

Please join us for our
January Faculty Rep Meetings

Tuesday, January 26
4:15 PM, Top Shelf Cantina,
1976 W. Southern Ave.
(Dobson/Southern)

Wednesday, January 27
4:15 PM, Mi Amigo's
6465 E. Southern Ave.
(Power/Southern)

Please RSVP by
Friday, January 22 to Heather at
833-8400, ext. 101 or to
heather.tanner@arizonaea.org

*We welcome ALL members to join
us at either meeting and hope to see
you there!*



Inside the Record

- Page 2 ...Why Bargain if There's No Money?
- Page 2 ...We Need YOU!
- Page 2 ...Dues Information for Tax Purposes
- Page 2 ...Drivers Going Without
- Page 3 ...Membership Form
- Page 4 ...Upcoming Training for MEA Members
- Page 4 ...Sign up for the MEA Tutor Bank
- Page 4 ...MEA Calendar of Events
- Page 4 ...Twitter and Facebook

January 19, 2010

Volume XLI, Number 6

An Ostrich or an Eagle?

By Kirk Hinsey, President



2010 is going to be a challenging, tough, frustrating year for all of us in the profession. We are being put under more scrutiny and told to do more and more but with less and less. We are held to higher standards than most professions without the salary and benefits to go with it.

I did not go into teaching to make a million dollars, but I will not apologize for asking to be paid as a professional. The businesses in the surrounding area hire and retain quality employees by offering competitive and professional salaries. Our legislators want to give them a tax break so they can do business as usual while shortchanging public schools. Is this the future for Arizona and an investment for our students?

As Bob Dylan once crooned, "**The times, they are a-changing.**" It is no different in MPS. The Board approved 7 recommendations for defining the future. One of the biggest changes will be the repurposing of Powell (for me personally as well as professionally). Those teachers will find themselves in new surroundings next year. Will they accept and celebrate the change or lament what was?

Race to the Top is another issue generating lots of discussion. Much of the discussion has been rumors and the fear of change. Yes, there is some money available to invest in education. Yes, some of the criteria may tie test scores to teacher pay. But what will that look like? No one knows. Is it better to be at the table to help develop the criteria or sit back and ignore it?

As **2010** unfolds I would rather be an **eagle** soaring through the air and enjoying the view from above. I want to **attack** the issues head on and be proud of accomplishments. I do not want to be the **ostrich** with my head in the sand and no idea what is going on. **MEA** will continue to provide the information that is important in **2010**, but also help dispel the myriad of rumors that are flying through the air.

Thank you for those that have continued being eagles in these trying times!

Why Bargain if There's No Money?

MEA is again preparing to represent certificated employees in the Meet-and-Confer process. Administrative representatives of the Governing Board and the MEA Bargaining Team meet annually to bargain contract provisions for the next school year.

Teachers have asked me, "Why should we bother with this when we know there's no money to talk about?" There are a couple of answers to that question, but no one should get excited about a big salary raise.

Yes, it's unlikely that the school district will see an increase to its operating budget for the 2010-11 school year. In fact, we can probably count on continued reductions: student enrollment continues to slide and the Legislature hasn't resolved the state's budget crisis. We already know that the district will lose some funding during the current school year.

But MEA will be at the table for Meet-and-Confer sessions in February anyway, and here's why:

Not all issues are about spending new money. Our agreement covers a lot of articles, including the professional day, preparation time, transfers, and lay-off procedures. These continue to be hot topics. During hard times it's particularly important to protect the procedures that we have – especially when many of these safeguards are under attack by unfriendly politicians.

Secondly, if cuts are made, we must have a voice in those decisions. In a school district there are only two ways to make substantial spending reductions: cutting staff and cutting compensation. We want to represent your best interests as we work with the district to make these hard choices. How can we protect your career earnings over the long term? How can we protect essential jobs and support services?

MEA needs your support and your input in this process. Read our bulletins, respond to our surveys, attend the Meet-and-Confer sessions. Stay involved. As always, Members Make it Happen.

We Need YOU!

There are two very vital committees that are being formed this semester. We need **dedicated MEA Members** to serve on these committees to help shape the decisions that have to be made.

- **Teacher Evaluation Committee** – We need 4 people (2 secondary and 2 elementary) to serve these next 5 months on a committee looking at teacher evaluation tools from around the country, as well as Mesa Public Schools' tools to see what changes need to be made should we be part of the Race to the Top grant.
- **Calendar Committee** – We need up to 3 people to serve on the committee to help develop calendars for the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years.

Please contact Kirk in the MEA Office if interested at 480-833-8400, ext. 102.

