



Messenger

A newsletter published for the education employees of the Howard-Suamico School District

Volume 9, Number 7

Message from the President *by Beverly Rittenhouse, HSEA President*

February 19, 2009

Howard-Suamico Education Association

Bev Rittenhouse
President

Dave Wickert
Vice President

Bev Schacht
Treasurer

Candice Perz
Secretary

Calendar of Events

March 12
Executive Board meeting
4 p.m., UNE Office

February 9 and 30
Board of Education meeting
6 p.m., BP Forum Room

We are well into February and already a few weeks into third quarter. I have already heard the familiar talk in the building of how quickly this year is passing. Within a month we will nearly be at Spring Break...and that does seem amazing!

Given this fact that time does seem to “fly,” I want to bring your attention to the following items, even though the months of April and May seem far away. In April, Howard-Suamico will elect School Board members. A former teacher, Doug Thompson, is running for a School Board position. I had the honor of working with him on several committees and admire him as a man with keen insights, honesty, and integrity. If you live in the district, please vote in your April election. Also, my two-year term as President will end this school year. I would ask for members to begin to reflect as to a personal desire to fill this position in our association. We have, I believe, entered a new “era” of education in working together with administration on numerous issues, hence creating a team of creative problem solvers, focused on a continued partnership based upon trust and respect. I would love to pass this critical position on to a member who shares this belief and future visions of possibilities. If you believe that you have leadership skills, are committed to collaboration, and desire to continue to have our district become the model of how education should change to reflect a 21st century model, please contact me. If you not only work in the district, *but also live in the district*, please reflect on this position as a way to also serve your school district as a community member. Next, we continue to address the topics of comp and prep time. Many believe we can create new procedures that reflect standards of professionalism, on both, which can be a model for 21st century education. Currently, a Task Force is working on prep time, hoping to create new guidelines, with the belief that the ability to prep; hence affecting the quality of instruction, is critical in our intervention model for at-risk students. We hope to create another committee, next year, working on the issue of comp time. Our profession should reflect, in this area, the highest status, equal to other highly trained professions. Please let me know if you’d like to participate in this endeavor next school year.

As always, there are important up-dates within this newsletter, as well. I hope that February continues to go quickly as we all look forward to March, the month of transition and change, which, as this newsletter reflects, change holds great possibilities of new positive beginnings. Please consider participating with others who believe in the unlimited possibilities as we strive to have Howard-Suamico be the “ground breakers” in this era of change.

HSEA Executive Board Meeting—February 12, 2009

Newsletter Summary

Treasurer's Report

- Savings \$16,945.16; Checking approximately \$1,140.45.
- Current expenses since the January meeting \$271.77.
- Discussion as to whether or not raise the total amount available for the scholarship fund. Moved (Rittenhouse) and seconded (Heim) to raise this year's amount to \$700 and to make a proposal in next year's budget to raise the fund to \$1,000. Motion passed.

President's Report

- Notified that Doug Thompson, retired teacher from HSSD is running for the school board. Will call Doug and ask if he would like our official endorsement. We will advocate for him in our HSEA newsletter. Vote for Doug on April 7!
- District sponsored retirement luncheon set for May 15.
- Recent climate survey results showed low marks in teacher/school appreciation/recognition. Looking for ways to increase our public relations with community and district. We have not had a public relations chairperson in four years. Will contact BP marketing department to see if they would like to do a feature on a staff member once a month for the Howard-Suamico Press.
- SPED task force looking to invite administration to February 18 meeting to discuss PREP time issue.
- Clarifying question on past president's message about creating a partnership within schools with Service Team Leaders and Union Reps. They DO NOT have to be the same people but they could help each other problem solve at the building level.
- Issues to resolve or make progress on before the end of the year:
 - ✓ Passing the constitution at the May 7 General Assembly meeting. We need 40+ people present for quorum.
 - ✓ Clarifying procedures for the breakfast program.
 - ✓ Create small consensus bargaining team to work on comp time and possibly the prep time issue.
- Procedures of the Union; how can we be more efficient? Need to find a way to get board members, specifically the president and negotiations chairperson, time to fulfill duties. Looking for suggestions/solutions; possibility of release time?
- Thinking/planning for positions for next year; vacancies in the Presidency. Any others? Please let us know of your plans and/or interests.

Committee Reports

Legislative

- WEAC RA April 24-26 in LaCrosse. March 11 deadline to UNE.
- VOTE February 17 for Tony Evers for State Superintendent. We need someone with an educational background leading the DPI.
- VOTE April 7 for Doug Thompson, HSSD School Board.

Members Rights

- Bay View working on new schedule as a solution to the mini preps grievance but the wording of the district's response letter makes resolving this difficult.
- Grievance reminders; please consult your contract for correct time lines so dates are not missed and grievances dismissed.

Negotiations

- Moved (Wickert) and seconded (Perz) to accept proposed calendar for 2009-2010.
- Early retirement committee gave a proposal to the district. Next meeting is March 3.

Building Reports:

Bay Harbor:

- Notified that if you are late to PLCs you will have to take leave time.
- Classroom parties are prescheduled and cannot be changed, no matter when your prep time is. Told to find someone to cover so you can hold the party and have your prep time. How can you have prep time if the party is in your room?
- Why are there fewer early release days?
- Conferences; do all schools have to have conferences on the same nights?
- Can you take comp time to attend your child's conference out of district if HSSD conferences are on the same night?

- If one of your student's parents passes away, what is the policy for attending the funeral?

Bay View:

- Frustration due to:
 - ✓ Three years, three NEW schedules.
 - ✓ Uncertainty of staffing; no word yet what you will be teaching next year or who you will be teaching with.
 - ✓ Advanced classes; math and science offered but may have to be taught by an in-house person, not getting more BP help. Who will this responsibility fall onto?

Bay Port, Forest Glen, Howard, Lineville, Meadowbrook, Suamico: No report.

Candice Perz
HSEA Secretary

Deduct Educator Expenses on Tax Form 1040

Congress has extended the tax benefit for out-of-pocket expenses; review these [guidelines](http://neamb.com/money_articles/121508A.jsp) for help with your return:

Selecting Partners and Groups

From Jen Wells, a foreign language teacher from Kendallville, Indiana:

I teach foreign languages, so I use interactive groups very frequently. I have several methods for organizing. First, I bought some poker chips at the local dollar store. There are four colors and about thirty chips of each color. I numbered each chip from 1-30 making four different colored sets. Upon entry, I pass out chips with the different numbers. For example, in a class of 18 in which I need to do paired activities, I pull 1-9 green and 1-9 white. The different colors with the same number pair up. I can create groups of up to four children each. I also use the chips as ways of getting students to answer questions. I draw chips and match the number to the student number in my grade book. So far, this chip method works very well. I can also select specific partners (weak and strong) by selecting my chips secretly.

Apply For An Ambassador Fellowship

The U.S. Department of Education is accepting applications for its Teaching Ambassador Fellowship. State-certified, practicing pre-kindergarten to 12th-grade public school teachers and instructional specialists/coaches with at least three years of teaching experience are eligible. <http://www.weac.org/Resource/bulletin.htm>

Retired HSEA Member Runs for School Board

Doug Thompson retired last June after having spent 33 years serving the students and teachers of the Howard-Suamico school district, first as a teacher at Bay View and later as a teacher mentor.

We were pleased to learn that Doug has decided to run for the School Board seat being vacated by Dave Thode. If you live in the Howard-Suamico district, please vote for Doug in the April election.



"There seems to be so much more winter than we need this year."

--Kathleen Norris