MEA MONITOR

February 2015

*Moline Education Association*

***Special Interest Articles:***

* Add a highlight or your point of interest here
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***Individual Highlights:***

Inside Story 2

Inside Story 3

Inside Story 4

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Last Story 8

## President’s Report – Susan Blackall

I want you to know that I have a very positive attitude right now. Winter should be ending soon. Really. It has to - I think. However, it appears that this March will come in like a lion. I am looking forward to the “lamb” phase. Thoughts also turn towards testing and more testing – PARCC, ACT, WorkKeys, MAP. We are concerned about keeping adequate Conference & Planning during the testing time. We have a new calendar for next year, insurance forms are ready, retirees need to call for their final retirement packet, and elections are around the corner. As much as I look forward to spring, I now start to panic about all the work that still needs to be done.

Here are the current issues:

* **Insurance Forms**
	+ Insurance Forms for were sent out Feb 19 with due dates for completion and submission.
	+ Tobacco Use Certification form is due June 1, 2015.
	+ Wellness physicals must be completed and forms returned to the Insurance Office before June 15, 2015.
	+ The forms that were sent out earlier will also be accepted this year, if you have already used them.
* **Retirement**
* If you are retiring this year, it is time to call TRS at (800) 877-7896 to get your retirement packet. It should be done at least 12 weeks before the end of the school year.
	+ All you need is your social security number to apply for your packet.
	+ They can give you an estimate of your benefits if you know this year’s salary and your total number of sick days.
	+ They will let you know when you can expect you benefits to start.
	+ You also need to make an appointment with Lanty McGuire to discuss insurance options.
* **Demand to Bargain**
* The MEA has filed for a Demand to Bargain with the school district over a Consumer Education class being outsourced to Black Hawk College.
* Black Hawk is going to provide an instructor for the class that is to take place at Moline high School, before school hours.
* The course would cost students $360 tuition for 3 hours of Black Hawk credit.
* We consider the course offering a potential threat to job security for our business teachers – a dangerous precedent.

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* **Vote for NEA Representative Assembly**
* The ballots for the upcoming NEA Representative Election are coming out this week.
* The election is on Wednesday, March 4th.  Returned ballots should be in school mail by Thursday afternoon.
* Write-in votes can be added to the ballots.

* **Nominations for MEA Positions**
* We are looking for people to fill officer positions, members-at-large positions, and Region 18 Council positions.
* Interested individuals should send nomination forms to Teresa Armes, tarmes@molineschools.org, by April 17.
* Elections will be held in May.
* Please take a moment to consider running for positions on the Executive Board or volunteering for a chair position. Your union is only as strong as you make it.
* Feel free to call me, if you have questions about these positions. I would be happy to meet with you and to explain the positions.
* **Lost Conference & Planning Time During Testing**
* Elementary teachers are being asked to keep track of lost C&P time during PARCC testing.
* Teachers will track their own lost time on the honor system, then take compensatory computer time later in the semester.
* High School has two proctors in each class for ACT testing.
* Teachers, using the honor system, can take breaks equal to their own lost C&P time.

If members need me to stop by their building or want to have a conversation about contractual issues, please feel free to call me. My number is 309-236-5907. Have a good semester.

Sue Blackall

MEA President

**Public Relations- Kim Anderson**

Attention members! Did you know that the MEA has its own website ([http://mea40.org/](http://mea40.org/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank))? On this website, you can find archived copies of past Monitors and Connecting Lines. In addition, you can find lists of who the MEA Exec Board members and ARs are and when their meetings are held, MEA election applications and bios, how to access our contract and your Weingarten rights, tax info, John Deere-Moline / Moline Schools Special Recognition Awards, MEA Scholarship info, and links to the District, IEA, and NEA. But there is more we can do with this site!

In a section called Good News, we will feature fun, planned events by the newly formed MEA Social Committee. In addition, I would be willing to post other things such as special classroom or events or school fundraisers, outstanding awards or achievements of students or staff etc. Please feel free to send me text and pictures of anything you would like to share that you believe would qualify!

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**AR Secretary’s Report – Emily Roberts**

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The MEA Association Representatives met Thursday, February 12th, 2015, at the IEA office, Moline. President Sue Blackall called the meeting to order at 3:50pm. There not being a quorum present to approve the minutes or Treasurer’s report, President Blackall began the meeting with the Committee Chair Reports.

