



Tempo!

Welcome Back DMEA

Greg Harris Executive Director

I would like to welcome back all of the officers, executive board members, association reps, and all of the DMEA members. The summer vacation has gone by fast and now it's time for us to focus our attention on one of the things we love most, advocating for children and public education.

This academic year will be full of challenges but we will get through all of the challenges together and we will become a lot stronger, wiser, and better. As you know, last academic year we were faced with the state

budget shortfalls. The stimulus funds helped to keep employees employed, but we saw a lot of excess employees within our school district. I know change does not come without disappointments but we got through the excesses and transfers and now we are ready for a brand new start.

The DMEA bargaining team and I was able to advocate for our members during bargaining. This year we will face some challenges, but we will work together to make sure we get the best agreement for our mem-

bers. As we receive more information concerning the state budget and other things that will impact bargaining we will, as always, keep you informed.

If you have not taken an active part in the association, now is the time for you to get involved. It only takes a little of your (cont)



Des Moines Education Association

Back to School Edition

8/27/2009

Greg's Points to Ponder:

- ☺ Always arrive to work on time
- ☺ Make sure you know and understand district and school policies and procedures
- ☺ If you are unsure about something, don't be afraid to ask your administrator or supervisor to clarify information
- ☺ Always get to know your building rep or reps in your school because they have resources that can help you before there is a crisis
- ☺ Always keep in contact with parents on both positive and negative concerns about students
- ☺ You are the professional in the classroom. Never try to get on the same level with your students

President's Note

Alan Young, DMEA President



Sitting down to write my President's Note for the Back-to-School issue of the Tempo

is something that always gives me pause. It would be easy to just churn out a superficial piece to excite you about returning to do the most important job in the world - shaping our children to shape the future and the world! You get a lot of exhortations from

folks who admire your work to an extent, but have little real clue about the details, dedication, and drive needed to educate our nation's youth, let alone support you in substantive ways.

Upfront, I will say that I

hope you had a great summer (some longer than others who have already been back at it for a month!). I hope you are ready meet the new faces in your lives and eager to see familiar faces in a fresh way. Consider this my "shout out," my "go team," my heart-felt "rah, rah," about how I feel about you and what you do. I cannot say enough times how important you are in the lives of our students, our association, our district, State, and Nation. Make this your best year yet!

I struggle because I don't want my message to be just typical "pat yourself on the back" jargon. Don't get me wrong, I DO want you to be energized and hopeful as you begin the year. It is critical that you stay in touch with your passion to make a difference. Unlike many, I know *hope, expectations, and exhortations* are NOT enough! I don't want to minimize how difficult it can be at times. I know the daily grind of teaching (often more related to the "system" than our actual experiences with our students or colleagues) can, at times, impede your ability to stay connected to the deep joy that making a difference in the lives of others brings. *Hope, expectations, and exhortations* cannot produce or sustain the complex, varying blend of art, science, passion, and persistence you exhibit daily, in an atmosphere of systemic, constructive supports, resources, relationships, and space/time needed to reflect, to best grow the capacities of each student.

And so, this is where the deeper, more sustaining message enters in. ***We do not do this alone.*** Not even one day, really! It takes all of us working together in solidarity with others, in and out of our profession,

to truly make public education work well. To this end, DMEA is truly dedicated to providing more than just "cheers" or liability insurance! We are here to provide genuine, deep, systemic support for you, the education professional, as your professional union.

Yes, DMEA provides protection, connections, and strength from our solidarity and unity. Yes, the DMEA is here for you in bargaining contracts, salary increases, and great benefits. ("United, we bargain! Divided, we beg!") Yes, we secure insurance and provide many member benefits. Yes, DMEA advocates for you and serves as the official means to address individual concerns and grievances in our district. Yes, we appoint people to district committees. Yes, we are here to communicate and solve problems with the district proactively, constructively, and systemically. Yes, we galvanize your voice to make a difference on the local, state, and national levels. Yes, we are here fighting for all of our members to have a living wage!

