The average total experience is 15.6 years. Interestingly, the percent with advanced degrees fell slightly from 29% (85-86) to 28.2%.

By contrast, the characteristics of full-time principals are these:

- Age-47.5 years
- Female- 27.1% (up from 8.7 in 85-86)
- Minority-3.3% (up from 1.2 in 85-86)
- Experience-22.8 years

☞ Contributions to ISEA's political action committee are voluntary. When a member signs-up or a continuing member fills out a verification form either may opt not to contribute to PAC.

Here is another opportunity. If you want to cancel your \$10 contribution to our state PAC, you may call the DMEA and we will supply you with a post card that you can use to get your refund.

HAPPY WINTER BREAK

Bev
Carol

John
Sharon

Questions and Answers about Filing A Grievance

Q. What is a grievance?

A. A grievance is a claim made by an employee that the district has violated one or more provisions of the comprehensive agreement.

Q. Who can file?

A. Any employee can file on their own or seek assistance from the DMEA. Forms are available from DMEA or at your building.

Q. How do I know if I have a grievable situation?

A. If you seek DMEA help we will assist you in analyzing the potential grievance using the following approach:

- Are the words in the contract clear. For example, all three of our contracts say that employees are entitled to 30 uninterrupted minutes for lunch. If you are not getting 30 minutes, grieve and you will win because the language is clear and unambiguous. These are the easy ones.
- Secondly, if not clear, we will look at the intent of the parties when the language was bargained. This requires some historical research and is more than likely to be the subject of disagreement between the employee and the employer.
- Finally, we will look at past practice of the district in interpreting and administering the contract. For example, most transfers are done by seniority after the district has accommodated some special needs. Seniority can be tracked to prove that it is the district's administrative pattern.

Q. How do I start a grievance?

A. Within 10 working days of the incident, you need to informally discuss the problem with your immediate supervisor. The whole procedure is intended to solve problems at the lowest level. Many are concluded at this level.

Q. What's next if not resolved?

A. You file a written grievance with your supervisor within 5 days of the informal conference. If the supervisor still disagrees with your claim, the grievance will be turned over to the appropriate director of Elementary or Secondary Programs, then to the Superintendent. All meetings to this point are face to face and informal.

Q. What is the final step?

A. Arbitration is used. This is a formal procedure involving witnesses and cross-examination. The arbitrator's decision is final and binding on all parties.

Q. If I start a grievance, can I withdraw it at any time?

A. Yes you can.

Q. Who decides what grievance should go to arbitration?

A. The DMEA Executive Board makes that decision based on the recommendation from the DMEA Grievance Committee. Committee members are Hance Throckmorton- chair, Lois Blum, Diane Crozier, Steve Koch, Joyce McSorley, Jan Rouse, Elaine Wilkinson, Paul Mann.

☞ Positive election results won't mean much unless we can turn them into positive legislation for schools. That means a lobbying effort. ISEA is planning two Lobby Days on January 20th and February 24th. Call DMEA if you would like to participate.

DMEA is also participating in a local coalition with the School Board, Administrators, PTA and AFSCME to maintain contact with Polk County legislators throughout the session. Again, let us know if you are willing to devote a few hours of volunteer time to this important effort.