

GREEN SHEET

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER • DEARBORN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS • AFT LOCAL 681, AFL-CIO

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Dearborn, MI

Membership Meetings

2007—2008 Meetings

January 2008

22 General Membership 4:00 P.M. Lowrey

February 2008

26 General Membership 4:00 P.M. Lindbergh

March 2008

25 General Membership 4:00 P.M. Stout

April 2008

22 General Membership 4:00 P.M. Bryant

May 2008

27 General Membership 4:00 P.M. EFHS

June 2008

4 Year-End Celebration 3:00 P.M. Park Place

Plymouth-Canton Contract

The Plymouth-Canton Education Association union has agreed to a two-year contract with the board of education that includes pay raises and a switch in health insurance, according to The Canton Eagle

This year, teachers at the top of the pay scale will receive a bonus of 1.5 percent, while all others will see a 0.25 percent raise. Those at the top of the pay scale will receive an additional 2 percent raise next year.

The PCEA also voted unanimously to change health coverage to a Blue Cross/Blue Shield Community Blue PPO starting in January 2008. The district expects to save more than \$400,000 through the switch

Westwood Hires Private Company to Provide Alternative Education

The Westwood Community School District has contracted with Ombudsman, a private company based in Illinois, to provide an alternative education program to students in the Dearborn area.

Westwood Superintendent Ernando F. Minghine said the program gives at-risk students a chance to complete high school, in some cases their last chance.

"We hope it will benefit all students who need something to catch fire. We can't afford to have a whole generation go by the way-side," Minghine told Michigan Education Report.

Ombudsman is a division of Educational Services of America, a national educational service firm. The company is under contract with the district for one year to provide alternative education programming to students not only from Westwood, but from three other conventional public school districts in the Dearborn area. In an arrangement among the districts, all of the students have enrolled as Westwood students so they can attend the Ombudsman program. The state aid the districts would receive for each student also will flow to Westwood, which will, in turn, use it to pay Ombudsman.

Alternative education students are usually described as those who don't perform well in a traditional classroom setting. Francis L.

McCauley, Westwood's alternative education administrator, said many of the students come from transient families, moving frequently among school districts without putting down roots in any of them. Some live with relatives, not parents. Many have behavioral issues, social issues and legal issues, like pregnancy and truancy, and few role models.

Ombudsman offers them a different environment, some control over their own schedule, an individual learning plan and a one-on-one relationship with a teacher, she said.

Ombudsman students don't attend their local school; they go to a learning center where they work their way through seven major areas of study, including core academic subjects like math and science, plus nonacademic subjects like college preparation. In Westwood, students temporarily are meeting in the district's administration center, but an off-campus site was expected to open by mid-November.

Under the terms of its contract with Westwood, Ombudsman provides the building and equipment and develops the curriculum to meet Michigan graduation requirements. The teachers, who hold Michigan certification and have taken training in the Ombudsman program, are school district employees. In some states, Ombudsman hires teachers directly, but Michigan law requires instructional personnel to be district employees. The program currently uses two full-time and two part-time teachers, although McCauley said that could change if enrollment increases.

Jill Basherian, president of the Westwood Education Association, said that the teachers hired for the Ombudsman program will not be members of the teachers union. That follows past practice, she said, adding, "Westwood has never had alternative education teachers in our unit."

Dearborn High adds 7th period

In an effort to help students who are failing 2 or more classes, Dearborn High School has added a 7th period to its schedule. This period was created by shortening each of the 6 classes students currently have.

The new period is 40 minutes long and runs on Tuesday and Thursday of each week. Students who are failing 2 or more academic classes must attend a "core seminar". These students can seek help to improve. The remainder of the students can elect to sign up for workshops created by the remaining teaching and counseling staff. Those on the honor roll and no failures can take advantage of special "reward" centers such as silent reading in the auditorium or socializing in the cafeteria. Attendance is taken during a separate class that meets for 10 minutes and then students are free to relocate to the workshop of their choice or required core seminar.

Staff and student reaction to the new program is mixed. Some feel it is a waste of already limited organized time and does little for the target students. Others feel it allows students to get caught up on missed work.

School Aid Budget fy 2007 - 2008

House Bill 4359 appropriates a total of \$13 billion for the 2007 - 2008 School Aid Budget, of which \$35 million comes from general fund monies. School districts will see between \$48 and \$96 per-pupil increase in funding this year. Dearborn will see a \$48.00 per pupil increase. Overall, with the elimination of the Middle School Math and Science Grant, Dearborn will receive per pupil funding equal to what it received in the 2006—07 school year.

