

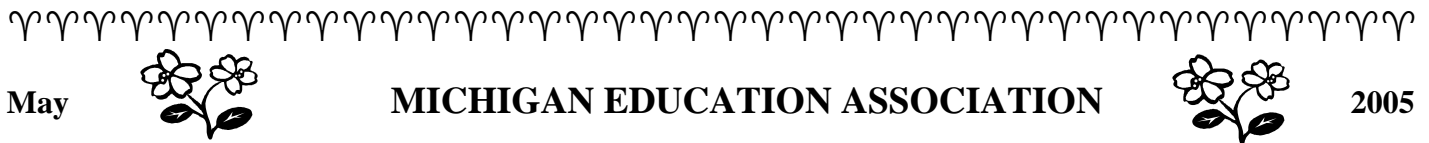
# 15-B INSIDER

<http://www.mea15b.org>

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## Public School Employees Need to Act NOW!

Senate Bills 55 and 56 will put public school employee negotiations back 40 years by eliminating the right to bargain health insurance benefits with the local district. You need to act now in order to protect your bargaining rights and ability to have a decision over what health benefits will be available to you and your family. Each local association member needs to contact his or her state senator and state representative and tell them not to support these bills or any bill that eliminates local control over bargaining health benefits.

You may feel that your voice is not important; however, remember state legislators consider that if one voter contacts them, this issue is important to at least 9 others.

### And the insanity continues ...

On March 22, 2005, HB No. 4534 was introduced in the Michigan House that would amend the PERA (Public Employment Relations Act) to allow a school district to open a settled contract and bargain over insurance if the

district determines that modifications are required because of economic necessity.

“Economic necessity” would be a large loophole that districts could use to bargain continuously over health insurance. In addition, the district will be required to get three competitive bids on health insurance without requiring which benefit levels would be covered.

### Senator Michelle McManus (R-MI 35<sup>th</sup>):

**E-mail:** [SenMMcManus@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:SenMMcManus@senate.michigan.gov)  
905 Farnum Building, Lansing, MI 48909-7536  
**Phone:** (517) 373-1725 **Fax:** (517) 373-0741

### Representative Darwin Booher (R-MI 102<sup>nd</sup>):

**E-Mail:** [darwinbooher@house.mi.gov](mailto:darwinbooher@house.mi.gov)  
166 House Office Building, Lansing, MI 48909-7514  
**Phone:** (517) 373-1747 **Fax:** (517) 373-9371  
To find out more about Senate Bills 55 & 56, go to [www.stopthetakeover.nea](http://www.stopthetakeover.nea)

*"There really is no strong case for the state to be in the insurance business. Nothing in the Constitution requires it, and experience hardly suggests that government can run a business more efficiently than private enterprise."*  
*Mackinac Center for Public Policy, 1992*

## Layoff Benefits with MESSA

If your association has MESSA healthcare, you can qualify for continued healthcare coverage at no cost to you for a specific period of time providing you have had healthcare for one full year preceding a layoff. Please give us a call if you need more information or assistance.



Settled:  
Bargaining 2005:

### BARGAINING UPDATE

Evert Transportation; Forest Area EA; Mesick ESP; & Pine River ESP  
Cadillac ESP; Evert ESP, McBain EA & ESP; Mesick EA; & Marion ESP

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

May 10-13	Cyndi out of office- Arbitration training & vacation
May 23-26	Cyndi out of office - NZ retreat
May 30	Office Closed - Memorial Day
June 10-17	Cyndi out of office – Vacation & staff meeting
June 20-24	Labor Relations Practicum - Novi, Sheraton



July 25-28

Summer Leadership Conference - Saginaw Valley State University



# OPIE Banquet Big Success!



We had 289 persons registered this year, with a total of 273 persons attending our 29<sup>th</sup> annual Outstanding Persons in Education Banquet held April 21<sup>st</sup> at the Timber Lake Lodge. This number was up from last year's 209 persons. Eight school districts and sixteen local associations were represented. MEA president, Lu Battaglieri, was our special speaker. Some of the comments received during and after the banquet from members and guests were: *"This was the best banquet ever. They just keep getting better! This setting is awesome – and the atmosphere and decorations are beautiful. The food was delicious! This is another wonderful banquet!!"* We were thankful for the beautiful weather and wonderful turnout.

As usual, Harvey Miller did a great job as our emcee, and the MEA Retired volunteers helped everything to go as planned by assisting with all kinds of tasks including getting things ready for the banquet; decorating; working at the banquet; and helping to clean up afterwards. A **BIG** thank you to each of them, and to Harvey for all the other hours he put in typing, proofreading, using his and Barb's vehicle for transporting decorations, and for many other tasks. Thank you also to Barb Miller for all of her help with the reservations. A **HUGE** thank you to Kathleen Kelso for her computer "expertise" and the many hours she spent printing, copying, and getting letters out - and her willingness to do whatever, whenever before, during, and after the banquet. We also really appreciate Roger and Linda Hopkins for all of their help in proofing and assembling booklets as well as helping out before, during and after the banquet. And a special "thank you" to Tammy Ladd for her help in punching and binding the booklets. Twenty-seven students from Pine River Area Schools did a wonderful job as our "wait staff" for the evening. We also honored Austin Bancroft, son of Steven and Sherri Bancroft of Evart, and Kathleen Benson, daughter of John and Julie Benson of Pine River, as our MEA 15-B Scholarship recipients.

## The time is NOW to support Public Education!

**RALLY** for public education! Join administrators, teachers, parents, students, community members, and other friends of public education in calling on legislators with one loud and unified message! Michigan must secure adequate funding for public schools NOW!

Let legislators know that you support the passage of SB 246 and HB 4582, and that you want them to support adequate funding for public schools! Lawmakers MUST hear us before important school budget decisions are made!

### You can help!

**What:** Join the Michigan K16 Coalition Rally!

**When:** June 21, 2005

**Where:** The Capitol building steps, downtown Lansing

**Time:** Pre-rally at 1:00 pm, followed by rally at 2:00.

If you care about the future of our schools and the future of our State, plan on coming and bringing other supporters with you. We want legislators to hear one LOUD and UNIFIED voice say: **"For the STUDENTS, for the economy, for the future; fund education NOW!"**

The K16 Rally demands a change in the way schools are funded. Michigan can't continue to afford teacher layoffs, school building closings, increased class sizes, and the elimination of school programs.

For more information on these bills go to the MEA website at [www.mea.org](http://www.mea.org).

## "Some people walk in the rain, others just get wet."



We wanted to start our end-of-the-year note with the quote above from Roger Miller. To us it means enjoy the time you have off; recharge your batteries; take a vacation with family; or start a new adventure in your retirement. Don't just get wet! Unfortunately, for some the reality of layoffs has or will be happening. If so, we hope this is only temporary. This has been a stressful year for most of us. And for those of you (us) still bargaining, remember just because the answer is not right there doesn't mean it won't be found! This is the last issue of the INSIDER until September. Our final thoughts for you until then are: *"The butterfly counts not months but moments, and has time enough"* (Rabindranath Tagore).

So don't forget to stop and smell the flowers.



Please note that beginning June 6<sup>th</sup>,  
our summer hours will be 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
**HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER!!**

