



Messenger

<http://www.weac.org/HSEA>

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

Volume 10, Number 4

Message from the President *by Jason Berna, HSEA President*

November 20, 2009

Howard-Suamico Education Association

Jason Berna
President

Dave Wickert
Vice President

Bev Schacht
Treasurer

Candice Perz
Secretary

As we enter the holiday season, we must stop and truly give thanks for what we have. This is, however, no time to rest. I really hate to sound like a broken record in asking people to help out, but we need **your** help! We have 383 members in our association and currently only around 50 members are actively participating (that is roughly 13%). Our building reps have been doing a great job of getting the word out to try and alleviate many of the issues that you have in your specific buildings. Please talk to your building reps about ways in which you can contribute.

We are nearing the beginning of a very important round of negotiations. The QEO is now gone and Governor Doyle has just signed legislation that will allow schools to create payments based on performance. The potential ramifications of this new legislation may be great. Our Negotiations team has been working very hard on our proposal trying to echo many of your specific concerns. However, not all concerns will be answered in this round of bargaining. We have just way too many; which is a shame in itself. At some point if we were a bit more unified, we would have fewer issues and that would make the negotiations much easier.

So how can **you** help? Here are some ideas:

1. Show up to a meeting:
2. We have scheduled a General Assembly meeting on January 12, 2010, to discuss negotiation issues. We want to inform you about some very hot and sticky topics. I strongly advise attending this meeting. We could even see about creating a babysitting service to help you out.
3. Join one of our new committees:
 - a. Numbers Committee. If you are a person who loves spreadsheets, money, data, and numbers, we have a job for you (leadership position available).
 - b. Members Action Committee. You may remember this one from four years ago; we need to rejuvenate it (leadership position available).
 - c. Food/Donation Drive: We would like to donate to the Giving Tree in the name of HSEA, ESP, and AFCSME 305 & 305D at least twice a year: We need a leader at each building. Contact Janelle Nickerson for more info.
 - d. Insurance Committee. We are reportedly running at 110% right now, which will cost us all in the end. This August we met with district leaders to discuss ways to reduce these costs. I have also, on three separate

Calendar of Events

December 10
Executive Board meeting
4 p.m., UNE Office

December 14
Board of Education meeting
5:30 p.m., BP Forum Room

occasions, discussed this with Mr. LaCroix and James Freeman to no avail. Dave Wickert is now heading a committee to create a brief pamphlet/presentation to share at a faculty meeting. Contact Dave if you are interested in helping out.

e. Jenny Johnston and Justin Nelson (Public Relations Committee Chairs) have created an email directory. It currently contains 171 members email addresses. Yes we are happy to have this many, but that is only 44% of our membership. We could be saving lots of money in printing costs if we could send you a quick email. Please contact them if you did not initially report your email address.

When you look at how easy it is to get involved you must almost wonder how you have not been. Those of you that were may have burned out. It is easy for one person to look at the number 383 and say “Oh, someone else will do that for me.” You’re right, someone else will. But what if you decided to spend one or two hour(s) a month to make your working conditions better? What can you bring to the table to make us stronger? We are currently running at 13% efficiency. For those of you who understand automobiles, you know that an 8-cylinder vehicle will not run on only one cylinder; however, we are trying to.

I believe that we can learn from the lessons of the past. On January 20, 1961, John Fitzgerald Kennedy said in his Presidential inaugural speech, “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what can you do for your country.” In our September newsletter, I tried to answer the following members questions, “Why have a union?” and “Why do I need a union?” I now challenge you, one of the 383 other members, to answer the following question: “Ask not what your union can do for you, but what can you do for your union?”

Happy Thanksgiving, Jason

HSEA Executive Board Meeting—November 12, 2009 Newsletter Summary

Treasurer’s Report

- Total expenses for October/November: \$1,250.34 Total for year: \$6,318.34.
- Checking: \$1,275.67; Savings: \$17,161.00.