Drop out Factories

A national study found that one out of 10 high schools across the nation fail to graduate at least 60 percent of the students who are assigned to the school as freshman. Seven schools in the Flint area fall into this category, but school officials are disputing the label, according to The Flint Journal.

The study was conducted by Johns Hopkins University for the Associated Press and used data from the U.S. Department of Education that tracked graduating classes from 2004 through 2006. Flint area schools included on the list are International Academy of Flint, Bendle High School, Bentley High School, Carman-Ainsworth High School, Flint Central Academy, Flint Northwestern Academy and Flint Northern Academy. State statistics report that only two of these schools, Flint Central and Flint Northern high schools, had a graduation rate lower than 60 percent, The Journal reported.

According to data from Michigan's Center for Educational Performance & Information, Bendle, Bentley and Carman-Ainsworth high schools and International Academy of Flint had graduation rates above 90 percent in 2004-2005. Traci Cormier, director of the International Academy, noted the disparity in figures is a result of students transferring out of the school because of its academic rigor, according to The Journal.

Michigan is planning to calculate its 2007 graduation rate using a formula specified under the No Child Left Behind Act, which reflects an attempt to standardize reporting across the nation, The Journal reported.

SOURCE :
The Flint Journal

Oct. 31, 2007

Bill Mandates Compulsory Education until age 18

Education leaders are pushing legislators to increase the compulsory school attendance age from 16 to 18, according to The Grand Rapids Press.

A bill to mandate the change is being discussed in the Senate Education Committee. Currently, 20 states and Washington D.C., require students to attend school past the age of 16, and 12 require students to remain enrolled until they are 18, The Press reported.

The bill has won the support of some educators throughout the state, including Grand Rapids Superintendent Bernard Taylor and Justin King, executive director of the Michigan Association of School Boards .

"I don't see how they have time to work on laws like prohibiting people from jumping off piers and not touch this," King told The Press .

Wyoming Superintendent Jon Felske supports the legislation but says the issue is more complex than people think.

"On one hand, do you want to have in your classes a 16-year-old kid who doesn't want to be there and is a potential discipline problem and disruption to all the other students?" Felske told The Press. "On the other, do you want to have laws in this state that would leave people to believe that they don't need a high school diploma to be successful in life?"

SOURCE :
The Grand Rapids Press

Nov. 4,

Salaries Trail Inflation

The National Education Association published figures showing that investments in America's public schools remain stagnant, as the average increase in teacher salary continues to trail behind the rate of inflation for 2005–06. No state has achieved adequate and equitable funding despite years of court cases and education reform proposals.

According to NEA's publication, *Rankings and Estimates: Rankings of the States 2006 and Estimates of School Statistics 2007*, the average one-year increase in public school-teacher salaries was 2.9 percent, while inflation escalated 3.9 percent. Over the past 10 years, the average salary for public school-teachers increased only 1.3 percent after adjusting for inflation. Because of inflation and other economic factors, teachers have not been able to keep pace with basic household expenses.

According to the report, the national average public schoolteacher salary for 2005–06 was \$49,026.

Over the decade from 1995–96 to 2005–06, in constant dollars, average salaries for public school teachers increased 1.3 percent. Mississippi (14.0%), Louisiana (13.1%), Arkansas (12.6%), North Carolina (12.3%), and Illinois (11.5%) had the largest real increases in salaries during that 10-year period. Twenty-two states saw real declines in average teacher salaries over those years, adjusting for inflation. Those with average salaries declining 5 percent or more: Alaska (-16.1%), Michigan (9.1%), Pennsylvania (-8.8%), Connecticut (8.2%), West Virginia (-7.4%), New York (7.3%), New Jersey (-7.2%), and Wisconsin (5.5%).

Source: NEA Rankings and Estimates

School Enrollment

Public school enrollment was 48,727,536, up 0.7 percent over fall 2004. The largest percentage of school enrollment increases from fall 2004 to fall 2005 were in Nevada (3.1%), Georgia (2.9%), Texas (2.8%) and Arizona (2.4%). Eighteen states and the District of Columbia experienced declines in student enrollment in fall 2005. The greatest declines were in Louisiana (-9.6%), North Dakota (-2.2%), Utah (-1.9%) and the District of Columbia (-1.3%). Michigan showed an estimate increase of 1.1%

Student Expenditures

Average per student expenditure for public elementary and secondary schools was \$9,100 based on 2005–06 fall enrollment. States with the highest per student expenditures were New Jersey (\$13,781), New York (\$13,551), Massachusetts (\$12,596), Vermont (\$12,475) and Connecticut (\$12,436). Among the states with the lowest per student expenditures were Utah (\$5,347), Arizona (\$5,585), Nevada (\$6,755), Oklahoma (\$6,944) and Tennessee (\$6,979). These figures, in the context of adequacy and equity in school funding studies, are about 25 percent short in meeting student needs. Michigan's average was \$9880.00.