DMEA is also here to support your ability to make a difference in our efforts to secure and improve your teaching, learning, and working conditions. We are here to establish an infrastructure for your voice and ideas to improve our schools, our profession, and public education. We are here as a main means to support your professional improvement. We are your professional and social community - an actual and virtual network of professional and personal relationships, friends, and colleagues to sustain you as a lifelong learner and educator. And we are dedicated to improving what we do in all of the above

areas. All this and more!

We are here for more than service and benefits. We are here organizing for power and influence, so your voice and vision help change the conditions under which we teach and students learn, in every school throughout the district and beyond. While DMEA is here *for* you daily in so many ways, mostly in ways you don't even think of, we cannot do it *without* YOU!

So this year, with all of the changes, obstacles, and possibilities confronting us, your active membership within our association has never been more critical. DMEA will create more opportunities to inform, support, involve, and engage you this year than ever before. The more members we have and the more engaged our members, the stronger we become . . . and, the more we are able to make a difference for you as an organization. The more you give to DMEA, the better DMEA can effectively support you and your ability to make a difference! What would it be like if DMEA had not been there all these years? As the challenges mount and opportunities grow, it will take a stronger DMEA to keep making a difference!

I truly hope your year gets off to a great start! But remember, *we do not do this alone.* Together, we will make far more of a difference than we ever will alone!



Welcome back to a new school year filled with possibilities! DMEA continues to have a strong voice on the District Professional Development Committee, and we are looking forward to helping the district craft a long-term professional development plan and vision that centers on sustained effort on one or two main initiatives. We know many are tired of constantly jumping on new professional development bandwagons, or what I like to call "PD ADD". While this is happening at the district level, it is important you continue to advocate for teachers having a role in

your building-based PD. Buildings are still required to have a "representative" committee that makes PD decisions, especially concerning the allocation of the PD money that comes to your school. Stay tuned for more on that at our first Rep Assembly and via email.



missals, and they will all dismiss early by 120 minutes on those days. Seven of the early dismissals will be building-directed, and six will be teacher-directed. Look for a document via email that shows which days are which and the reasons behind this change. Have a great start to the school year!!

One last thing: this year every level (elementary, middle & high school) all have the same number of early dis-

Marinus van Kuilenburg

DMEA Associate Director

On Friday, August 7th, I visited a United Steel Workers Local 310 rally at the Firestone plant in Des Moines. Around 200-300 people were holding signs and shouting slogans. Many of the plant workers had brought their kids. Also, a number of other unions were present to show their solidarity with the plant workers.

Firestone workers are in tough negotiations. The plant management is trying to use the current economic situation to slash benefits and reduce salaries. One management proposal would reduce contributions to retiree and health care premiums. Additionally, the company wants to implement a "new wage structure" which would result in at least a \$1000 pay cut per year. Finally, there are rumors that a number of workers might be laid off. How can we connect the struggle of the Firestone workers to our struggles?

Money will be tight this year in the Des Moines Public Schools. Neverthe-

less, this does not mean that we will fight less hard for fair compensation and respect on the job. For ESPs in particular this means that we will continue the Living Wage Campaign. The District might not provide a Living Wage. However, this does not mean we should let them off the hook during bargaining when it comes to providing ESPs with a fair pay increase and Just Cause. Just Cause would end the "at-will" status of ESPs. Termination could then only take place for reasons negotiated in the Master Agreement. Successes at the bargaining table will be



a measure of our strength in the fight for a Living Wage and Just Cause.

To win our fight we need to put pressure on the school board by telling them our stories at school board meetings and telling them our demands. We need to involve the broader Des Moines community, including other unions, by putting out information about the Living Wage. But most of all we need **your** help in this fight. We need **you** to talk to your colleagues about the Living Wage (teachers and ESPs alike). We need **you** to walk with us in the Labor Day Parade. We will need **your** presence at school board meetings to support DMEA's struggle for workplace justice. That is what the Firestone rally teaches us; if we all get involved and if we all stand together we can make that difference.

