

Please join us for our
April All Member Meetings

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

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

Please RSVP by **Monday, April 25**
to 833-8400 or via email to
heather.tanner@arizonaea.org.

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



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A Bittersweet Ending

By Kirk Hinsey, MEA President

As I come to the close of my final year as president, I am reflective of the last four years. These have been trying times for education and for a president of a large urban local. I continue to believe that I have done more good than harm and that I am leaving **MEA a stronger local**. I have had missteps, as all leaders do, but I am proud of my own personal and professional journey. I wish everyone could have this kind of an eye-opening adventure.

I am proud that I have spoken my mind and put myself out there with my thoughts and ideas. I have not stayed back and only shared my thoughts in the teachers' lounge. I was willing to take a stand. I have had the discussions with legislators, school board members, superintendents, administrators, and fellow teachers. Learning to frame a message has definitely been a skill that will carry me forward through my next quest.

I am proud of my fellow educators who have stepped up and learned to advocate for themselves, their colleagues, and their profession. Again, they were willing to stand up and speak up. They did not take the easy road and cower in the anonymous shadows and criticize from afar. They found their voice and spoke up.

There were times that I had to give a message that was not what the educators wanted to hear, but it was the reality of the times and the budget. I was attacked for speaking that reality, but I accept that as it was the right thing to do. I could not paint a rosy picture when one was not there.

I know that **MEA** will continue to **grow** and **prosper** and continue to **advocate for a quality** public education for all of Mesa's students. I have worked with all of the leaders who have stepped forward to lead MEA over the next few years, and they bring new strengths and **passions**. In my heart, I am proud and excited for them.

There are many things I will not miss, but I will cherish the people I have met and those who **challenged me to grow**. It has been a great adventure and one I would not trade for anything.

MEA: Where members DEFINITELY make it HAPPEN!!

MEA Superintendent's Forum

On April 7, MEA hosted another Superintendent's Forum with Dr. Mike Cowan, who was as open and forthright as in the past. One of the highlights was the news that a smaller cut to the MPS budget would occur. The cut is smaller than what had been originally proposed. Also, Dr. Cowan was optimistic that there would not be the need for a large RIF process across the district, and that only a few departments would possibly be affected. Another positive note was that there may not be a need for the planned furlough days.

Of course, all of these are preliminary discussions until the Governing Board approves the budget. He shared his frustration with the legislature increasing the employee's contribution to ASRS and the District not benefitting from those savings. MEA members continued to ask thought-provoking questions and were able to share their stories in a positive and constructive way.



Be sure to join us this month for our **April ALL Member Meetings**. We will be presenting important information about dues deduction changes, announcing the results of the MEA Election, and much more. Plus there's great food and networking with your fellow MEA Members. You may attend either meeting - the agendas will be the same. *Join us, and be a member who Makes it Happen!*



West Side - Tuesday, April 26 at 4:15 PM, Top Shelf Mexican Cantina, 1976 W. Southern Ave. (Dobson/Southern)

East Side - Wednesday, April 27 at 4:15 PM, Mi Amigo's, 6465 E. Southern Rd. (Southern/Power)

Please RSVP to Heather at the MEA Office at 480-833-8400, ext. 101 or via email to heather.tanner@arizonaaea.org by **Monday, April 25** to reserve your spot.

Tough Choices

By Mike Weaver, AEA Organizational Consultant

Over the past three years our Association, as well as our profession, have come under increasing attack. These attacks have come from a variety of sources and directions. Some attacks have taken the forms of budget restraints and cuts, while some have increased teacher workload with no corresponding compensation and others have been punitive policy changes to diminish your security and rights to due process. These attacks have all taken their toll on members, as well as the public education community as a whole.

Through all these attacks, AEA and MEA have been constant beacons of truth that have carried the torch on behalf of you and your students. Many times, especially recently, the only voices speaking out for public education have been MEA and AEA. Many other "education advocacy" groups have been silenced, feeling pressure to "Go along and not become a target". While it may be hard to see at times, due to the uphill battle we find ourselves in, AEA and MEA have continued to advocate for teachers and public education, even as the state legislature does its work in a very partisan atmosphere. As a member, **you** can stand up and make a statement that you will **not** be bullied or have your voice silenced.

One of the non-budgetary efforts by the legislature over the last three years has been to make it more difficult for you to exercise your right to belong to a professional organization. These attacks have usually taken the form of taking away your ability to have dues payroll deducted. This is an attempt to silence your voice and remove your input into the legislative process, as well as move Arizona's policymaking even further into the shadows.