Committee Chair Reports:

- Elections – In the absence of chair Teresa Armes, President Blackall reminded the ARs of the election for the summer NEA/RA Convention. If anyone is interested in being a delegate, have the building staff do a write-in nomination. Nominations for the elected officials on the MEA Executive Board are due April 15th, 2015.

- Region 18 – Bonnie Lartz reported that at a meeting to be held February 20th, representatives from throughout the state would be considering suggestions for cost savings, including decreasing the number of chair positions, decreasing the number of convention days, and more trainings offered at the local levels.

- Legislative – Dave Strafford urged members to provide updated contact information to IEA.

- Membership – Jen Ulam reported that membership stands at 440. After discussion, it was decided that Jen would create a list of MEA members and building assignments on a Google document, to be shared only with the ARs. The ARs are asked to check the document for accuracy, and send any additions or corrections to Jen Ulam – she would be the only person who can edit the document.

- Public Relations – Kim Anderson reported that the blog was updated.

- Social – Cassie Larvenz reminded members of the TNT Beverage Tasting event scheduled for Friday, February 20th, 4:00pm. at the IEA office.

There now being 21 ARs and 13 Executive Board members in attendance, a quorum was declared. A motion was made by Jen Ulan, seconded by Leslie Perkins, to approve the minutes of the January 15th, 2015, AR meeting. **Motion** passed.

Treasurer Lori McCaw reported balances in the MEA accounts. A motion to approve the treasurer’s report was made by Dave Strafford, seconded by Teresa Armes. **Motion** passed. It was voted (January 2015) to not publish the dollar amounts in the MEA budget in the neither the minutes nor the Monitor. Members with questions regarding MEA account balances are asked to contact Treasurer Lori McCaw.

Old Business:

- Lost C & P time due to PARCC testing – elementary teachers were asked to record lost C & P time on the “C & P Compensation Time Log for PARCC Testing.” Copies of the log were distributed to the ARs. Lost C & P time would be compensated for by extra release time during computer lab.

- President Blackall reminded members that nominations were open for the NEA convention.

- President Blackall reminded members that nominations were open for MEA Executive Board and Region 18.

- On behalf of MEA, Shelly Rumler had made a request of district administration for the use of a room to use as a “shopping room” for retirees’ materials. She was informed by Allendale administration that this request must be brought before the cabinet for approval.

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New Business:

- Lost C & P Time/ACT testing - President Blackall encouraged conversation to continue among staff at the middle schools. Two staff members are required to be in each room during testing. MHS Principal McGuire has asked that high school staff use the “honor system” for taking C & P time, with one certified teacher remaining in the testing room.

- Spirit Wear – there has been discussion on what constitutes “spirit wear.” President Blackall reported that MHS Principal McGuire informed her that, with prior administrative approval, MHS teachers could vary spirit wear.

- Black Hawk Classes offered at MHS – President Blackall received information regarding a proposed class, offered before hours at MHS, taught by a Black Hawk College staff member. The MEA is requiring impact bargaining before this class even begins.

- MOA on WIU ELL Cohort – President Blackall reported that the cohort has successfully started.

- It was noted that there would be a fundraiser for the Dave Stone family. President Blackall will send an e-mail to MEA members providing more information.

- Cassie Larvenz informed members that the Jazzercise in East Moline was offering free classes for teachers during the month of February.

President’s Report:

- Insurance forms were sent prematurely. Teachers may use these forms or wait until new forms are distributed. Insurance forms may be retroactively completed.

- Retirement Information – all retirees are encouraged to contact TRS (1-800-877-7896) and ask for their retirement packages.

- RiF Information Connected with Student Growth – after discussing concerns with the untried PARCC test and new evaluation forms, the RiF committee suggested that a grace period be observed during which the student growth component information not affect a teacher’s RiF standing.

- Involving the Stakeholders – the lack of communication with stakeholders will again be brought to Dr. Moyer’s attention.

A.R. Concerns:

- It was voted (2010-2011) to not publish AR concerns in the Monitor. ARs were reminded to communicate concerns discussed at the meeting with the other MEA members they represent. President Blackall will discuss most issues in the “President’s Corner” section of the Monitor or send superintendent’s responses directly to the ARs for dissemination to members.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Shelly Rumler, seconded by Bonnie Lartz. **Motion** passed. The meeting adjourned at 4:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Roberts

MEA Secretary

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**INSURANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Dear Colleagues,

As you know, one of most important and best benefit as an employee is our opportunity to purchase health insurance.  Many of us cover ourselves and our families and, many retirees purchase this coverage as well.  We are a self-funded group.  That means that the money that each of us pay toward the premium is combined with the portion that the Board of Education pays and is in one fund that pays all of our claims.

