



# Messenger

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

Volume 10, Number 2

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

September 17, 2009

## Howard-Suamico Education Association

Jason Berna  
President

Dave Wickert  
Vice President

Bev Schacht  
Treasurer

Candice Perz  
Secretary

## Calendar of Events

### September 28

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

### October 8

General Assembly meeting  
4 p.m., Townline

### October 12

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

During our most recent Executive Board meeting, we were discussing our past newsletter. Jenny Soucoup asked if any of us had received a question for the “Ask the Messenger” portion. Blake Bierowski said that one of the most popular questions that she has been recently asked (as members started to look at the pink half of paper with our Union dues printed on it) was, “Why do we need a Union? And what does the Union do for me?” It really created a great discussion that I wish would have gone on for a while. About eight years ago, I personally had an administrator ask me why I supported the Union? “Wouldn’t you rather negotiate your own contract? You could conceivably get more.” My answer was and is “peace of mind.”

Why we have a union is basically for the same reason that they were created in this country during the 1870s. People started to realize that they were being used as “paid slaves.” Told what to do, when to do it, and paid very little for their work. Employees were living in company towns, paying rent to the company, buying food and clothing from the company store, and placed their savings (if they had any) in the company bank. Skilled wage earners wanted better working conditions, shorter hours, higher pay, and better benefits (vacation, sick leave, tools of the trade paid for). They were also tired of unskilled laborers underbidding them and “stealing” their jobs. Skilled labors agreed to improve their skills and provide higher quality products with more efficiency in exchange for many of these benefits. Blood was spilled, leadership was jailed, and businesses were temporarily shut down. President Theodore Roosevelt had even gone as far as threatening to use the U.S. Army to take over the coalmine fields by force during the 1902 Coal Miners Strike. Your Union is much more civil than those a near century and a half ago and I believe that our administration will not be like Marshall Field and Company (yes the owner of the department store), buying a Gatlin gun in response to the Chicago Haymarket Riot in May 1886 (First they would say that “they don’t have the money for it,” but let’s face it, if they want it, they’ll find the money for it ☺).

The interesting thing in looking back in time is that we are basically asking for the same things. All we want is a place to work that we are given the tools necessary to do our jobs, a comfortable atmosphere, a **fair** wage, and some **fair** fringe benefits. We have long been upholding our end of the bargain, staying on top of the new and improved ways to educate America’s Youth, scoring above the state average year after year on WKCE, ACT, and AP tests, as well as having more students than any school in the area take and succeed in our extracurricular programs. Yet we are currently being asked to give up even more and raise the bar again. At some point we must collectively ask “what is

in it for us?" In a past meeting with our superintendent Damian LaCroix, he told me "that it is not all about money." I want to know if the nice write-ups in the newspaper or a "pat on the back email" are going to pay your everyday bills. If I go to the "Pig" to pickup dinner tonight, a simple smile and flash of my HSSD identification badge is not going to pay the bill!

What your Union is doing for you and why you have it is very simple. We are here to:

- Fight for your rights and protect individuals.
- Bargain as a whole unit, trying to get what all of us deserve for the hard work that we do.
- Provide for a "quality of life" both now and into retirement.

These concepts are lost when individuals think that they could do better for themselves, but be careful. Here are just a few questions that come to mind:

- Why should the District keep you with a Masters degree, when they can hire someone else for less?
- What kind of time restraints would be placed on you to bargain your own contract every couple years?
- You actually think that the district would get involved in long-term contracts?
- What happens when they create merit pay and you don't have the "most energetic" students?
- What happens to you if you have a personal problem with your principal?
- Do you really feel like finding a new job every few years and moving?

I know that many of you despise hearing/reading quotes, but Benjamin Franklin could not have said it better on the eve of signing the Declaration of Independence, "We must, indeed, all hang together or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately." Either we learn from the past, or we are doomed to repeat it again. This is why you are part of one of the largest Unions in the State of Wisconsin. This is why it is important for you to be an active member. This is why you are interested in sharing your opinions, so together, we can support our livelihoods. Keep doing the **GREAT JOB** that you have been doing in the classroom, and know that I will be discussing the items that I hear from you with the administration.

*Jason*

## HSEA Executive Board Meeting—September 10, 2009 Newsletter Summary

### Treasurer's Report

August expenses: \$671.70.

Balances: Checking = \$976.02; Savings = \$17,748.32.

### President's Report

- Meeting dates for 2009-2010: **October 8** (General Assembly meeting at Townline), November 5, December 10, January 7, February 11, March 11, April 15, **May 13** (General Assembly meeting at Townline).
- Meeting with Damian September 16.
- October 7 UNE team training: dinner and informational sessions from 5 to 8:30 p.m. Contact Jason if interested.

- Business cards: ready to be handed out. Encourage use of website.
- Building representatives: hearing good things. Keep holding 10 minute meetings.

### Committee Reports

#### **Legislative/Political Action/Public Relations**

- Grant info given.
- Survey discussed and would like all staff to return it by September 18.
- Ideas for teacher recognition from HSEA discussed.
- Ideas for flyer of HSEA info for all staff.

#### **Members' Rights**

- No report.

#### **Negotiations**

- Final insurance increase is 8.3%.
- Encourage 10 minute meetings to discuss the following insurance concerns:
  - ✓ Stop visiting emergency rooms for non-emergency issues.
  - ✓ Use generics whenever possible.
- Next meeting September 15 to finalize proposal.
- Administrative and non-union members have made changes to their insurance; increased deductible to 250/500, increased co-pays, drug plan.

## **Newsletter**

- Looking for “Ask the Messenger” questions.
- Copies going up to .10 a piece; looking to implement emailed newsletter ASAP. Please submit home emails to building reps.

## **Retired Liaison**

- No report.

## **Scholarship**

- Looking to publish scholarship winners.

## **Social**

- General Assembly meetings on October 8 and May 13 will take place at Townline. Attendance awards will be based on percentage of staff of specific buildings in attendance, not straight numbers.

## **Webpage**

- Lots of changes/updates coming to the web. Jason granted access and will continue working to update.

## **Building Reports:**

### **Bay Harbor:**

- Suggestions given on how to help members with insurance questions; will take this to the negotiations committee.
- Some member having problems with “Care Mark” prescriptions program.

### **Bay Port:**

- Questions about internal subbing.
- Lack of cleaning supplies for teachers.
- Lack of continuing training for Power School.

### **Bay View:**

- New schedule difficulties.
- Large class sizes.
- Imbalance of classes.
- Inequity among teachers with number of preps; some have four different preps and others have only 1.
- Teachers being required to attend additional math training without compensation for time outside of school day.

### **Forest Glen:**

- Class sizes not equal across district.
- Have not turned on AC and classrooms do not have windows that open; also told not to have fans.
- Not enough aide coverage for special education students; IEP concerns.

**Howard:** No report.

**Lineville:** No report.

### **Meadowbrook:**

- Carrie Brunette will be the new building representative, replacing Michelle Wick.

**Suamico:** No report.

*Candice Perz*  
*HSEA Secretary*

## **Expecting a pay raise?**

*Extremely important reminder for new hires during and since the 2005-07 contract(s):*

You are required to advance on the salary schedule within five years (Appendix A, page 27). If you do not do so, you will be frozen on the salary schedule, meaning that you will not be eligible to advance until you receive the necessary points required to do so. If you have questions, please look over your 2005-07 and 2007-09 contracts. If you have further questions, make sure you see your building rep or contact HR.

