

MEA MONITOR

Moline Education Association

February/March 2018

President's Report - Susan Hafner

Hello Everyone-

I can't believe it is already the end of February. I hope that all of your conferences went well and that you had a restful President's Day weekend. I have to admit that I have spent a lot of my downtime watching the news of late, and I am so impressed with today's young people. Seeing the students of Parkland take a stand for school security reinforces what we do everyday. As we teachers begin each day, we are trying to help our students learn and in the process helping them to become more informed citizens of this country, who are willing to use their voices to effect change.

One of the major changes that we will notice next year is the end of the PARCC test. The test will be replaced, but it is supposed to be shorter and focused more on growth, similar to the MAP test. Testing has been a constant point of conversation with administrators, and I am adamant that our students are more than just a test. If someone wants to know about a student and his or her progress, talk to the teacher and look at the gradebook--not just one test. As I said earlier, we are trying to create better citizens and that includes being responsible for one's work and behavior, as well as being able to perform satisfactorily on a test.

During this spring, a committee of teachers will be meeting with our administration to discuss the salary schedule. For Tier II employees, they are currently expected to work until they are 67 to receive full retirement benefits, which means with our present schedule they would have to work for 23 years without a step. This is a complex issue and I will keep you posted on any thoughts or findings along the way. We want to make sure that all of our teachers are valued and that we do not discourage young people from working in our district.

We have had some recent positive steps in the district, including the Behavior Modification Room at Wilson and improvements to our professional development. On our first day back from winter break, I hope teachers felt that the focus on levels and differentiated instruction were useful. We want to make sure that our PD offers information that we can use in our classrooms and that we don't feel like we are wasting our time for a day or afternoon. When high school teachers recently had a less than stellar afternoon with a consultant addressing differentiated instruction, we received an apology from administration, which was followed by requests of how to make things better. If we want change, we have to be vocal when our PD offers nothing new or doesn't address the concerns of our classrooms. With the Behavior Modification Room, students who are sent out of class will now have a place to go, so they can work on their behavior and hopefully become a positive part of the classroom, rather than a disruption. I am hoping that we can get PD next year that will help teachers with dealing with difficult students--something that goes beyond the ACES training and provides useful strategies for teachers.

As we go into March, the days will be getting longer, literally and figuratively, but before we know it, spring break will be here. We can be very proud of what we do, and I hope everyone will take a moment to remember those courageous teachers and students in Parkland. Teachers gave their lives to protect the students, and kids helped one another in the face of evil. The survivors are making sure that their friends and teachers are not forgotten, and we should be so very proud of today's young people. The students of Parkland have started a movement and students (and adults) across our country are joining their rallying cry, which will be officially recognized with the March for Our Lives on Saturday, March 24th. The Quad Cities will be taking part in this historic day, which will give the students and teachers of our area an opportunity to take a stand on the security of our kids and schools. When people join together, their power cannot be denied, and it is then that change finally occurs.

Appreciatively-
Susie

AR Secretary's Report - Emily Roberts

Moline Education Association
Association Representatives Meeting
Thursday, February 8th, 2018

The MEA Association Representatives met Thursday, February 8th, 2018, at the IEA office, Moline. President Susie Hafner called the meeting to order at 3:46 pm. There not being a quorum present, the meeting began with the Committee Chair Reports.

Committee Chair Reports:

- Membership – Heidi Norcross reported membership stands at 441, with two new members.
- Elections – President Hafner e-mailed NEA Convention information to members.
- Legislative – Dave Strafford will attend the GPA mini-convention in Springfield.
- Region 18 – President Hafner noted nominations for Region 18 chair, vice-chair, and ethnic minority position were being accepted.
- Public Relations – no report.
- Social – President Hafner announced the next social event would be March 3rd, with the place to be determined.
- Grievance/Negotiations – no report.

Old Business:

- President Hafner reminded ARs that contracts and salary statements were available on-line.
- There was positive feedback from the ARs regarding the professional development offered during the January 3rd in-service.
- President Hafner noted that the behavior modification room would soon be open at Wilson Middle School.

New Business:

- Some schools had received notice about student enrollment and staffing for the 2018-2019 school year. President Hafner reminded the ARs that Todd DeTaeye had said these numbers were a good starting point, and that staffing could change for next year.
 - President Hafner announced that a committee had been formed to discuss the salary schedule. She noted that Tier 2 teachers must work to age 67 to receive full retirement benefits, and that, in the current salary schedule, they are at the same salary step for 25 years.
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A.R. Concerns:

- It was voted (2010-2011) to not publish AR concerns in the Monitor. ARs were reminded to communicate concerns discussed at the meeting with the other MEA members they represent. President Hafner will discuss most issues in the "President's Corner" section of the Monitor or send superintendent's responses directly to the ARs for dissemination to members.

In the absence of Treasurer Mary Nelson, President Hafner reported balances in the MEA accounts. It was voted (January 2015) to not publish the dollar amounts in the MEA budget in neither the minutes nor the Monitor. Members with questions regarding the MEA account balances are asked to contact Treasurer Mary Nelson.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:57pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Emily Roberts, MEA Secretary

MEA Member News

Congratulations to:

- Becky Meneses (MHS) on the birth of a baby girl

Condolences to:

- Becky Kennelly (Willard) on the loss of her grandmother
 - Jen Sondgeroth (Butterworth) on the loss of her grandfather
 - Megan Ramirez (Roosevelt) on the loss of her sister
 - Heather Breidenbach (MHS) on the loss of her grandmother
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