

**14-A Uniserv Newsletter**  
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# Eastsider

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## WHERE'S CHUCK?

- Sept. 14 - 14A COPAC Meeting (Lewiston Lodge)**  
15 - 88<sup>th</sup> District Court (Atlanta) postponed to October 20  
Alpena EA Bargaining Team meeting (MEA Office)  
16 - Hillman ESP Bargaining (Hillman)  
17 - NMEA (BJ's, Gaylord)  
21 - **Meeting with Presidents (location to be announced)**  
22 - Alpena EA Bargaining (MEA Office)  
23 - Workforce Development Board Meeting (Atlanta)  
Travel in p.m. to Crystal Mountain  
24 - Mandatory Northern Zone Meeting (Crystal Mountain)  
25 - Chuck on leave  
28 - ACC C/M Bargaining (ACC)  
29 - Alpena EA Mediation (APS)  
30 - **Association/Building Rep Workshop (location to be announced)**
- Oct. 2 - Chuck on leave  
5 - ACC-ESP Mediation (Van Lare Hall)  
6 - Meeting in Houghton Lake w/MEA Management  
8 - **Grievance Workshop (location to be announced)**  
9 - Chuck on leave  
12 - ACC C/M (ACC)  
13 - **14A COPAC Meeting (MEA Office)**  
14 - **Region 14 Council (BJ's, Gaylord)**  
Alpena ESP I ULP Hearing (Lansing)  
15 - **NMEA (BJ's, Gaylord)**  
16 - Chuck in Lansing



## Greetings and welcome back to the new school year!

From the amount of phone calls to this office, it appears as though we had a relatively smooth opening. I have heard that student numbers are fairly consistent with last year's. Yes, there are a couple of exceptions in which layoffs occurred and the numbers have not rebounded sufficiently to recall people.

The Legislature is in its silly season again. The State Budget must be done by October 1. They are no closer to a budget than they were in May. Instead we have side shows going on. Dillon and his health plan (make bargaining health benefits illegal). The State Board of Education trying to get "race to the top" money from the Feds (create neighborhood public schools [another name for charter schools], allow cyber schools, disallow teacher tenure, and change collective bargaining agreements). It also appears as though we're headed for a State government shutdown on September 30<sup>th</sup>. There are also rumors there will be no

budget without some restrictions on educational employees' bargaining rights. Perhaps a shutdown of the State educational system is in order. The "fun" never stops. Stay tuned.



## Will Knowledge Have Value With State Legislators?

Public school employees certainly hope so. If knowledge really truly has value to them, they would NEVER seriously consider the highly reported and politicized "Dillon Plan".

The "Dillon Plan" is predicated on the belief that public employee health care costs are creating an ever-increasing drain on the precious revenues given to run our public schools and other public services. This is where the picture and reality get blurred by political wrangling and single-issue reporting.

It is true that public school employee health benefits have increased over the years. What one has to look at, however, to determine if this trend has cause an ever-increasing drain on our schools, is the total compensation costs of school employees as a whole. Total compensation costs include wages, insurance, social security contributions, and retirement contributions paid by the schools. If insurance costs go up, but the amount of a school's budget contributing to retirement or wages goes down, then the total effect is NO DRAIN on the overall revenues given to operate our schools.

From 2003 until 2008 (the most recent audited figures we have for Michigan's public schools), school employee total compensation as a percent of the revenue given to school districts peaked at 83.51% in 2004-2005, and is currently at an all-time low with the 2007-2008 of 80.95% of revenue.

The highest percentage of expenditures by Michigan's public schools dedicated to employee total compensation in the past 5 years is 82.65% from 2003-04. The lowest just happens to be the most recent audited year of 2007-08. Employee total compensation as a percentage of expenditures for that year is only 81.26%.

It is true Michigan is in a tough economic environment. Let's hope that our legislators use knowledge to create real legislation that solves real problems, and encourage them to leave the local decision-making of how to divvy up the resources allocated to schools to the very people that are there performing the services to our students and communities. Local control and collective bargaining for wages and benefits has worked very well for many decades. There is no fix needed, because the problem simply doesn't exist.