On Friday, August 7, eleven members of the Building Support for Public Education committee interviewed all nine DMPS school board candidates and recommended challenger Felipe Gallardo as well as incumbents Connie Boesen, Teree Caldwell-Johnson, and Patty Link for the four open seats in the upcoming September 8 school board election. The DMEA Executive Board approved the Committee's recommendations at a meeting on Monday, August 10.

DMEA's recommendation process is the most rigorous of any organization that recommends candidates in school board campaigns. Each candidate was asked 25 questions and had approximately one hour to respond.

In coming to the decision to recommend Felipe Gallardo, committee members were impressed by his com-

mitment to educating the whole child and his work in the area of dropout prevention. His interview and life's work as a case manager for the Iowa Re-engagement Center show that he is passionate about reaching disengaged students and building bridges that will lead those students back into the classroom. He made it clear that an engaging and relevant curriculum that focuses on more than just increasing standardized test scores is the key to building those bridges. The committee also noted the growing Latino community in Des Moines. Latino students make up 1/6 of our student population. While Gallardo's job will be to represent all students in Des Moines, a representative of this fast growing community on the school board is long overdue.

In recommending incumbents Boesen, Caldwell-Johnson, and Link, the Committee emphasized continuity and the

need to sustain and build upon positive changes that have been initiated in the school district. These incumbents have shown they can listen, change, and grow. They played important roles in shaping the district's new Graduate Ends Statements that should drive the development of a new approach to curriculum and assessment in the district. They recognize the need to educate the whole child, while fostering critical thinking and communication skills that empower students to thrive in a democratic society and diverse, changing world. Continual turnover on the board makes it very difficult to sustain these kinds of initiatives so their continued voice and support is welcome.

DMEA RECOMMENDS GALLARDO AND THREE INCUMBENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 8 SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION



Des Moines Education Association

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United. Protected. Connected.

SLA Update

Welcome back to school, I hope you enjoyed your summer. We have been busy working throughout the summer to figure out ways to benefit you as members. DMEA is continuing to improve and increase our online presence and ability to listen to and network with each other. Join us on Facebook at <http://tinyurl.com/DMEAfacebook>.

Follow us on Twitter @DMEAAction and keep up to date by visiting the DMEA Blog at www.blogdmea.blogspot.com.

We are excited about new ways to get everyone involved. Please fill out the online membership survey; we are striving this year to grow even stronger by every member agreeing to "One Thing". Please let us know

Josh Brown, Goodrell Middle School

what you are willing to do to help strengthen our association by filling out the survey that you have either received or will be receiving soon.

We are also looking forward to our back to school social on Saturday, August 29th from 4-7pm. We will be enjoying fellowship while listening to Faculty Lounge at Ingersoll Live! I hope you can join us.

DMEA Revenue Purpose Statement

Dave O'Connor Merrill Middle School

Along with the school board race, voters will also be asked to approve the District's Revenue Purpose Statement on the September 8 ballot. Failure of this measure would mean a \$7 million loss in the first year alone of funds that would otherwise have been available for continued building renovations in the Des Moines District. This measure, which has already been approved by Ankeny, Southeast Polk, West Des Moines, Urbandale, and other metro areas is, the result of the state legislatures approval of a statewide one-cent sales tax to benefit school districts in Iowa. It RE-

PLACES the Local Option Sales tax approved by Polk County voters and therefore IT IS NOT A TAX INCREASE. It will remain in place through 2029.

If approved, every building in the Des Moines district that has not yet been renovated would receive funds for infrastructure improvement from this revenue source within the first five years. The district's five year plan focuses on needs



such as air conditioning, technology infrastructure upgrades, and safety and security improvements. Since the average school building in Des Moines is 60 years old, approval of this measure is critically important and in our best interests. Please be sure to vote in the school board election and for the Revenue Purpose Statement and be sure to let others in your community know as well.

