



Messenger

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

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

Volume 11, Number 4

November 19, 2010

Howard-Suamico Education Association

Jason Berna
President

Dave Wickert
Vice President

Bev Schacht
Treasurer

Candice Perz
Secretary

Calendar of Events

November 29
Board of Education meeting
6 p.m., BP Forum Room

December 9
Executive Board meeting
4 p.m., UNE Office

December 13
Board of Education meeting
6 p.m., BP Forum Room

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

In my last letter, I asked that you go to the polls and vote. I know that each of us has a different political view. I also know that each of us is willing to voice our opinions on politics differently. No matter what your opinion, over the past two weeks, new policies have been introduced and I hope that you are ready for what may be the fight of your life. As I stated in our last news letter, I wanted you to get out and vote, hopefully you exercised your rights and did so. Please be willing to stay informed and voice your opinions to the State legislature. I have attached several of the articles that have been in recent papers. Please take 10-15 minutes out of your busy day to read these. I guarantee that you should find these of GREAT INTEREST (deals with your future working conditions, salary, retirement, insurance and everything else educational). Keep all of this in mind as you read that our school board has approved the 2010-2011 budget, while stating that we are "currently \$5.00 from being the lowest revenue limit of all 426 school districts in the state." What that means is that we are spending less money per student than 424 other schools. While we being "fiscally practical and educationally progressive," you may have seen the following:

- Your class sizes have increased
- You have spent more hours in meetings that at any other point in our history
- You have fewer aids/secretaries/other staff to assist you
- We are expanding our programs offered (in many cases pushing kids into these before they are ready so we can meet administrative goals that are tied to Merit Pay)
- Specialist have seen an increase in sections per week to the point that some cannot even get to the bathroom
- You are filling out more paperwork than ever
- Questioned about appointments/illnesses
- Just plain doing more! Need I go on?

So what can **you do about it?** I am glad that you have asked. On December 13 from 5:00 until 6:20 p.m., our school board wishes to meet with us and all staff. It is really exciting to see the board trying a new small group format so they can get more of our (your) comments/concerns/suggestions/solutions (bring facts/data). The board will be sending all staff an invitation and a list of seven questions (see last page of this newsletter). On October 25 we had one board member stand up out of their seat, look at several of our members in attendance and say, "and I hope to see a LARGE turnout." This was repeated two weeks later at the November 8 meeting as well. So some of them really want you there!

I have already arranged for a **FREE** babysitting service to be provided by our YLS students (see your building rep for more info) during the meeting. I have also decided to spend some personal money to try and get people to attend. As you show up, please place your names into a box for a raffle to win one of 10 gift cards; however, I will only have the raffle if 50+ percent (136+) association members show up. If this still does not work for you, then please, pretty please with sugar all over it, fill out the anonymous list of questions sent to you by the board and turn it into your building rep. This is your chance to tell the board what you LOVE and what you would LOVE to change about our (your) school district.

Over the past 16 months of my presidency I have heard a growing number of people stating that they are more tired and busy than they can ever remember. Well, so am I. However, I do have three simple assignments that you MUST make time for, because it is about YOU!

- I need you to read these articles and discuss with your colleagues:
 - a. **Sunday, November 14, 2010 Madison State Journal article**
 - http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/local/education/local_schools/article_3f7fc14e-f02d-11df-8841-001cc4c03286.html
 - b. **November 6, 2010 Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel**
 - <http://www.jsonline.com/news/education/106830878.html>
 - <http://www.jsonline.com/news/education/106833503.html>
- I need you to voice your opinion on December 13
- Have a great rest of the month, Happy Thanksgiving and safe travels.

Jason

Quotes used in this publication were provided by the October 25 and November 8 School Board meetings, as well as, the November 2010 Howard-Suamico School District newsletter.

HSEA General Assembly Meeting—November 11, 2010

Newsletter Summary

Treasurer's Report

- Balances of accounts and a list of expenses paid were given.