Grievances

According to Vice President David Atkins, one grievance has been filed on behalf of the teachers at Dearborn High and the new 7th period.

Certification Fees to Rise

Effective November 19, 2007, an applicant shall pay the following fees to the Department of Education in order to renew or apply for their teaching or other certification:

<u>Original Application Fee</u>	<u>In-State</u>	<u>Out-of-State</u>
Provisional teaching certificate	\$160.00	\$210.00
Professional teaching certificate	160.00	210.00
Vocational temporary authorization or interim occupational certificate.....	160.00	210.00
Occupational education certificate	160.00	210.00
Additional teaching certificate endorsement.....	50.00	
Substitute teacher permit	45.00	
Full-year teacher permit	45.00	
Emergency permit	45.00	
Annual occupational authorization.....	40.00	
Duplicate certificate or authorization.....	25.00	
School psychologist certificate.....	160.00	210.00
Temporary special education approval.....	50.00	
School administrator certificate for persons eligible for certificate after July 1, 1988	160.00	210.00
School administrator endorsement	50.00	
School counselor license	160.00	210.00
<u>Renewal or Reinstatement Application Fee</u>	<u>In-State</u>	
Provisional teaching certificate	\$100.00	
Continuing teaching certificate reinstatement.....	50.00	
Professional teaching certificate.....	160.00	
Vocational temporary authorization or interim occupational certificate.....	100.00	
Occupational education certificate.....	160.00	
School psychologist certificate.....	160.00	
School administrator certificate	160.00	
School counselor license	160.00	

These higher fees are the result of new legislation passed and signed into law this fall. The new fees will be used to fund on-line renewals and an update site for teacher certification.

Bi-Weekly Paychecks Delayed

Bi-weekly paychecks, slated to begin February 1, 2008 will be delayed because of technical issues with WCRESA. WCRESA has met with Dearborn's payroll department, and at that time it was determined that additional time is needed to make sure that the new system information can be sent to the Office of Retirement Services (ORS) accurately in order to update their database for the new biweekly pay and TDP deductions.

The following steps are necessary to insure that the transition is seamless:

1. RESA Programmers program/test changes needed to convert monthly earning and deductions to biweekly;
2. Verify the changes and run biweekly pays in a test environment;
3. Transmit changes to ORS so that files can updated with new information;
4. Test an ORS submission to verify the ORS database are in sync with Dearborn's payroll file.

Once this is accomplished, the biweekly payroll will be implemented. Once a firm date is determined, members will be notified of the changes and what they will need to look at, given their own circumstances.

Members should monitor their deductions, on a yearly basis and make any adjustments to insure that they are taking advantage of any IRS changes that may take place. These changes include contribution limits to 403b's and 457's, along with changes in personal withholding allowances to insure IRS compliance.

Year end checks also provide members with an opportunity to re-evaluate investments and investment strategies with their financial consultant.

Michigan Spec. Ed. Teachers Deemed Not 'Highly Qualified'

Secondary school teachers of special education in Michigan likely have lost their status as being "highly qualified" under federal standards because the state allowed them to take certification tests for elementary teachers.

Currently, the district is identifying those whose status has changed, and is going through the process as defined by the State to insure that these teachers are highly qualified, as defined under NCLB. In situations where a teacher's status cannot be determined, the individual teacher will be contacted and asked to provide additional documentation in order to be highly qualified.

Teachers will have until June 30, 2009, to become highly qualified, a status they need to comply with the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The Michigan Department of Education said it was unclear how many of the state's 7,000 secondary special education teachers used the elementary exam to become highly qualified.

"At the time, this was believed to be an appropriate means to meet the requirements—until guidance from the federal government directed us to amend the requirements," state education department spokeswoman Jan Ellis said last week.

Family, Friends and Colleagues

As you head off for Winter break, please take some time for yourself to rest and enjoy the holidays.

From the DFT family to yours, have a restful and peaceful break.

Classes resume on January 2, 2008