President’s Report

- October meeting with Damian:
 - Absences paperwork:
 - Reminder: fill out immediately upon return.
 - Keep it simple: cold, flu, headache, doctor appointment, etc.
- No November meeting so December meeting will be on December 16.
 - Looking to establish two new committees and in need of interested parties to set up and help organize and lead:
 - Numbers committee. Negotiations committee has lots of numbers from the district and they need help organizing this so they can use it. Numbers like administration contracts, etc. If interested, please contact Jason as soon as possible; he has the materials.
 - Members Action committee. Need to help the PR committee in getting messages out in the community, possible job actions, and spreading messages through our membership. If interested, please contact Jason as soon as possible.

- Insurance committee. Should meet with Denise Hutchinson to create a short informative presentation to be used at staff meetings. We are running at 110% usage with our insurance benefits and we need more information out there to help decrease our costs. If interested, please contact Jason as soon as possible.
- Food/Monetary donation drive by HSEA, ESP, and the AFCSME 305 and 305D; this is good PR and the right thing to do to help support The Giving Tree. Contact Janelle Nickerson if you’re interested in being a contact person at your building.
- Possible general assembly meeting in December to discuss contract proposals. Look for more information to come.
- Asking the PR committee to think about sending out another staff survey on issues:
 - How are we doing?
 - What needs improvement?
 - What improvements have been made that are noticeable?

Committee Reports

Legislative/Political Action/Public Relations

- Stimulus Funds; approved pay for performance standards.

- Wisconsin considered a state in major budget crisis; signaling further cuts.
- Surveys completed; 171 responded to survey, 169 email addresses in database. T-shirts = 94 yes votes. Many people interested in participating in the HSEA; will be contacted individually.
- Teacher of the month; five nominations received, will pick one from each level. Decision still pending on what to give them in recognition. Next newsletter will showcase winners.

Members' Rights

- A few small issues have been dealt with and resolved.
- Looking for information/update on the retirement arbitration.

Negotiations

- Discussed district proposal.
- Discussed calendar proposal.

Retired Liaison

- No report. Karen Dallman in attendance for Lynne Glinski.

Social

- Retirement Dinner at Townline will be May 4.
- General Assembly meeting at Townline will be May 13.
- Possible December General Assembly meeting. More info to follow.

Newsletter, Scholarship, Webpage: No report.

Building Reports:

Bay Harbor:

- Absence forms are returned unfolded and not stapled. For privacy sake, please return to folding and stapling.
- Specialists: each year number of sections changes; can be between 45-50 sections. Major prep time differences.
- Question regarding association members who do not require a sub; how does their deduction for personal days work?
- Sending people on school visit to Illinois cost lots of dollars; now what? We have not heard anything coming from this.
- Quality people not passing the teacher insight; cannot sub or apply in our district because of it. Should judgment be based on ONE test?

Bay Port:

- Online courses are conflicting with courses offered on site.

Bay View:

- Positives to report:
 - Changed house meetings from every day to every other day.
 - Committed to shortening staff meetings; staff meeting for next canceled due to conferences.

Forest Glen:

- Told to use last years Social Studies benchmarks; not using any of the work done over the summer?

- Math benchmarks do not match curriculum; told not to report out on any math benchmarks this quarter.

Howard, Lineville, Meadowbrook: No report.

Suamico:

- Amount of time teachers are pulled from class for trainings; can there be a cap placed on this per month? Can teachers refuse to attend trainings?
- Inservice hours; must go through mylearningplan.com. Nothing can be done at building level; told it needs to be offered to the whole district to be considered inservice. Clarification needed.

*Candice Perz
HSEA Secretary*

Late Homework Pass

From a high school English teacher in Brooten, Minnesota:

Some teachers reward students by giving them a free homework pass that allows them to skip a homework assignment. I think this implies that the homework wasn't important. Instead, consider giving your students a late homework pass that allows them to hand in an assignment one day late without penalty. This can be used for those rare times when grandma came over unexpectedly, the playoffs are going on, or a kid was ill the evening before but felt well enough to come to school the next day.