President's Report

- Continue to fill out Good News cards.
- Board Meeting report:
 - ✓ Justin Nelson on the October 25 meeting: Passed budget/tax levy, 4.7% increase. Concern about lack of community members there to oversee a budget being passed.
 - ✓ Joyce Treml on the November 8 meeting: Clergy and Civic Communication Night; various community members attended a night of discussion centered on questions generated by the school board.
 - ✓ Next meeting November 18 and Lineville members will attend.
 - ✓ Issues: concern with lack of community member attendance, board members speaking in "code" and people in attendance having no idea what they are talking about, and encouraged by positive feedback from school board members on our continued attendance.
- Discussion with Mr. LaCroix and Mr. Freeman on November 10:
 - ✓ They are "aware of stress level" and will be talking to the Administrative Team on November 11 about it.

✓ Mr. Freeman commented that, "It doesn't seem to be any one thing, but the computation on many little things." We ask, "What can be done?"

- Board meeting on December 13 from 5 - 6:20 p.m.:

✓ Board will be inviting us and sending out the list of questions.

✓ New format for meeting was presented: set up focus groups by building level-- elementary, intermediate/middle, and high school. Mr. LaCroix liked the idea.

✓ Challenge to HSEA members: we want 136+ to attend and all 371 to respond to the questions.

✓ PowerPoint created and will be given to building reps to share with staff.

- Signed Memo of Understanding on Doug Thompson being the new Teacher Mentor:

✓ Becky Zimmer has had an increase in Math Coach responsibilities.

- Please take your issues to the building administration and building reps first. Contact those involved prior to involving building administrators if it is between members.

- Retirement Grievance issue: close to a settlement. More information to come as process is ongoing.
- Leadership: where are we going? Are you performing your duties as a HSEA leader in your building? Suggestions: continue attending board meetings, continue holding 10 minute meetings in your building, contribute to the PR good news newsletter, and BUY A HSEA T-SHIRT!

Committee Reports

Legislative:

- Chairpersons: Tim Mulrain.
- Shared two articles (from the Journal-Sentinel series “Building a Better Teacher,” both written by Alan J. Borsulk):
- *Public schools likely to face cash drain – Walker platform creates new challenges for old-guard education system*
- If the state government cuts aid, which is likely, local districts will be forced to raise taxes.
- Teacher benefits will be an easy target to attack. Walker may try to add teachers to state employee insurance pool.
- Voucher program is currently capped at 22,500 students. This cap will probably be repealed.
- *Systematic Changes Coming for the State’s Public School Teachers*
- Criticism of the state’s public school centered around lacking teacher development (reason the state lost the “Race to the Top” funds), stagnant test performance, minority populations score well below average, and Wisconsin is in the “backseat” of educational reform (actually a good thing because we don’t jump on every “new” idea).
- Proposed solutions: performance based teacher training, merit pay will probably become a reality, and mandatory teacher coaching and training will increase.
- Questions for parents: Does my child enjoy classes with this teacher? Is the teacher enthusiastic and knowledgeable about what he or she teaches? Does the teacher correct and return homework in a timely manner? At parent-teacher conferences, does the teacher know my child and how he/she is doing in class? Is my child’s teacher responsive to my attempts at communication? Do I get a heads-up if my child is struggling? Do I have a way to know how my child is performing and whether my child has been late to or absent from class?

Political Action:

- Chairpersons: Justin Nelson and Jenny Johnston.
- Executive Board needs to decide action committee’s next move.
- Next action team meeting is December 7 at 4 p.m. at Townline. Still looking for at least one member per building.

Members’ Rights:

- Chairpersons: Darlene Schoen and Mary Lu Sachs.
- Clarification on how much information members need to submit when asking to use bereavement leave.