As a pre-emptive measure in response to these continued threats, AEA and MEA will no longer be payroll deducting dues starting with the 2011-12 school year. We urge you to continue to have your voice heard, and keep your membership by switching to an alternate method of payment for future dues. You and your Faculty Representatives will be receiving more details about the options at the April All Member Meeting, and you will be contacted at your site by a representative in May to decide on your option for payment of dues for next year. We have made this as convenient as possible with options of EFT, Check, or Credit Card payment. Aside from the change in payment method, **your membership will continue just as it has in the past.**

We need to stand together now more than ever and keep our local and state associations strong, with one collective voice. Our profession and the future of Arizona's children are at stake:

- Our livelihood is at stake – wages, health benefits, and retirement pension.
- Our working conditions are at stake – sufficient classroom materials, reasonable workloads, and evaluation and curriculum standards.
- Our students are at stake – classroom sizes, well-maintained schools, and their health and safety.

Thanks for all you do every day! Please contact the MEA Office at 833-8400 if you have any questions.

Celebrate Earth Day — Save a Tree — And Go Green with the *MEA Record*!

Help save a tree or three this Earth Day and sign up to **GO GREEN!** Simply fill out and return the form below, or visit our website at www.mesateachers.org and click on the *MEA Record* link. **Remember, we are NOT allowed to send MEA communications via the District e-mail system.** You must provide a **PERSONAL email address** (Yahoo, Gmail, Cox, Hotmail, etc.) to receive the MEA Record electronically. Thanks for doing your part to save some **GREEN!**



____ Please send me the *MEA Record* via e-mail! I DO NOT want a paper copy each month.

____ Please send me the *MEA Record* via e-mail! I would also like a paper copy each month.

Name _____ School/Site _____

PERSONAL e-mail address _____



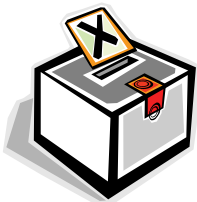
MEA Record
1032 E. University Dr., Mesa, AZ 85203
(480) 833-8400 (Office) (480) 834-6890 (Fax)
www.mesateachers.org

MEA Election Results

At the Tuesday, March 29 Faculty Rep Meeting, the following MEA Officers and Regional Directors were elected by acclimation (due to running unopposed for their positions).

MEA President - Kathy Ray, Taft Elem.
MEA Secretary - Tiffany Bunstein, Dobson High

Region 1 Director - Alissa Gonzalez, Jordan Elem.
Region 5 Director - Francine Bard, Mesa Jr.
Region 7 Director - Mahle Killian, Hale Elem.
Region 9 Director - Skip Allen, Stevenson Elem.



The Election Results for **MEA Vice President** (Candidates Tammie Pursley and Shirley Thomas) and **Region 3 Director** (Candidates Anna Cicero and Alex Reyes) will be announced at the April All Member Meetings on April 26 and 27.

Need a Summer Job?

Then sign up to participate in MEA's Tutor Bank!

While you may not have the time to tutor during the school year, summer tutoring is a great opportunity to earn a little extra cash. Parents looking for tutors call our office and we give them your name and a phone number to contact you. You set your own price, the subjects and when you want to tutor.



We often have calls from parents over the summer looking to get their kids a head start for the next year, or for help with summer school and distance learning. If you need a sign up form, please contact Heather at the MEA Office, 480-833-8400, ext. 101., or at heather.tanner@arizonaea.org. **You must be a current MEA Member to participate!**

If you are already in our tutor bank, please check with Heather to ensure your summer contact information is correct before the end of the year.

MEA Calendar of Events **April - May 2011**



Tuesday, April 18: *MEA Executive Board*, 4:30 PM, MEA Office

Tuesday, April 26: *West Side All Member Meeting*, 4:15 PM, Top Shelf Mexican Cantina, 1976 W. Southern Ave. (Dobson/Southern) **All Members are encouraged to attend!**

Wednesday, April 27: *East Side All Member Meeting*, 4:15 PM, Mi Amigo's, 6465 E. Southern Rd. (Southern/Power) **All Members are encouraged to attend!**

Friday, April 29 - Saturday, April 30: *AEA Delegate Assembly*, Phoenix-Mesa Marriott Hotel

Tuesday, May 3: *MEA Retirement Dinner*, 5 PM, Admin Services Building, 8th Floor

Tuesday, May 17: *MEA All Member End of Year Fiesta*, 4:30 PM, Mi Amigo's, 1264 S. Gilbert Rd. **All Members are invited to attend!**

Thursday, May 26: *Last Day of Classes*

Summer Vacation

June 30 - July 5: *NEA-RA in Chicago, Illinois*
 (For more information, visit <http://www.nea.org/grants/1357.htm>)

July 11 - 13: *AEA Summer Leaders Conference*
 at the Wigwam Resort, Litchfield Park

July 2011: *MEA/MESPA Planning Retreat*
 Date/Location TBD

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

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