Negotiations Update by Cathy Allen-Schneider, HSEA Negotiation Chair

Negotiations have opened between the HSEA and the District. Members of the HSEA negotiation team are: Tom Appel, Ryan Hibbard, and Jenny Soucoup at BP; Candi Perz and Mary Koglin at BV; Deb Hebert at LV; Darlene Schoen at MB; Michele Nigbur at SU; and Cathy Allen-Schneider at FG. Sue Britz is our UNE director helping us with negotiations. Members of the District team are: Jim Freeman, HR Assistant Superintendent; Betty Zimdars, Assistant Superintendent of Financial Services; and School Board members Teresa Ford and Jeff Andersen.

On October 20, the parties exchanged proposals. Prior newsletters have already outlined the HSEA's proposal, so following will be what the District proposed at this meeting:

****New language on Professional Development:** The District is proposing that members may be required to participate in up to 37.5 hours of professional development per contract year to occur on workdays, Saturdays, or during the summer. Members would receive comp time for the actual hours worked on workdays and Saturdays and would receive summer curriculum pay for summer hours worked. The rationale behind this is to limit the amount of time staff are out of their classrooms for meetings.

****Early Retirement:** The District re-proposed their early retirement language that was rejected by the HSEA team late last year. The District has proposed three groups, with each receiving different benefits. Group 1 would include active bargaining members currently age 50 or older as of July 1, 2009. This group would receive our current early retirement benefits. Group 2 would include active members under age 50 with at least 10 years of service as of July 1, 2009. This group's benefits would include the District depositing a percentage of the current health insurance premium into a health reimbursement vehicle each year between ages 50 and 57 (they proposed 66% of a single plan and 35% of a family plan); a pension benefit based upon the early retirement schedule in our current contract, with a maximum of \$125,000; upon retiring, 20% of the total amount in their benefit "pot" would be paid to a TSA (tax sheltered annuity), with the remaining 80% to be available through the health retirement vehicle. Group 3 would include active members with less than 10 years of service as of July 1, 2009, and all new hires. This group would have \$3,000 deposited into a health retirement vehicle per year following their tenth year of continuous service. Benefits would cease upon termination/resignation, retirement or age 57. No contributions would be made while on any unpaid leaves of absence lasting one semester or longer, with the contribution pro-rated the remainder of the contract year.

****Transfer Language:** The District proposed tweaking the language pertaining to Level 1 teachers receiving a written explanation from a selecting principal when they are not chosen for an open position in the district. Their proposed language would change this to a verbal explanation from the principal, with the teacher being able to make a written request for the reasons s/he was not chosen. A written request and response would be placed in the teacher's personnel file.

****Salary Payments:** The District is proposing revising this to reflect their use of direct deposit for all members. Staff would receive all checks on or before the 15th or 30th of each month (including checks over the Christmas holiday).

****Inclement Weather Days:** The District is proposing that the superintendent will determine if missed time will be made up as instructional time or as a

teacher work day, with missed time being made up on dates and times determined by the superintendent after conferring with Association leadership. A variety of suggestions were made as to days/times this could be accomplished.

****Calendar:** Calendar negotiations have begun and will be elaborated on later in this article.

****Contract lines:** The District proposed tweaking various language to correct any errors or outdated references.

****Economic proposals:** The District proposed a 7% total package increase, with a 3.58% total package increase for 2009-10 and a 3.42% total package increase for 2010-11. (Even though no longer in effect, this is less than the QEO minimum of 7.6%.) Their proposed percentage increase for 2009-10 would result in no increase on the salary schedule due to the increased health insurance costs. The district proposed keeping our current health and dental insurance plans as they are currently. They also proposed changing the percentage the District would pay towards health insurance premiums from the current 95% for single/family to 90% for single/family. The District also proposed with this that if members successfully participated in a voluntary health risk assessment program (HRAP) provided by the District, the Board would pay 95% of the group

health insurance in the insurance year following the HRAP compliance. Their proposal on this would include the employee and all adults covered by the employee's group health insurance; dependent children would not be included.

****Prep Time Language:** The District notified the HSEA team that it would be exercising its right to remove permissive language in our current contract related to prep time, starting when agreement is reached on a successor contract.