Public Relations:

- Chairpersons: Justin Nelson and Jenny Johnston.
- Shared staff (teachers, support staff, custodial, food service, etc.) linkage PowerPoint for December 13 Board Meeting from 5-6:20 p.m. at Bay Port in the lower blue pod.

- ✓ Look for the emailed invite and District generated questions coming soon.
 - ✓ Attendance/participation will show positive united front.
 - ✓ If you can’t attend, fill out the questions and get them to your building reps. Probationary teachers, your answers can be submitted anonymously.
 - ✓ Don’t just complain; bring a solution or reasons for your complaint (support data).
 - ✓ Questions from the district are in an order of importance as decided by Board.
 - ✓ Remember: How to solve the issue is just as important as what the issue is!
 - ✓ HSEA’s goal: 136+ in attendance and 371 questionnaires returned!
 - PR newsletter goal to “toot your own horn” is underway; looking for a Forest Glen rep.
 - ✓ Template sent to building reps.
 - ✓ All articles need to be submitted by Tuesday, November 16, so these can be printed for conference night.
- ### **Negotiations:**
- Chairperson: Cathy Allen Schneider.
 - Summarized where we are in negotiations: still without a contract.

Received response from district with no apparent changes made and still no response to HSEA proposal. Team meeting held on November 8 to discuss team's affirmed decision on changes to early retirement.

- Bay Area Negotiators meeting on November 30: HSEA will be presenting their proposal for approval of BLUE members, part of WEAC requirements for arbitration.

Retired Liaison:

- Chairperson: Lynne Glinski.
- No report.

Scholarship:

- Chairperson: Blake Bierowski.
- No report.

Social:

- Chairperson: Kathy Krause.
- Spring Social and Retirement Dinner will be at Townline.
- Support your union, purchase a t-shirt! Get your order forms to your building reps that will send them to Kathy at Bay Port.

Newsletter:

- Chairperson: Jenny Soucoup.
- There are now 331 Association members receiving The Messenger at their home email account. This is 89% of the membership!
- Feel free to submit any stories you think would be of interest.

Web page:

- Chairperson: Joyce Trembl.
- No report.

Building Reports:

Bay Harbor:

- Building Reps: Blake Bierowski and Michele Otradovec.
- No report.

Bay Port:

- Building Reps: Blake Griesinger, Justin Nelson, Kathy Krause, and Eric Sorensen.
- Concern over lack of drop policy enforcement; students are dropping classes after the deadline and not receiving the policy specified grade on their report cards
- Who will recover the cost of additional resources, not to mention teacher's time spent, if all or any students are allowed to drop a class at any time without penalty?

Bay View:

- Building Reps: Kurt Prien and Mark Campbell.
- No report.

Forest Glen:

- Buildings Reps: Mary Lu Sachs and Cathy Allen-Schneider.
- Social Studies Power Standards issue; corrected standards have been inputted (near the completion of the 1st quarter) but teachers are still waiting for specific rubrics. Generic rubrics will be used in the meantime.

Howard:

- Building Reps: Sue Tegan and Mary Berg.
- Hourly sub versus half day sub issue resolved.

Lineville:

- Building Reps: Joyce Trembl and Deb Servais.
- No report.

Meadowbrook:

- Building Reps: Darlene Schoen and Carrie Brunette.
- No report.

Suamico:

- Building Reps: Michelle Nigbur and Michelle Wick.
- Concerns over inadequate coverage in the front office at the end of the day; part-time secretary leaves at 2 p.m.
- Concerns over inconsistencies with staff being moved around/traveling; secretaries, LMS, Art, and Music.

