



1136 N. Military Avenue  
Green Bay, WI 54303  
920-496-2440  
Toll-free: 1-800-472-5582

# Magnifier

Volume XX, Issue 4

December 16, 2009

## **UNE - Bayland Educators Merger Decision to Be Made at the RA**

For almost a year, the United Northeast Educators' (UNE) and Bayland Educators' Boards of Directors have been discussing the pros and cons of merging the two UniSerts. The Boards have determined that a vote to merge the two UniSerts will come to the membership in their respective Representative Assemblies on May 19, 2010. What is a Representative Assembly (RA)? For many members, this is a mystery.

### **What is an RA?**

A Representative Assembly (RA) is the governing body of an organization. For example, our affiliate organizations, the National Education Association (NEA) and Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) both hold RAs every year. The RA is the primary legislative and policymaking body of the Association and derives its powers from, and is responsible to, the membership. The RA adopts the strategic plan and budget, resolutions, and other policies of the Association. Delegates vote on proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws. Those delegates with full voting rights elect the executive officers, Executive Committee members, and at-large members of the NEA Board of Directors as appropriate.

United Northeast Educators (UNE) UniServ and Bayland Educators UniServ also hold annual RAs. To prepare for our RAs, the members elect delegates and these delegates make decisions that impact the way the UniSerts operate. According to each of the Constitutions and Bylaws, every local Association can send one delegate for every 25 members, rounded up (example:  $88 \text{ members} \div 25 = 4 \text{ delegates}$ ). UNE is entitled to a total of 166 delegates and Bayland Educators is entitled to 141 delegates.

### **Our Goal is 100%!**

Don't miss your opportunity to have a voice in next spring's important RA. Each local needs to elect delegates to the RA. If you are interested in attending, please contact your local President and tell him/her that you are interested in representing your local at this crucial meeting. Elections must take place and certification of the delegates must be turned into the UniServ office prior to May 2010. An election does not need to be a formal balloting process. Your local can decide the easiest way to accomplish this task. What is most important is that people volunteer to be considered as a delegate to the RA.

### **Stay Tuned**

The UniServ Boards of Directors will be distributing further information about the proposed merger in various formats for our members, including regional meetings that you can attend and ask questions about the process. Please note that a merger cannot occur without a majority favorable vote of Representative Assembly delegates in both UniSerts, on May 19, 2010.

**WHY? Because members have a voice!**

**WHEN? Wednesday May 19, 2010**

**WHAT? Vote on proposed budget, constitution, by-laws, policies, etc.**

**WHO? Elected delegates from each local come together at the RA.**

## Arizona law changes way teachers contract with district

An Arizona law that took effect December 1, 2009 changes the way teachers contract with school districts. Under the new law:

- A district is prohibited from adopting policies that use seniority or tenure as a factor for determining retention. Districts may not use seniority as a criteria when selecting teachers for reduction force.
- In the case of recall after a reduction in force, districts no longer have to give preferred rights or rehire based on dates of original employment. More senior employees will no longer receive preferred rights or return during rehiring.
- The requirement that a general salary reduction must be applied equitably among all tenured teachers before reducing a tenured teacher's salary has been removed. *The effect of this is that the administrators can lower salaries of individuals.*
- The number of days required for correction after an inadequate teacher is placed on an improvement plan is reduced from 85 instructional days to 60.
- Districts are no longer required to notify teachers by April 15 about whether they'll be offered a contract for the upcoming school year.
- School districts no longer have to issue teachers contracts between March 15 and May 15, meaning they can issue contracts at any time.

### **Without a strong union, it could happen here...**

Public education is directly controlled by elected officials: the school board, the state legislature, the governor, congress and the president. Who resides in those positions makes a big difference to your salary, your benefits and your working conditions.

Each year there are members who request their political action dues back for a variety of reasons. Whether it's UNE PAC dues and/or WEAC PAC dues, both of which total \$25 for the year, those dollars are used to help elect officials who support you.

During the last few election cycles, pro-education candidates were elected to the state legislature, as well as the election of Governor Doyle several years ago. Not only were they pro-education candidates -- they were also pro-educator.

Two primary examples that underscore this point are the elimination of the QEO (which capped teacher salaries) and not allowing student test scores to be used to fire teachers (despite lobbying from groups such as the Wisconsin Association of School Boards).

Arizona is a right to work state that does not require its educators to join the union or pay dues. Without that collective strength, politicians were able to make a law which has made teaching in Arizona an unpredictable occupation and will undoubtedly have a negative impact on kids.

*Adapted from GBEA Perspective December 2, 2009*

## Beware of District Bargaining Tactics

Most UNE teacher and many ESP bargaining teams are either bargaining or preparing to begin negotiations with their respective school boards. Economic pressures and revenue limits on school districts could make this a very difficult bargaining climate. Health insurance increases, particularly for school districts that insure through the WEA Trust, were relatively low for 2009-10, and may remain that way as long as there is pressure for reforming health care



from the State and Federal governments. On the other hand, increases in WRS contribution rates are greater than they have been in recent history due to the stock market decline.

As a result, we may see school boards and district administrators resort to the following commonly used tactics to lower our expectations in negotiations:

- Publicly designate the source of the district's economic woes as unionized teachers and support staff.
- Publicize the high cost of our salaries, irrespective of the percentage cost of the instructional budget.
- Focus on our benefit packages costs, regardless of how such packages historically emerged as concessions to salary increases while insurance costs were low as compared to present costs.
- Scare employees with job security by emphasizing that without salary and benefit concessions, layoffs may occur or the school district may have to close; consequently, we will lose our jobs.
- Emphasize that without concessions, the public will vote down a referendum because school employees (but not administrators) make too much now, and the referendum would not be necessary if it wasn't for unionized employees.
- Strive to have union members vote for proposed board concessions based on fear of job loss.