You may also know that the price of health care has risen dramatically in the last decade and that with the Affordable Care Act the industry is undergoing big changes.  The insurance committee, made up of MEA members and cabinet members, have worked together to navigate these changes and keep our fund healthy.

Over the years we have recommended changes to our plan to insure sustainability of this benefit.  Premium increases (which are far below the industry average), requiring our spouses that have coverage through their employer to use that coverage as their primary, and most recently to add a premium to the coverage for those who choose to use tobacco and/or not get an annual physical. These changes have been put in place to protect our fund and make sure that we can provide coverage for future generations.

The committee has researched what other employers charge and how they have implemented premium coverage for tobacco users and those who do not get an annual physical.  We will determine the additional fee at our next meeting.  After all, it is in our own best interest to be as healthy as we can.

Each employee that uses the health insurance benefit will be receiving forms through email to complete. We are asking you for your support in the following ways:

* Print the forms and read them carefully.
* DO NOT DELAY in filling them out and submitting them.  The insurance office has a lot of work to do make sure everything is done correctly.

Important things to note and remember:

* The tobacco self-certification form is due, at the very latest by June 1, 2015.
* The annual physical form is due, at the very latest June 15, 2015.
* If your forms arrive late you will pay the higher premium rate.
* An annual physical is free under our plan.

Please read the frequently asked questions sheet that was sent with the forms.  We have tried to address the common questions that have arisen.  If your question isn’t answered from that sheet please contact Sarah Bartels in the insurance office for further clarification.

Thank you,

MEA Insurance Committee Members

Bonnie Lartz, Julie Reed, Allison Ryser, and Jeff Weller

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**Nomination Form for MEA Executive Board and Region 18 Council**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please accept my nomination for a one-year term on the MEA Executive Board for the following position checked.

**CHECK ONLY ONE FOR EXECUTIVE BOARD**

\_\_\_\_\_ President

\_\_\_\_\_ Vice President

\_\_\_\_\_ Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_ Treasurer

\_\_\_\_\_ Elementary Member-At-Large

\_\_\_\_\_ Middle Level Member-At-Large

\_\_\_\_\_ High School Member-At-Large

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature Date

If you are interested in being nominated for a two-year term on Region 18 Council, please indicate below. (You may be on the MEA Executive Board and Region 18 Council at the same time. This position is independent of the MEA Executive Board.)

**CHECK FOR REGION 18 COUNCIL**

\_\_\_\_\_ Region 18 Council

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature Date

**RETURN THIS FORM TO: Teresa Armes at John Deere Middle School**

**Teresa must receive the nomination form and a brief biography BY 3:30, April 17, 2015.**

Thank you for your interest in your MEA.

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#### MEA Member News:

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Moline Education Association

PhONE: 309-764-0811

E-Mail: sblackal@molineschools.org

WEB SITE:

www.mea40.org

*Congratulations to:*

Scott Karl (MHS) on birth of his daughter

Sarah Tollenaer (Deere) on her recent engagement

*Condolences to:*

Christina Ferreri (Lincoln-Irving) on death of her uncle

Sarah Carlin (Lincoln-Irving) on death of her uncle

Diana Winthurst (Jefferson) on death of her uncle

**Executive Board**

President-Susan Blackall

Vice President-Bonnie Lartz

Secretary-Emily Roberts

Treasurer-Lori McCaw

MHS at Large

Scott Ehlers

Colette Guerdet

Middle School at Large

Derek Lindauer

Dave Strafford

Elementary at Large

Chris Ballard

Dinah Leibovitz

Leslie Perkins

Appointed Committee Chairs

Elections-Teresa Armes

Legislative-Valerie Hays

Membership-Jen Ulam

Public Relations-Kim Anderson

Social-Cassie Larvenz

 Chief Negotiators-

Susie Hafner



####

**NEXT EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING: MARCH 5 AT 3:45 AT MEA OFFICE**

**NEXT AR MEETING: MARCH 12 AT 3:45 AT IEA OFFICE**

**NEXT SUPERINTENDENT MEETING: MARCH 19 AT 3:45 AT COOLIDGE**



##### **About Our Organization…**