Old Business

- Discussion on attendance at Board meetings. Buildings will be responsible for sending representatives to the School Board meetings on the dates listed: Lineville: November 29; Bay Harbor: December 13; Forest Glen: January 10 and 31; Howard: February 14 and 28; Meadowbrook: March 14; Suamico: April 11 and 25; Bay Port: May 9 and 23. Building reps be sure to send out an email to all staff about attending board meetings.
- Upcoming dates for HSEA Executive Board meetings for the 2010-2011 school year are as follows:
 - ✓ December 9, January 13, February 10,

March 10, April 7, May 12 (General Assembly Meeting at Townline)

Candice Perz, HSEA Secretary

Negotiations Update by *Cathy Allen-Schneider, HSEA Negotiations Chair*

Not much has been happening the last two months with negotiations. On October 12, the HSEA negotiations team received the district's final offer with no changes from their previous offer. The district's proposals on early retirement and the total package (wages and benefits) had not changed from their previous offer. The district is still proposing a 4% total package on each year of the contract. To give you an idea of what this means for members, a 4% package increase in the first year is about a \$167 increase on the schedule. With our current health insurance increase of 11.9% for 2010-11, a 4% package in the second year would be about a \$175 decrease to the schedule. In other words, we would go back on salary in the second year. This certainly would not be a situation the negotiations team would be willing to consider.

The HSEA team met on November 9 to discuss the district's proposal, particularly the early retirement issue. After quite a bit of discussion, the team voted to say no to the district's proposal on early retirement. For us to consider any early retirement changes, the district would need to propose something very significant to the salary schedule. As for our proposal to the district, we have continued to include language items previously mentioned in this newsletter and have asked for a 2% increase to the base on the salary schedule for each of the two years of the contract. At this time, we have also dropped our proposal regarding PLC language from the contract.

To try to reach a voluntary agreement, the team has asked Sue Britz, our UNISERV director, to ask for another mediation session with Marshall Gratz and the district team. As of the time of writing this article, we had not heard back from the district on our request. It is still our hope that we'll be able to reach a voluntary agreement. Please contact one of the negotiation team members with any questions or concerns or contact me at Bobcat54301@aol.com.

Good News!



Bay Harbor:

- Our building is wireless!
- We are having a HERO breakfast to kick off our book fair.
- We earned over \$300 for Heavenly Hats.

Bay Port:

- "Flowers for Algernon" was a huge success. Students and directors worked very hard. Great job!
- Janelle Nickerson walked the original marathon in Athens, Greece! Way to go!

Bay View:

- World Language Lunch was a huge success--a great staff morale builder--thank you Gail Burant for organizing this!

Forest Glen:

- We had a great book fair. The money earned was given to classroom teachers to purchase books for their classroom libraries.

Howard:

- Really enjoy our all-school assemblies every month!

Meadowbrook:

- Harvest Fest on October 27 was fun for all! Painting and decorating pumpkins in the classroom was enjoyed.
- Kathy Hoppe's trip to Trinidad is a plus for bridging communication between two school systems. Way to go!

Suamico:

- Third grade products store simulation was very successful. Kids learned a lot. Many parents volunteered to help out.
- Healthy Movers Club started for students at Suamico.
- Library aid is an excellent addition to staff.



PLEASE RETURN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE TO YOUR BUILDING REP BY FRI 12/10

Faculty and Staff Community Conversation
December 13, 2010 - 5:00-6:20 p.m. - Blue Pod D

Update

Welcome and introduction will include progress the District has made since last year's linkage with feedback on specific items raised in the previous staff linkage and a recap of other community conversations.

1. Please describe the Howard-Suamico School District in one to three words.
2. How do you define a top performing school district?

Is it important to you that our District be a leader in the state of Wisconsin?

3. What is our district doing best?

What should our district stop doing?

4. How can we help our students interact effectively with people from other cultures and backgrounds? (E-3-8)
5. If you were to prioritize the Life Skills policies (E-3) and the Citizenship policies (E-4), which would you rate as a higher priority? Why?
6. What would you like the Board to know about board policies and actions in connection to the values of our community and the mission of the HSSD?
7. Our state is facing a very challenging budget situation that will likely impact K-12 educational funding. What do you consider "untouchables" for budget reductions? What areas seem like candidates for reductions?