What must be remembered is that your employers will demonstrate during the upcoming negotiations whether or not, and how much, they value your work. The economic climate does not drive your contract negotiations. If it did, locals would have received far better settlements during the economic boom of the '90s.

The early trend shown by school boards is to demand concessions in benefits and job security provisions (layoff language, just cause rights, etc.) with virtually no salary or wage rate improvements. Boards also continue to ignore the need of educators licensed under PI-34.

You have a vested interest in the success of your bargaining team. These are your wages, hours, and working conditions being negotiated. Do your part by supporting your bargaining team and staying informed.

*Adapted from NUE Memo October 9, 2009*

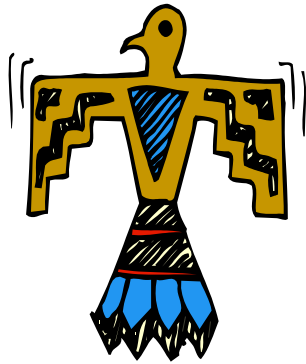
## 20th Annual Poster Contest

### *The Land Holds All Our Stories*

The purpose of the post contest is to promote the celebration of the Native American culture and to address the issue of racism directed at Native Americans. This will be an opportunity for your students to express their thoughts and feelings artistically.

#### Poster Contest Rules

- ✓ Students' posters must state the theme as part of the poster design and reflect students' learning with reference to Wisconsin Native American culture.
- ✓ The contest is open to all fourth grade students in Wisconsin public schools.
- ✓ Each poster must contain wording and/or imagery which reflects the contest theme.
- ✓ Posters must accurately reflect Wisconsin Native American culture.
  - ✓ Artwork can be presented in any two-dimensional media, except computer-generated art, and must be a student's original artwork. Size must be 12" x 18" (vertical or horizontal). Lamination of entries is encouraged but not required.
  - ✓ To facilitate anonymity in judging, the following information must be clearly printed only **on the back** of each entry:
    - Student's full name
    - Student's school name and address
    - School district
    - Teacher's name and address



- ✓ **If the student does not wish to have his or her name released as a winner of the contest should his or her submission be one of the three winning entries, please indicate this in writing with the student's entry. Otherwise, winning student's names may be released in response to press requests or individual inquiries.**
- ✓ **Entries will not be returned.** Teachers may want to make copies for their students prior to submission. **The original poster must be submitted.**
- ✓ Entries must be sent to the Local Association Presidents by February 1 for judging.
- ✓ The top three posters at the local level **must be sent to UniServ Presidents by February 15.**
- ✓ After judging at the UniServ level, the top three posters must be sent to the WEAC Madison office by March 15.
- ✓ The three artists will be chosen by the Human Relations Committee to receive \$100 savings bond and gift. The Human Relations Committee will award medals to the artists of the three entries submitted by each UniServ. The artwork of the winners will be displayed at the WEAC Convention and other WEAC functions and publications for a one-year time period.

**Teachers:** Please send suggestions for future themes and resouces for this contest to: WEAC, ATTN: Mary E. Pitassi, 33 Nob Hill Road, P.O. Box 8003, Madison, WI 53708-8003 or email: [pitassim@weac.org](mailto:pitassim@weac.org) or fax: (608) 276-8203.

### UNE Activity Calendar

**December 24 through January 1**  
UniServ Office Closed due to  
Holidays & Staff Vacations

**January 13**  
**UNE Board meeting**  
5:30 p.m. UniServ Office

**January 18**  
**Bayland/UNE IPD Committee**  
5:30 p.m. UniServ Office

**January 20**  
**Bayland/UNE ESP Negotiators**  
5:30 p.m. UniServ Office

**M&O EA Negotiators**  
5:30 p.m. Snazz & Jane's, Gillett

**January 22**  
**Bayland/UNE PR Committee**  
2:00 p.m. UniServ Office

**January 25**  
**UNE PAC meeting**  
5:00 p.m. UniServ Office

**Bayland/UNE Legislative Committee**  
5:30 p.m. UniServ Office

### UNE Board Policy

#### RE: Office Closures



*"This policy relates to the policy for unscheduled closing of the office. In the event of inclement weather, the office will be closed if the Green Bay School District is closed. This includes late starts and early dismissals. Any other occurrence necessitating closing the office will be handled on an as-needed basis."*

*United Northeast Educators—Mission Statement*

*UNE is an organization of public education employees who provide training and services to protect, improve, and enhance members rights and the professional and economic capabilities of its members, hence improving the quality of life of all its members.*

*Kaz*

UNE President  
Mike Kaczmarzinski  
[mkaz@netnet.net](mailto:mkaz@netnet.net)

*Sue*

Suzanne Dishaw Britz  
UniServ Director  
[britzs@weac.org](mailto:britzs@weac.org)

*Dave*

David A Campshure  
UniServ Director  
[campshured@weac.org](mailto:campshured@weac.org)

*Kim*

Kim Plaunt  
UniServ Director  
[plauntk@weac.org](mailto:plauntk@weac.org)

*Sarah*

Sarah Bauman  
Associate Staff  
[baumans@weac.org](mailto:baumans@weac.org)

*Shirley*

Shirley Forrest  
Associate Staff  
[forrests@weac.org](mailto:forrests@weac.org)

*Neva*

Neva Paque  
Associate Staff  
[paquen@weac.org](mailto:paquen@weac.org)

Happy  
HOLIDAYS



**End of the Year Tax Tip for Educators:**

***Save your receipts for any classroom expenses. They may qualify for the \$250 Educator's Expense Deduction, an above-the-line deduction.***

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**Green Bay: 828 Cherry Street • 920.432.1985 & De Pere: 566 Red Bird Circle • 920.632.4375**