

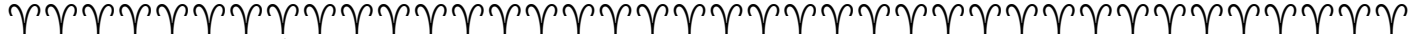
15-B INSIDER

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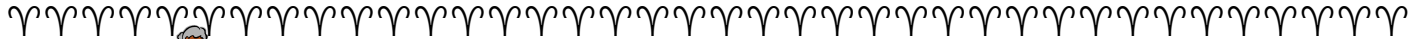
November



MICHIGAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION



2005



“Give Me 5!” Petition Drive – Phase II

It's a shame, but it seems as though our legislature has no desire to address school funding without a dramatic show of interest by the public. By gathering enough signatures on petitions, we will demonstrate just that. We know from past experiences that it has been the MEA that has been the champion for fairness and equity for students and school employees in the State of Michigan. Even when we have partners in our efforts, we always lead the way.

Failure is Not an Option

Even now, it is the MEA that must come through or the petition effort will fail. For the children we serve and the members we represent, failure is NOT an option! So far, statewide we have attained just a little over 55% of our targeted goal. Time is running out.

Every week until we reach our goal of 300,000 signatures, MEA will be awarding a prize to a lucky petition circulator who has turned in a petition filled with signatures. That's

only 10 signatures! Prizes will vary but you could be the lucky winner of an iPod, a PDA or a vacation. Even if you've already turned in your petitions, you're still eligible.

In addition MEA is providing a \$10 gas card, a \$10 Meijer card, or a \$10 McDonald's gift card to **members** who collect 25 valid signatures. Please return your petitions to your local Uniserv office to be counted and receive a free card of your choice.

If an organization outside of the MEA (band boosters, athletic boosters, community organizations, Student MEA group) is willing to collect signatures as a fund-raiser, MEA will compensate them at a rate equal to \$10 for every 25 signatures. Let me know if you have an organization willing to collect signatures.

When we reach our goal of 300,000 signatures—everybody wins!



BARGAINING UPDATE

Bargaining 05-06:

Manton ESP, Mesick ESP, Evert EA & Transportation

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



Nov. 23
Nov. 24 & 25
Nov. 28-30
Dec. 7-9
Dec. 12-16
Dec. 19

Cyndi out of the office
MEA office closed – Thanksgiving holiday
Cyndi out of the office – SPARKS Training
MEA office closed – Northern Zone Staff Training
Cyndi out of the office – NEA Training
Coordinating Council Meeting – 7:07 p.m.

Nominations for the Leon A. Brunner Award, MEA's highest honor for ESP members, are due Feb. 1st. The award recognizes support staffs who have made significant contributions to ESP issues and concerns. The award will be presented at the Statewide ESP Conference March 24-25 at the Grand Traverse Resort. Questions can be directed to Monica Ritchie at t 800-292-1934, ext. 6667, e-mail mritchie@mea.org. The 2005 Leon A. Brunner Award nomination form can be downloaded from at www.mea.org.

"If you can't set a good example, you'll have to settle for being a horrible warning!"
Author Unknown

'Pupil Protection Laws' threaten MEA members' jobs



A list of teachers and other school employees with misdemeanor or felony convictions in their past is due soon from the Michigan Department of Education.

The State is expected to notify school districts of the names of employees who have previously been convicted of crimes, as required by a series of new state laws collectively known as the "Pupil Protection Laws."

The list is part of a package of laws expected to directly impact school employees. The law now:

- Requires all school employees to be fingerprinted by the Michigan State Police, including school employees who have previously been fingerprinted.
- Requires a criminal background check on each school employee. The law does not specify whether the school district or the employee is responsible for the cost of fingerprinting and background checks.
- Requires a school employee charged with a crime covered by the Sexual Offenders Registration Act (SORA) to report to his/her local superintendent and the State superintendent of public instruction

the fact that he/she has been charged with the crime.

- Requires the discharge of school employees who are convicted of crimes covered by SORA. Those convicted of other felonies may continue to work with permission of the superintendent and board of education.
- Establishes "Student safety zones" within 1,000 feet of a school facility, where individuals registered under SORA, with certain exceptions, may not reside, work or loiter.

The Michigan Department of Education plans to release lists of school employees convicted of crimes within the next few weeks. Publicity generated from the public release of the lists may prompt school districts to act hastily toward employees with criminal convictions in their past. MEA members are urged to contact their Uniserv director immediately to protect their employment rights to the extent possible.

For an overview of the laws provided by MEA legal counsel and a list of the SORA crimes that will require a district to discharge an employee, please go to the MEA website at www.mea.org

MEA must continue efforts to build strong union, Cameron says

Former NEA Executive Director Don Cameron told MEA RA delegates that the nexus of professionalism and unionism 40 years ago led to higher salaries, respect and dignity for teachers and school employees across the country.

"Prior to the 1960s, we had professionalism without unionism, and we were part of a system that went against us at every turn," said Cameron, who began his career as a teacher in the Birmingham School District.

"We were told that if we act as professionals, the public will recognize us as professionals, and the money and prestige will follow. Baloney. It didn't work. Teachers were oppressed and depressed."

In 1960, the average teacher salary in the United States was \$4,800 a year, he said. "We were grossly underpaid," Cameron said. "School boards paid whatever they wanted, and teachers could demand nothing. Women were paid less than men.

Elementary teachers were paid less than secondary teachers. Blacks were paid less than whites. You could be fired without cause. And there were no fringe benefits. None!"

Thanks to collective bargaining and unionism, today's average annual teacher salary is \$48,000, Cameron noted. "Professionalism without unionism got us nothing," he said. "With strong unions and collective bargaining, we've increased our pay, and we have fringe benefits, dignity and respect. Without collective bargaining, we'd be right back where we were 40 years ago." Cameron said the MEA was at the forefront of the union movement for public school employees 40 years ago and must continue to lead the way today.

Noting MEA's Building Full Capacity Locals initiative, Cameron said "we must stay together and work together and strengthen our union by building strong local affiliates."

