

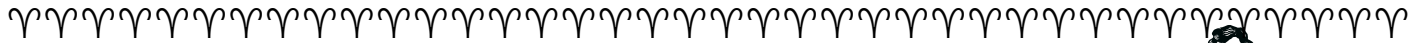
# 15-B INSIDER

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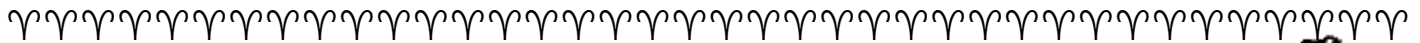
February



**MICHIGAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**



2006



## Show Me The Money....It's Tax Time!



Budget news, whether it's state, school or personal, hasn't been very optimistic. If you're looking for ways to help your financial future, the following information about tax deductions may help.

Under the Working Families Tax Relief Act of 2004, "eligible educators" are entitled to an above-the-line deduction of up to \$250 per year for the years 2004 and 2005 for "qualified expenses." You can deduct these "qualified expenses" even if you do not itemize deductions on Schedule A (Form 1040).

An "eligible educator" is an employee who works at least 900 hours during a school year in a school that provides elementary or secondary education. That includes teachers, instructors, counselors, principals or aides.

"Qualified expenses" are unreimbursed expenses for books, supplies, computer equipment (including related software and services), other equipment, and supplementary supplies that you use in the classroom.

For courses in health and physical education, expenses for supplies are considered "qualified expenses" only if they aren't related to athletics.

**Retirement:** You're never too young to start looking at saving for your future. As a new teacher, you've got a great opportunity to start ensuring a secure retirement by buying service credit (buying years) at a reasonable cost. You can even have the money deducted from your paycheck each month.

Go to [www.michigan.gov/ors/](http://www.michigan.gov/ors/) and click on the School Employees Retirement System (MSPERS). From there you can link to Service Credit and get more information. You can also go to [www.me15b.org](http://www.me15b.org) and click on MEA Financial Services for additional retirement savings information and options.

### BARGAINING UPDATE

Bargaining 05/06: Evert Transportation



### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

February 27	Cyndi out of office – Vacation
March 6	Region 15 – Candidates Night (Cadillac)
March 7-11	National ESP Conference
March 14 & 16	Cyndi gone – Legal Update & Statewide Staff Meeting
March 17	Cyndi gone – BFLC Training
March 20	Coordinating Council Meeting
March 21-23	Cyndi out of office – Train the Trainer meetings
March 24	Cyndi out of office – ESP Conference



**Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.**

-John F. Kennedy, *speech prepared for delivery in Dallas the day of his assassination, November 22, 1963*

# Injunction Stops Inaccurate Crime Lists



MEA members greeted with loud applause a lunchtime announcement during the MEA Bargaining, Political Action and Public Relations Conference in Dearborn that an Ingham County circuit court judge had blocked public release of a list of school employees' names with criminal convictions because of mass inaccuracies.

Judge Joyce Draganchuk issued a preliminary injunction preventing the State Department of Education from releasing the list after hearing arguments from MEA attorney, Bill Young, and testimony from four teachers who appeared on the list for crimes they said they never committed. Draganchuk, ruling just 15 minutes after testimony ended, said the public interest is not served with the release of inaccurate information.

The Judge's ruling will give the Department of Education and school districts time to verify names on the list. The reaction to the news from members attending the Conference summed up the feelings of school employees around the State who opposed releasing the names.

Attorneys for MEA successfully sought a temporary restraining order two weeks ago that barred the Department of Education from releasing the list to the media until local districts contacted the named individuals and verified the accuracy. MEA argued the State demonstrated gross negligence in releasing to

school districts a list rife with errors while knowing of the existence of a more accurate method of developing the list. This action came amid hundreds of calls fielded by MEA from school employees who were victims of mistaken identity or errors in the reports.

The Michigan Legislature adopted the Pupil Protection Laws in September with the aim of removing employees convicted of sex crimes from our schools. They were implemented in January. When the Department of Education released the list to school districts three weeks ago, the inaccuracies became immediately apparent. Some falsely accused school employees would have been only four or five years old when they supposedly committed felonies. One MEA member on the list would have been convicted before he was born!

The inaccurate list has forced hundreds of school employees to lose time from work so they could be fingerprinted to clear their names. Last Thursday, Gov. Jennifer Granholm announced that school employees appearing on the list can be fingerprinted at State Police posts at no charge. Meanwhile, House Republicans retreated from a bill forcing the State to release the names immediately by proposing legislation that would require the Department of Education to help ensure the list is accurate before releasing it to the public.

**If you have made mistakes, even serious ones, there is always another chance for you. What we call failure is not the falling down but the staying down.** -Mary Pickford - *US (Canadian-born) movie actress 1893 - 1979*

## Former Kalamazoo Teacher Named MEA President

The Michigan Education Association today announced the ascension of Iris Salters to the position of president, marking the first time an African-American woman has held the top job. Salters, who has served as vice president of the union since 1999, is a former special education teacher from Kalamazoo. Salters will serve as president through Aug. 31, 2008.

"I am honored and humbled to serve alongside teachers and support staff who work tirelessly to help all students achieve," Salters said. "Educators must be heard and their ideas and concerns addressed so that educational reform can work for children."

Steven Cook, secretary-treasurer of MEA, will serve as interim vice president. Cook is a former paraprofessional from Lansing. The moves were prompted by the 2005 retirement of former Executive Director Charles Anderson.

Lu Battaglieri, elected MEA president in 1999, was hired by the MEA Board of Directors as executive director

following a national search. He is a former teacher from Fraser.

Salters was employed by Kalamazoo Public Schools for 25 years as a special education classroom teacher, consultant and speech pathologist. She was then elected president of the Kalamazoo Education Association, a position she held from 1992 to 1999.

Her advocacy for children and quality education led to service as a member of the MEA Board of Directors as well as other committees and task forces on the local, State and national levels. She is married with two adult children.

Salters will serve the remainder of Battaglieri's unexpired term, pursuant to MEA's governing bylaws. Cook will work as interim vice president until the MEA spring representative assembly, April 28-29. Assembly delegates will elect a vice president in April to serve until Aug. 31, 2008. (Article courtesy of [www.mea.org](http://www.mea.org))