

Thanks, NEA!

By Janie Hydrick, NEA State Director for Arizona

What has the NEA done for you lately? Here's a biggie. This week, the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the NEA: *The federal government cannot force states and school districts to spend their own funds to meet the mandates of NCLB.*

This ruling means local school districts do not have to spend their own monies to meet the unfunded mandates of NCLB. The ruling is simple: If you regulate it, you have to pay for it.

This ruling is a great example of "your dues dollars at work." Lawsuits and appeals are not cheap, particularly at the federal level. *Every* public school educator in the country will benefit from NEA's commitment of time, legal counsel, and money to sue for what the courts now deem "reasonable and just." Yet every public school educator did not contribute to this huge success through dues dollars.

Spread the word to your colleagues. Tell them what NEA has done for them lately, and ask them to pay their "reasonable and just" share through dues.

Tutors Needed!

Interested in making extra money and helping kids at the same time? Sign up for the MEA Tutor Bank!

We provide your name and phone number to parents who are looking for tutors for their children. You set your rate, availability, and where you will tutor.

We have a desperate need for High School tutors, especially in Math and Science. These are probably our most requested grade levels and subjects. However, **all** grade levels and subjects are welcome.



If you are interested in signing up, please contact Heather at the MEA Office, 833-8400, Ext. 101.

In order to participate, you must be a current MEA Member.

MEA Calendar of Events

January - February 2008

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
21 <i>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</i> No School	22 <i>West Side FR Meeting</i> , 4:15 PM, Dobson Ranch Inn (Dobson/US 60)	23 <i>East Side FR Meeting</i> , 4:15 PM, Mi Amigo's (Power/Southern)	24	25	26 AEA Committee Day
28	29	30	31 <i>Retirement Seminar</i> , 4:30 - 6 PM, Student Services	1	2
4	5 <i>MEA Exec Board</i> , 4:15 PM, MEA Office	6	7	8 <i>Delegate Assembly Nominations Due</i>	9
11 <i>MEA Meet and Confer</i> , 4 PM, Stapley Boardroom	12	13	14	15	16
18 <i>President's Day</i> No School	19 <i>MEA Exec Board</i> , 4:15 PM, MEA Office	20	21	22 RSVP Due by 5 PM for February FR Meetings	23
25 <i>MEA Meet and Confer</i> , 4 PM, Stapley Boardroom	26 <i>West Side FR Meeting</i> , 4:15 PM, Dobson Ranch Inn (Dobson/US 60)	27 <i>East Side FR Meeting</i> , 4:15 PM, Mi Amigo's (Power/Southern)	28	29	

Ask the Staff

By Will Moore, AEA Organizational Consultant



Question: Could the decline in student enrollment lead to staff lay-offs? And if so, how will the district do that?

Answer: Funding for Arizona school districts is directly tied to student enrollment – so, yes, a reduction in enrollment *can* lead to a reduction in staff. For a variety of reasons, Mesa schools suffered an enrollment decline this year of over 1,400 students. That translates to a revenue reduction of over \$6 million for next year's budget. More than 90% of the district's general budget goes to salaries and benefits, so a cut in budget must mean a cut in the number of employees.

In the best scenario, there would be enough retirements and resignations in the right positions to take care of the reductions. If all the missing students were from one school, we could simply close that school, transfer all of the staff to vacancies at other schools and be done with it. But it's not likely to work that way. Reductions are spread across dozens of schools and there is a need to make proportional reductions of staff. The decisions get most difficult when there are only a small number of certain kinds of positions, such as electives teachers and specialists of various kinds.

MEA has negotiated a procedure for all of this, Article 30 – Reductions in Personnel. That procedure establishes some basic guidelines:

- Normal attrition (retirements and resignations) will be used first to deal with reductions.
- Staff will be transferred to new assignments for which they are qualified in order to avoid layoffs.
- With some exceptions, the district will keep those with the greatest seniority.
- Employees who are reduced will be recalled to vacancies as they come open.

Here are a few points to keep in mind. The priority is to make sure that everyone has a job, not that everyone keeps the job that they have now. You are less likely to have a job if you are too narrowly qualified. (This may not be the best time to only be able to teach Latin.) If you know that you're going to retire, the sooner you submit that decision, the better.

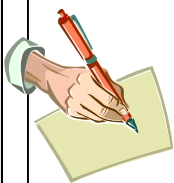
Education Day at the Capitol

Education Day at the Capitol is coming up quickly and is a great way to meet your state legislators and discuss important issues regarding education. Start making your plans now to attend on **Wednesday, March 5.**



The day begins with a welcome and AEA overview of what has been happening so far. Our lobbyist, Jennifer Daily, outlines what bills will be heard that day and will guide you on how to give public testimony. The day continues when educators have the opportunity to watch the education committee in each chamber discuss and vote on bills. A luncheon is held and all the state legislators are invited. The governor usually addresses the audience at this time. The afternoon is a chance to arrange one on one meetings with your legislators or observe the full House and Senate in action.

In the past, MEA has had a strong presence on this day. Some educators have invited administrators, parents, and community leaders to this important day. If you are interested and want more details, contact the FR at your school or call Kirk at the MEA Office, 833-8400, Ext. 102. It is a great day and very beneficial for education policy in this state.



Do you like to write? Would you like to share your story of how MEA has helped you? Interested in reporting on an MEA or AEA event you attended? Or have another idea for a Record article?

If so, please submit your story or ideas to Heather at the MEA Office. Articles must be received no later than 5 PM on the 10th of each month. Please include a contact number or email.

All articles must conform to established length and be appropriate for the purposes of this publication. Information in articles needs to be journalistically and factually sound. We reserve the right to edit for grammar, mechanics, and clarity.

We will notify you if we use your submission.

MEA Record Marketplace

If you have an item you would like to sell, please submit your ad to Heather at the MEA Office before 5 PM on the 10th of each month. Ads are limited to 25 words or less, not including name and home telephone number.



Items that are second income related, contrary to the common beliefs of the MEA/AEA/NEA, or pose a possible threat to the community will not be accepted.

MEA Record

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Visit us on the web: www.mesateachers.org