

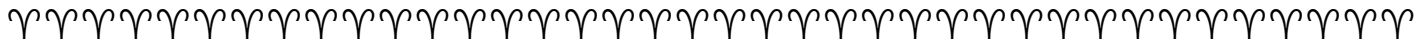
15-B INSIDER

<http://www.me15b.org>

Cyndi Austin
Uniserv Director

caustin@mea.org
jpullen@mea.org

Judy A. Pullen
Uniserv Field Assistant



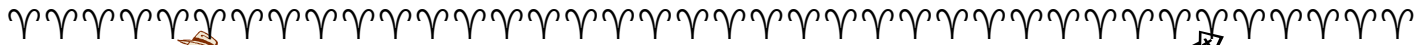
October



MICHIGAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION



2006



Democracy. Cool, Indeed!!



A couple of years ago I wrote an article in the Insider about voting. Well, I am climbing up on that "high horse" again and stressing the importance of using your voice and casting your vote in this upcoming election. This election is crucial to you as educational staff. One of my favorite quotes, which I used then, seems to fit with more urgency today. ***"Through the vote, the press, our own loud voices, we have a right to make noise, to affect change. Democracy. Cool, indeed. - unknown"*** So.....again I say....Don't stand mute and let your vote elect leaders who gut educational funding and take away the tools you need to do the quality job you do.

In this election, it is essential that you know what your candidates say about educational issues and how that could affect jobs in education. For example, last spring, DeVos sent a letter to all of Michigan's school superintendents that "applauded" the decision to outsource the jobs of 225 Grand Rapids bus drivers. He encouraged more school districts to privatize support staff, and offered the help of the Great Lakes Education Project to assist districts in handing over more school jobs to for-profit companies.

Gubernatorial candidate, Dick DeVos, has said he would not push for vouchers from the governor's office despite his history as the main supporter of the failed voucher initiative in 2000. A DeVos family foundation has been contributing to groups in as

many as 21 states across the nation to support voucher initiatives.

As part of the education goals in his "Michigan Turnaround Plan," DeVos says: "As governor, I will set a goal that is crystal clear. Schools will make sure that 65 percent or more of their funding is spent in the classroom." (Read the article on the 65 percent solution in this newsletter) Local school districts know best how to meet the needs of their students, and should keep control of how they spend their money.

However, our current governor, Jennifer Granholm has successfully resolved over \$4 billion dollars in budget deficits. Granholm has increased spending for Michigan's public schools. In 2005, for the first time, classrooms in Michigan received record funding at levels promised by the previous administration. She has advocated for universal access to higher education, and has challenged universities to hold the line on tuition increases. She has proposed a first-in-the-nation program that would award \$4,000 to every Michigan student who completes two years of post-secondary education.

Don't stand aside and allow education to be put on the back burner; see vouchers rear its ugly head; or endure yet another attack on the educational community. **GET OUT and VOTE.**

(Information courtesy of www.meavotes.org)

BARGAINING UPDATE



Bargaining 06/07:

Evert EA & ESP, Cadillac EA, Pine River ESP, Marion EA & ESP

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Oct. 17-18	Statewide Staff Meeting – <i>Cyndi out of the office</i>
Oct 24	Women's Training – 5:30 p.m. (RSVP)
Oct. 30	Region 15 Meeting – Cadillac - 7:00 p.m.
Oct. 31	Privatization Meeting – <i>Cyndi out of the office</i>
Nov. 1-3	Northern Zone Staff Meeting – <i>Cyndi out of the office</i>
Nov. 7	Election Day – Get Out and Vote
Nov. 11	Fall Representative Assembly – East Lansing
Nov. 20	Coordinating Council Meeting – 7:07 p.m.



Beware... the 65 Percent Solution!

Funding scheme—more deception than solution

School funding is in the news daily in Michigan and elsewhere. Inadequate funding has prompted school boards everywhere to make bad decisions that hurt kids in order to balance the books. One proposal that has surfaced in the funding debate is known as the “65 Percent Solution,” promoted by a group called First Class Education.

The goal of this organization is to pass laws in each of the 50 states by 2008 that would require school districts to spend at least 65 percent of their operating budgets on “classroom instruction.”

Problem is, the proposal borrows its definition of “classroom” costs from the federal National Center for Education Statistics and applies it in a way never intended by the Center or anyone else.

The results can be absurd. Spending on football programs, for example, would be allowed, but not on librarians, nurses, counselors, or the buses or bus drivers needed to get kids to school in the first place. It’s a gimmick that removes control of spending from local districts.

This bad idea is a real and growing threat to sound school funding. It’s serious enough to cause the Michigan Education Association, the National Education Association, the National PTA, and other State and national education organizations to sound the alarm as the scheme spreads from state to state.

Instead of helping schools, this scheme would hurt them as they work hard to meet the needs of their students. Please join MEA to oppose this proposal. Local school districts know best how to meet the needs of their students. Let local districts keep control of how they spend their money!

The lowdown on the 65 percent scheme

The “65 Percent Solution” sounds like a good idea on the surface, but the name is a rhetorical sleight of hand meant to obscure the scheme’s actual consequences. It would, in fact, have a crippling effect on schools.

Nonetheless, the scheme is proving to be popular with politicians by affording them the opportunity to sound as if they’re supporting teachers and students without having to increase education funding, no matter how much it may be needed.

Who’s behind this gimmick?

The so-called 65 Percent Solution is being promoted nationally by a conservative group called First Class

Education founded by Patrick Byrne, CEO of Overstock.com. Byrne created First Class Education exclusively to promote the school funding scheme.

One notable supporter of the initiative is Grover Norquist who heads the anti-tax group Americans for Tax Reform. Norquist’s group, which promotes Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) tax limitation measures, was the first to endorse the First Class Education campaign. TABORs have been defeated in a number of places because of their negative impact on education funding.

The conservative American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) has embraced and is actively promoting the scheme to its members in all 50 state legislatures.

Critics have their say

“It’s a simple-minded gimmick. A study by Standard & Poor’s that looked at school budgets and test scores found no significant link between the 65 percent number and increased student performance.”—*Mike Thomas, Orlando Sentinel columnist.*

Prominent conservatives have condemned the plan. Writing in the conservative “National Review,” Manhattan Institute senior fellow, Jay P. Greene, said it’s “horribly wrongheaded.”

“Political operatives have opened a new front in the war on public education...politicians, talk show radio hosts and TV news reporters don’t seem to care that there aren’t any data or research that support the 65% solution...intuitively, it sounds right, and it provides yet another springboard for public school bashing, the nation’s new national pastime.”—*eSchool News opinion by Nora Carr.*

At present, no activity on H.B. 4975 in Michigan

Last June, State Rep. Jack Hoogendyk (R-Kalamazoo) introduced H.B. 4975, Michigan’s version of the 65 percent scheme. The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Education and has seen no activity since last year. However, it is part of Republican gubernatorial candidate, Dick DeVos’s, education plans, so this issue may pick up steam in the fall.

(Article courtesy of www.mea.org)

For more information on this bad idea, visit www.mea.org/65percent

Remember to vote YES on Prop 5!!

For more information, visit www.MichiganK16.org