Welcome Back DMEA Continued

Greg Harris, Executive Director

(Welcome Cont) time. Maybe you want to become a part of the Rapid Response Team to keep the legislators informed about things that affect children you work with in the schools or legislation that will help or hinder progress of quality public education.

The way to get involved is to speak with your association reps about the

opportunities for getting actively involved in the local association or send me an email at greg.harris@isea.org we are always looking for ways to get more members involved.

The summer conference was held in Storm Lake on August 4-6. DMEA had some members who attended for the first time. The conference was really

great and gave our members an opportunity to network with other ISEA members from across the state.

"We got through the excesses and transfers and now we are ready for a new start."

Department of Associates Update

Rhonda Anderson East High

Welcome back! I hope your summer was memorable, restful, and refreshing.

As we look forward to the 2009-2010 school year, know it will be a busy one with new demands for our flexibility, cheerfulness, and skills. We need to be prepared to meet each moment and change as a challenge to grow with our students. It is not about us.

Please know our students face far more challenges each day than we are aware of. Keep what is best for the child in the forefront-not always easy, but we must. I know everyone does this, as we all do our jobs very well.

We are currently planning our first meeting for this year. It will be on Tuesday, September 15th, from 3:45

to 5:45 at the East library. Hope to see you there!

If you have not received an assignment for this year, please call Marinus at 471-8040 so we can keep track of this issue. You may leave a message with Maria or Kathleen also.

Have a great beginning of the school year, and see you in September.

Kathleen Crouse Office Manager

Your building rep will be distributing this year's Membership Summary form. Please note any changes and either turn it in to your building rep or bag mail it to the DMEA office.

In order to keep your dues deductions correct and ensure that you receive all you are entitled to as a member, be sure to keep us informed of changes such as:

Name

Home address & Phone number

Work location & work status

Maria and I work together every day to maintain up-to-date information on the 2,200 members of DMEA. Please call our office at 515-471-8040 or e-mail me at kcrouse@isea.org or Maria at mrittel@isea.org.

AUGUST CALENDAR

Mon 24	All Teachers Report Deadline for Postmarks on Voter Registrations
Thu 27	1st Day of School for Students
Fri 28	Last Day to Register for Elections

SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

Tue 1	DMPS School Board Meeting
Thursday 3	DMEA Rep Assembly
Monday 7	Labor Day—Office Closed
Tuesday 8	School Board Election
Thu 10	DMEA Executive Board
Tue 15	DMPS School Board Meeting DMPS Staff Development—No Students
Thu 24	DMEA Executive Board
25-26	NEA Board Meeting

SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE FORUMS

A strong DMEA presence at these events in support of our candidates would be helpful and educational. Here is a listing of upcoming forums:

Northeast Neighbors Association

Northside Seniors Center, Park Fair Mall, 100 E. Euclid
Tuesday, August 25, 2009 7:00 p.m.

Des Moines Neighbors

Mickle Center, 1620 Pleasant St.
Thursday, August 27, 2009 7:00 p.m.

A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy (A.M.O.S)

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1528 E. University
Monday, August 31, 2009 7:00 p.m.

Interfaith Alliance, League of Women Voters & Citywide P.T.A.

First Unitarian Church
1800 Bell Ave.
Wednesday, September 2, 2009

REVENUE PURPOSE STATEMENT ALSO ON SEPTEMBER 8
BALLOT

Maria Rittel Office Assistant

I answer the phone to the DMEA office. I am also the organizer/editor of the Tempo, and the webmaster to the Web site. I recognize many of your names.

Speaking of names, before May 1, 2009, I was Maria Howlett. I gained a wonderful husband and a spectacular stepson!

There are a few things that I would like to point out to help make your call to the office smoother.

When a member calls with a situation, I will need to verify the name, school site, whether or not the caller is a member, and a short summary of the reason for the call. Having this info up front before I transfer a call to our directors greatly helps them organize and prepare to help.

Be sure to check the Web site for updates regularly. Have a great 08-09 school year!