The HSEA negotiations team met on October 26 to discuss the District's proposal and to work on a response. The team is scheduled to meet again on November 23 to continue work on our proposal and response to the District's proposal. Two meetings are scheduled for December 8 and 17 to continue the bargain with the District team.

Calendar Negotiations

Calendar negotiations got underway on November 3 with the first meeting between the two teams. Jenny Soucoup and Cathy Allen-Schneider represented the HSEA and Jim Freeman, Vicki Dachsler, and Sue Sinclair represented the District team. The District and HSEA proposals are as follows:

<u>District</u>	<u>HSEA</u>
8-26 Staff Development day	8-30 Staff Development day
8-27 Inservice day	8-31 Inservice day
8-31 Full work day	
9-1 First student day	9-1 First student day
10-28, 29 Teacher Convention	10-28, 29 Teacher Convention
11-16 P/T Conferences PM	11-22 P/T Conferences PM
11-18 P/T Conferences PM	
11-23 P/T Conferences PM	11-23 Students AM only
	11-23 P/T Conf afternoon and PM
11-24 Students AM/ECT PM	11-24 ECT both AM/PM
12-23 to 1-2 Christmas break	12-23 to 1-2 Christmas break
1-21 ECT AM/Inservice day PM	1-21 Work day AM Inservice day PM
3-21 to 25 Spring break	3-21 to 25 Spring break
4-22 Non-contract day (Good Friday)	4-22 ECT both AM/PM
6-7 Last day of school	
6-8 Work day AM/ECT PM	6-8 Last day of school
6-9 ECT both AM/PM	6-9 Work day both AM/PM

ECT = Evening Conference Trade-off

The dates above are very tentative at this time. The District team had concerns about the HSEA's fall conference proposal, so a calendar agreement was not able to be reached at this meeting. Another meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, December 3, to continue calendar discussions.

The next few months will be busy ones for the negotiations team. When 10-minute meetings are scheduled in your buildings to update you on negotiations, please try to attend. We need your input on the various issues as we move forward with this bargain. The more involved and knowledgeable we are as a membership could make a huge difference. As always, please contact your negotiations rep in your building or me at Bobcat54301@aol.com with any concerns or input you may have. Enjoy the rest of November and I hope your conferences go well!

Win a 2GB Jump Drive

On December 1, WEAC will randomly select 10 WEAC members who are Facebook fans and 10 WEAC members who are Twitter followers to win 2GB jump drives!

If you aren't already a fan or follower, become one now to qualify!

Also visit the new weac.org for news, professional development resources, member services, and expanding multimedia and social networking opportunities.

Become a fan of the WEAC Facebook page at www.weac.org/facebook

Become a follower of the WEAC Twitter page at www.twitter.com/WEAC

Ask the "Messenger"

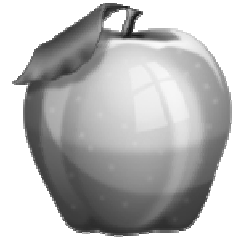


Do you have a question about your insurance coverage? Need clarification on language you read in our contract? The answer to these questions and more can be found right here! All you have to do is ask.

Put your question in writing, mark it "Ask the Messenger," and forward it to any HSEA Executive Board member. Then look for your answer in the next issue of the Messenger.

The best teachers teach from the heart, not from the book.
~Author Unknown

The Howard-Suamico School Education Association is inviting your nominations of teachers who deserve to be recognized!



Each month we will recognize one outstanding teacher from each of three grade levels: K-4, 5-8 and 9-12.

Anyone (students, parents, colleagues, administrators, etc.) can submit a nomination. The Teacher of the Month for each level will be recognized publically in the HSEA newsletter, recognized at his/her school, and will receive a token of appreciation from the HSEA.

For nominations please submit this form to one of your HSEA Public Relations Representatives, Justin Nelson or Jenny Johnston at BPHS



TEACHER OF THE MONTH NOMINATION FORM



Name of the teacher being nominated: _____

Name of the teacher's school: _____

Grade level taught by the teacher: K-4 5-8 9-12

Please provide a statement explaining why this teacher deserves recognition:

Your name and/or school _____

(You may remain anonymous if you so desire)