Dues Information for Tax Purposes

In spite of the Tax Reform Act of 1986 which severely limited some of the deductions American taxpayers have historically enjoyed, many MEA members will still be able to deduct their Association dues as a business expense.



Dues Information for the 2009 Tax Year is now available on the MEA Website at www.mesateachers.org/Tax%20Information.htm.

If you were not a full time member with payroll deduction last year, please call the MEA Office at 480-833-8400 and we will assist you in doing a personal calculation.

Drivers Going Without

According to the Insurance Research Council (<http://www.ircweb.org/>), the higher the unemployment rate, the higher the number of motorists driving without insurance on our roads. IRC estimates 1 out of every 6 motorists could be driving without insurance this year. For those who do have insurance, they may not have the proper amount to cover the injuries caused in an accident.

To protect yourself and your passengers, be sure to have coverage in case the other driver does not have insurance or does not have enough. The coverage is typically known as **uninsured/underinsured motorist coverage**.

The benefit of having this coverage is that it provides financial protection for injuries that you and your passengers sustain in an accident with an uninsured or underinsured motorist. This is especially important for individuals who may no longer have health insurance or have lost wages due to their injuries.

If you don't have uninsured/underinsured motorist coverage, or don't know if you do, please contact your insurance agent to get more information. We suggest you add this coverage if you don't have it. The next time you're at a stop light along with other motorists, you can feel confident you are covered even if others around you are not.

If you are not currently insured through your AEA endorsed benefit, California Casualty Auto & Home Insurance, then please call 1-877-411-3426 or visit www.calcas.com/slister today, to get a free, no obligation quote. **This benefit is only available to MEA/AEA MEMBERS.**





MEEA Record

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(480) 833-8400 (Office) (480) 834-6890 (Fax)
www.mesateachers.org

Upcoming Training for MEA Members

These first two months for MEA will be very busy. Please be on the lookout for flyers advertising these opportunities:

- **Regional Trainings** – These will be held throughout the District at various schools. The training provided will address current issues and how to deal with them as it relates to our profession and our association. Dinner will be provided. (Feb. 9 – 11.)
- **Legislative Action** – Two organized days to spend with our legislators at the Capitol: Shadow Day (February 17) and Education Day at the Capitol (March 3).
- **Read Across America** – Cat in the Hat writing contest for first and second graders. Party with the Cat in the Hat on March 5. Activities for all grade levels at NEA.org
- **New Faculty Rep Training – Part 2** – Team leadership skills and how to engage members and nonmembers to the importance of paying attention to the politics of education. ½ day training on February 18.

Sign Up for the MEA Tutor Bank

Looking to make some extra money in these tight times? Want to help make a difference to students in need? Then sign up to participate in MEA's Tutor Bank.



Parents looking for tutors call our office and we give out your name and information to contact you. You set your own price, the subjects and when you want to tutor.

We are receiving more calls than ever from parents looking for tutors, but our tutor bank is smaller than it has been in the past — so if you haven't participated before, now is the time!

We welcome teachers in **ALL** grade levels and subjects but we always have a great need for High School Math and Science. We also need teachers in ALL secondary subject levels this year.

You received a sign up form in your Membership packet; or you can contact Heather at the MEA Office, 480-833-8400, ext. 101, to send you a form.

YOU MUST BE A CURRENT MEA MEMBER TO PARTICIPATE!



Search "Mesa Education Association"

MEA Calendar of Events January - February 2010



Tuesday, January 26: *West Side Faculty Rep Meeting, 4:15 PM, Top Shelf Mexican Cantina, 1976 W. Southern Ave. (Dobson/Southern) Open to all members*

Wednesday, January 27: *East Side Faculty Rep Meeting, 4:15 PM, Mi Amigo's, 6465 E. Southern Rd. (Southern/Power) Open to all members*

Tuesday, February 2: *Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 PM, MEA Office*

Friday, February 5: *Delegate Assembly/NEA-RA Nominations Due*

Monday, February 8: *Meet and Confer Begins*

February 9-11: *Regional Rep Trainings, Time/Location TBA*

Monday, February 15: *Presidents Day - No School*

Tuesday, February 16: *Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 PM, MEA Office*

Wednesday, February 17: *AEA Shadow Day*

Thursday, February 18: *New Faculty Rep Training Pt. 2., Time/Location TBA*

Tuesday, February 23: *West Side Faculty Rep Meeting, 4:15 PM, Top Shelf Mexican Cantina, 1976 W. Southern Ave. (Dobson/Southern) Open to all members*

Wednesday, February 24: *East Side Faculty Rep Meeting, 4:15 PM, Mi Amigo's, 6465 E. Southern Rd. (Southern/Power) Open to all members*

The MEA Calendar is also available online at www.mesateachers.org/Calendar.htm