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Magnifier

Volume XIX, Issue 7

February 17, 2009

Dear UNE Members,

After this issue, the Magnifier is switching to an electronic newsletter for the remainder of the 2008-09 school year. The UNE Magnifier will be posted on the UNE website at <http://www.weac.org/une>. Your local President will be sent an email notifying them when the latest Magnifier has been posted and is available for viewing by members. In addition, UNE will send a couple of hardcopies of the Magnifier to each local for posting on local bulletin boards in the school buildings.

The move to an electronic Magnifier is being done as one of many steps aimed at keeping UNE members' dues in check. The cost of postage for mailing the newsletter to building reps for distribution has increased significantly and postal rates are going up again in May. The cost of printing both the Magnifier masthead and the newsletter are not insignificant, nor are the amount of wear and tear running a monthly newsletter places on UNE's equipment, or the staff hours involved.

The UNE Board of Directors would greatly appreciate any feedback from the members on this move to make the Magnifier electronic for the remainder of this school year. So, let us know if you like the direction we are heading, or if you prefer receiving a hard copy. The Board will take all comments into consideration in preparing and budgeting for the 2009-10 edition of the Magnifier.

Contract Renewal

Midwinter signals contract renewal/nonrenewal for teachers. ESP contracts are handled according to the bargaining agreement and are not subject to the same statute as teachers. Part-time teachers may or may not be subject to these statutes, depending on teacher contract language.

Individual teacher contract renewals and nonrenewals are governed by Wisconsin State Statute 118.22. Under the law, districts are required to notify teachers of possible nonrenewal by February 28. In most districts, notices of contract renewal will be given to teachers by March 15 or sooner, and teachers must accept the contract renewal by April 15.

The nonrenewal process has three components. First, the school district must send a written notice of nonrenewal by February 28. The notice must contain information that the teacher has the right to private conference with the school board. Secondly, the board must grant the private conference, if it is requested

within five days of the notice of nonrenewal. Third, the board must vote to nonrenew the individual contract and notify the teacher by March 15. Call the UNE office for assistance if you or someone in your district receives a nonrenewal notice.

Contract renewals are to be returned to the district by April 15. If the district does not notify teachers of renewal by March 15, they may self-renew by sending a notice to the district stating, "I hereby accept the renewal of my teaching contract for the 2009-2010 school year."

The nonrenewal process is separate from layoff. Layoff procedures are subject to the terms of the master contract. If layoffs occur in teacher or ESP positions, the layoff timelines and procedures are spelled out in the contract. Both nonrenewals and layoffs can be difficult, traumatic experiences for the individuals and school districts involved. Reductions in staff and dismissals are most likely to occur in the spring of the year as districts develop plans for next year. Know your rights under the contract. Know your seniority status in the district, as seniority often kicks in for layoff and transfer situations. Talk to your local leaders or

call the UNE office, if you have any questions or concerns about contract renewal, nonrenewal, or layoff.

WEAC recommends Tony Evers in February 17 Primary for State Superintendent of Public Instruction

WEAC has recommended Tony Evers for election as the next State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Tony has the experience to take on the challenges public education faces in the 21st Century.

He has worked as an educator for over 34 years, including the past eight years as Deputy State Superintendent, and 26 years as a teacher, principal and superintendent.

As State Superintendent, Tony Evers will make class sizes smaller for more one-on-one teacher-student interaction; increase accountability and raise graduation rates; and change the way we measure progress to ensure high quality schools for all students. If members get out and vote in next Tuesday's primary, we can make sure Tony is successful.

*This is an 11.29 communication with WEAC members,
Federal Statute CFR 100.8(b)(4).*

SFN: A Change in School Funding is Needed

The School Finance Network (SFN) is made up of eight groups representing parents, teachers and ESP, school boards, administrators, and business leaders. The recently released school funding plan addresses funding flaws and ensures that all districts benefit.

You don't need to be an expert on school funding. It's as simple as 1-2-3. Remember these three points when talking to friends and neighbors:

1. **Wisconsin must invest in opportunities for all students.** The SFN plan recognizes that kids are different and that the one-size-fits all funding model doesn't work. The SFN plan also recognizes that students need a well-rounded education, including fine arts, business and vocational programs, and more.
2. **The SFN plan is accountable to taxpayers and targets money where it's needed most.** The SFN plan is more transparent and understandable than the

current funding plan.

3. **Now is the time to renew our investments in public education.** Investments in education are proven to benefit the economy. Now is the time to invest in the future.

SFN's goal is to create and sustain momentum for school funding reform. Schools have been struggling to meet the needs of students for more than a decade. In this time of economic crisis, it is important to make the changes needed to protect our tradition of quality public education for years to come.

Go to <http://www.sfnwisconsin.org> to sign up and support SFN's efforts.

Market Turmoil Complicates Retirement Planning

The year 2008 will go down in history as one of the most difficult for financial markets. Stocks, bonds, money market funds—investments of all types were affected in ways that will resonate for months and possibly years to come.

For those of you who are considering retirement, recent market turmoil has complicated the planning process and added considerable uncertainty. Can I still retire on schedule? If not, what do I have to do to get back on track toward a financially secure retirement? Are my investments properly positioned to help me through these uncertain times? Will I need to go back to work to make ends meet?

