

14-A Uniserv Newsletter
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Eastsider

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December 9, 2009

WHERE'S CHUCK?

- Dec. 9 - Region 14 Council (BJ's, Gaylord)
- 10 - ACC C/M Bargaining (ACC)
- 11 - Lansing
- 14 - Alpena EA Mediation (APS Administrative Offices)
- 15 - Mio AuSable ESP Bargaining (Mio)
- 16 - Michigan Works Meeting (Alpena)
- 17 - ACC C/M Bargaining (ACC)
- 18 - **MEA Offices closed in p.m.**
- 23-31 - **MEA Offices closed**
- Jan. 1 - **MEA Offices closed**
- 7 - Rogers City EA Executive Committee Meeting (Rogers City)
- 12 - 14A COPAC (MEA Office)
- 13 - Johannesburg-Lewiston EA Prebargaining Meeting (Johannesburg)
- 15 - 14A Presidents/CC Delegates Workshop (Location to be announced)
- 21 - NMEA (BJ's, Gaylord)
- 22 - Lansing
- 26-27 - Pre-retirement Workshops (MEA Office)



While at the hunting camp, I periodically check in with the office (Harriet) to see if the wheels have fallen off any of the wagons. To my surprise and to my chagrin, one of our ESP units called and mentioned they were going to ask the membership whether to open their contract to lower their insurance coverage. Mind you this unit will be bargaining the spring as their contract expires June 30, 2010. I should also mention that the school district is presently maintaining a 20% fund equity!

The fact that the superintendent and the board had the “brass” to ask this unit to open the contract six months prior to expiration just goes to show how uninformed this superintendent and board members truly are! Their perspective of the reason we have tough financial times is because the employees cost too much. Mind you this thinking comes from a group of people who have made a board resolution to maintain a 15% fund equity. So, if the ship (school district) goes down, at least there will be a box of gold coins to be found in the hold of the ship at the bottom of the sea, demonstrating that the superintendent and board members were able to squeeze from their employees and students money neither can now touch. I was always of the impression “student foundation allowance” was for teaching kids and not for stashing and hiding under the mattress.

True educational advocates would be standing up to the legislature stating, “It costs _____ (pick a \$ amount) per year to educate a student for 180 days.” If the legislature gives the district less than it needs, then the school district would respond by educating for only those days paid. Now, I

am not talking about bare bones education—include preschool, full day kindergarten, Voc Ed, PE, the Arts, remedial and accelerated courses, transportation, clean buildings and great food must all be included.

Until administration and board members “get it”, we will remain in the mess!

SPECIAL EDUCATION CASELOADS:

For economic purposes, some districts in Northern Michigan are starting to assign Special Education teachers to students on their caseloads who are not even in the same building, providing these teachers with minimal or no contact time to meet with either these students directly or indirectly with the teachers who actually have these students in class.

The immediate problems that arise from this ill-advised practice are enormous. The special education teacher of record is legally responsible for the implementation of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), writing individual goals and monitoring student progress. This is difficult to do with no structure or time built into the teacher’s schedule for gathering pertinent student information and records from classroom teachers and special education colleagues. Parents are expecting that teachers assigned to their special needs child are not only accessible to monitor their child’s progress, but available on a regular basis to coordinate and plan for services guaranteed to the child by the IEP. These teachers of record are responsible for making recommendations as to how best accommodate the individual learning styles and special needs of these students, then follow up with systematic monitoring procedures to make sure that these recommended adaptations are provided and working successfully.

Obviously, the practice mentioned above conflicts with the true intent of the IEP, a federally binding contract between the District, the student and his/her parents. Assigning students to a teacher of record who has no possible way to meet the requirements of the IEP is a practice that could potentially become very costly to a District should the parent decide to file a complaint. After researching this issue further with the Director of Special Education at Charlevoix-Emmet Intermediate School District, it is evident that while the practice as mentioned above, is not clearly stated as an issue of non-compliance with IDEA, it is certainly not best practice. Districts should base their decisions regarding student assignment on what is best for such individuals and subsequently, pursue other alternatives when assigning caseloads for special education students. *KHV Article #1, Submitted by Mary Lieberman*



MEA Scholarship:

Reminder: Deadline to apply for the yearly MEA Scholarship is February 12, 2010. Applications can be downloaded from www.mea.org, “grants & awards” or can be picked up at the Alpena UniServ Office.

CHECK OUT THE NORTHERN ZONE WEBSITE – www.northernzonemea.org



***MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM
THE 14A MEA UNISERV OFFICE,***



CHUCK & HARRIET