

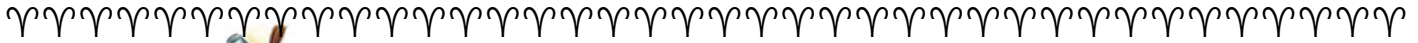
# 15-B INSIDER

<http://www.mea15b.org>

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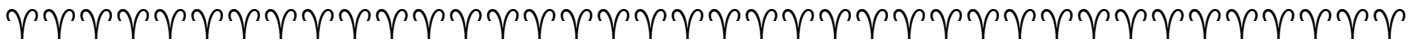
January



**MICHIGAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**



2006



## **Do You Know an Outstanding Person in Education???**

OPIE packets were distributed to each association at the Coordinating Council meeting on January 19th - and the process begins!!! You will soon be given an opportunity to nominate someone in your association who deserves special recognition for going "above and beyond" – and often without any expectation of notice or appreciation.

We encourage each association to take part in this annual event. It is a wonderful opportunity to come together as an educational community with members, their friends and families, superintendents, school boards and administrators. Keep in mind that all nomination packets

must be returned to the MEA 15-B Uniserv office on or before the February 21<sup>st</sup> Coordinating Council meeting!

Our banquet will be held on Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, at Timber Wolf Lake on M-66 in Lake City. Those of you who attended last year know what a beautiful, rustic setting this is – and the food was fantastic! Reservation forms are available through your local association or from the Uniserv office. We are continuing to hold the price at \$15.00 per person on a first come-first served basis. Reservations are limited, so get yours in early!

## **Postponement of Identification of School Employees with Criminal Convictions**

Last Friday the Michigan Department of Education was intending to send its list of school employees who have criminal convictions to the employing school districts by the end of this week. Since that time, MEA has authorized Attorney Bill Young to seek a temporary restraining order to stop the public disclosure of the list. However, as a part of the process to obtain a temporary restraining order, legal counsel first must attempt to contact counsel for the other party. Thus, Tuesday afternoon, Bill spoke with an assistant attorney general who represents the Michigan Department of Education and advised that he would be seeking the temporary restraining order on Wednesday. Late Tuesday afternoon, the assistant attorney general contacted Bill and advised that the criminal convictions information will not be sent out to the employing school districts until the end of the month. In the interim, MEA will continue to attempt to prevent the public disclosure of the list of convictions and to attempt to ensure some type of due process for our members whose names are on the list.

### **BARGAINING UPDATE**

Bargaining 05/06: Evert EA & Evert Transportation



### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Jan 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Cyndi out of office - Arbitration Training  
Jan 23<sup>rd</sup> Cyndi out of office - Training  
Jan 27<sup>th</sup> Cyndi out of office - MESSA meeting/Gaylord  
Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> Cyndi out of office - Meeting in Lansing  
Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> Cyndi out of office - Vacation  
Feb 6<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> Cyndi out of office - Statewide staff meeting/Bargaining Conference  
Feb 21<sup>st</sup> Coordinating Council - OPIE packets must be returned!  
Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> Retirement Workshop & Lobby Day in Lansing



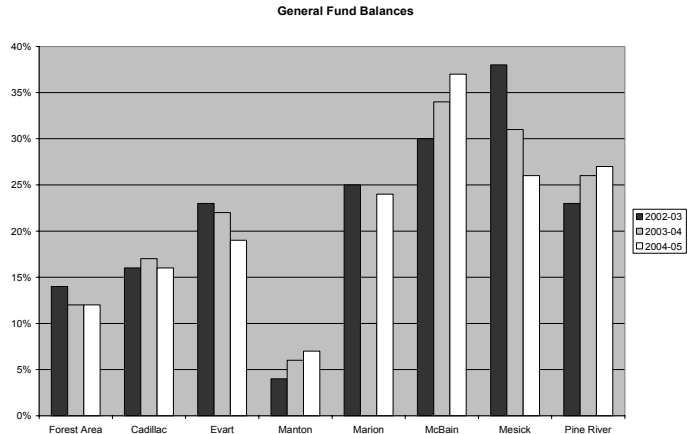


## What Are the Fund Balances in Your District?

What is a healthy fund balance for your school district? That is a question that is always a subject for debate. Figures released this month indicate the average fund balance in the State of Michigan is 14%, which is considered healthy. So how do the districts in our area rank? Here are the 2004-05 end-of-the-year figures:

*% is current fund balance, ranked by size of fund balance, school district (out of 521 Districts, statewide, not including Detroit)*

	<u>%</u>	<u>Rank</u>
<b>Cadillac: (down 1% from last year)</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>208</b>
<b>Ewart: (down 3% from last year)</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>143</b>
<b>Forest Area: (same as last year)</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>283</b>
<b>Manton: (up 1% from last year)</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>399</b>
<b>Marion: (up 14% from last year)</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>McBain: (up 3% from last year)</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Mesick: (down 5% from last year)</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Pine River: (up 1% from last year)</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>41</b>



## First Round Victory in the War Against Privatization

In a move Grand Rapids union leaders are calling a victory, Kent County Circuit Judge Dennis Kolenda upheld Grand Rapids Educational Support Personnel Association's (GRESPA) charges against Dean Transportation's privatization of district bus drivers. "Let this be a warning to other private companies who want to take away our jobs," said Colleen McDonald, a former district bus driver.

put more than 170 bus drivers, mechanics and route planners out of work and out of a contract.

GRESPA President Steve Spica said, "This clearly was an illegal move. The board was coerced by Dean to let them take over our jobs. The board was so eager to privatize, they violated their own policy by not seeking any other bids for the work."

The ruling means that GRESPA can continue its fight to represent the transportation employees who lost their jobs to Dean and to recover any money the employees lost as a result of being laid off.

GRESPA also charges Dean with interfering in the business relationship between GRESPA and the school district. "The judge ruled that we had every right to expect our business dealings with the district to continue. And they probably would have if Dean hadn't interfered to make a profit for itself," said Spica.

McDonald said, "Dean just wants us to go away. They called our charges frivolous. But we won the first round and we'll work even harder to win the next rounds."

Prior to this victory, the National Labor Relations Board agreed to hear the 34 counts under unfair labor charges the union had brought against the district.

GRESPA charges Dean with intentionally undermining the union's contract with Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS), which doesn't expire until June 30, 2006. Since April 2004, Dean has been the supervisor of transportation employees who were still protected by their union contract with the district. In April 2005, the GRPS Board hired Dean not only to manage transportation but also to provide all services. That move

Kolenda's decision means both sides must now prepare for a court battle. "This decision gives us hope. We won't quit fighting for what's right and for what our members are entitled to. It ain't over 'til we say it's over," said Clare Hoover, former GRPS bus driver. (Article courtesy of [www.mea.org](http://www.mea.org))

## Expecting a Little Bundle of Joy? Are You Prepared?

"So You're Going to Have a Baby" informational packets, provided by MESSA, are available in the MEA office for any MEA member on MESSA Super Care or Choices II insurance. These packets contain helpful information on leave time and maternity/new born baby benefits as well as needed forms, phone numbers, and additional benefits available.

**This is the situation in the public schools in America:**  
**The farther you travel from the classroom, the greater your financial and professional rewards –**  
*Frank McCourt, from "Teacher Man" (Author and NY City public school teacher for 30 years)*