Careful preparation can help ensure that you remain financially secure. Wisconsin public school employees and members of WEAC-Retired are eligible to receive a Retirement Income Analysis offered by WEA Trust Member Benefits. This fee-based service can provide you with:

- Knowledge of whether you are on track to meet your goals.
- Suggested adjustments to meet your goals.
- Your Wisconsin Retirement System estimate.
- Your Social Security estimate.
- A retirement distribution and cash flow analysis.
- A tax analysis to help you anticipate your future income tax liability.

This service is provided by CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNERS™ who:

- Understand retirement benefits available to public school employees.
- Are experts in coordinating those benefits.
- Have your needs and best interest in mind.

Call our Retirement Income Consultants at 1-800-279-4030, Extensions 2513 or 6769. Michelle or Rob can help you evaluate whether this service is appropriate for you.

This Member Benefits service is fee-based, with no product sales or commissions attached. Investment advisory services offered through WEA Financial Advisors, Inc.

Best High School 2009 Search

U.S. News & World Report—in collaboration with School Evaluation Services, a K-12 education and data research and analysis business that provides parents with education data on www.schoolmatters.com—analyzed academic and enrollment data from more than 21,000 public high schools to find the very best across the country. These top schools were placed into gold, silver, bronze, or honorable mention categories.

UNE had two high schools mentioned and both were given the bronze award. Congratulations.

- 📖 Crivitz High School
- 📖 Gresham High School

Local Teacher Certified by National Board

Angela Buchenauer of Bonduel Middle School is one of 74 teachers across Wisconsin to become certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Angela was certified in School Counseling/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood.



The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) announced December 9 that 74 Wisconsin teachers were awarded National Board

Certification for 2008. The teachers successfully submitted classroom-based videos of their teaching methods as well as details of their work in the community. National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) candidates also were tested in one of 25 selected categories such as science or math.

The 74 Wisconsin teachers certified by the NBPTS are part of 9,600 teachers certified across the country in 2008. WEAC President Mary Bell said: “The National Board Certification process is rigorous, well defined, and thorough, and Wisconsin should be proud it has so many NBCTs in the classrooms across the state. The certification shows teachers are dedicated to their work and want to take pride in that devotion by having it recognized nationally.”

Share Your Story with Other WEAC Members

WEAC’s *Share Your Story* is a way for members to personalize topics surrounding education, such as school funding reform, health care reform, or the impacts of revenue caps. The stories can be education staff members’ own experiences on how a certain topic impacted their professional responsibilities or their philosophical opinion about particular topics.

The stories accomplish several goals:

- Members will be able to read and learn about the experiences of their peers. The impacts of health care, for instance, can take different shapes in diverse areas and members can share their thoughts with others in similar—or very much opposite—situations.
- The stories put a human face on policy issues (such as school funding reform), instruction (class sizes) and other public education subjects.
- The stories will allow WEAC to identify those in the membership willing to share their stories with other members, the community, and the media.

Many of the recently submitted stories are anecdotal tales, such as an account of a reduction in counseling services for students and another story saying that one reading specialist is tasked with helping 167 at-risk students graduate.

The above stories and many more can be seen at the WEAC Members Only website at https://www.weacm.org/content/2008-09/shareyour_story/share.cfm. You may also add your own story at that website.

UniServ Activity Calendar

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Place</u>
February	27-28	WEAC Winter Conference	Milwaukee
March	1	WEAC Winter Conference	Milwaukee
March	2	Read Across America	
March	7	8:30 a.m. & 12:30 a.m. PDP Writing Workshops (2 sessions)	GBEA Office
March	9	5:30 p.m. Dinner with the Legislators	Comfort Suites, Green Bay
March	11	6:00 p.m. UNE Board Meeting	UniServ Office
March	13	Northeastern WI Education Association	Green Bay
March	16	5:30 p.m. Bayland/UNE Legislative Committee	UniServ Office
March	25	5:30 p.m. M&O Negotiators	Holiday Inn, Kelly Lake

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TAX TIME

When calculating one's income tax, a union member may use union dues as a deduction, subject to the 2% IRS code reduction. Dues are deductible only if you itemize your deductions. Following are the deductible union dues for 2008 (January through December) for teachers and support personnel:

<u>Teacher</u>	Full-Time	Half-Time
	\$584.00	\$297.00
<u>ESP</u>	Full-Time	Half-Time
	\$383.00	\$197.00

[Note: Local dues assessed are **NOT** included in these figures.]

Because of changes in the 1986 tax laws, Political Action contributions are not deductible, and have already been subtracted from the above figures.

You may also be eligible for the Educator Expense Deduction. If you are an eligible educator (teacher, instructor, counselor, principal, aide) you can deduct unreimbursed expenses you paid or incurred for books, supplies, computer equipment and software, other equipment, and supplementary materials for use in the classroom. See IRS topic 458 at <http://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc458.html> for more information on this important deduction.



AAA—New Address and Phone

UNE members can receive important discounts through AAA. Call (920) 964-3950 or visit the AAA office at 2593 Development Drive, Suite 200, Unit 5, Green Bay, Wisconsin 54311.

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.