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## *President's Newsletter      December 2007*

As we move closer to the holiday season and the momentum slides into high gear, please take a few moments to reflect on the blessings which we all share in this district as colleagues. Holidays are typically stressful times for so many families; this year of economic challenges in Michigan will test the outer limits. One cannot help but to reflect on the stability that teaching and our teachers bring to the Troy community both economically and academically. It is a comfort to know that some good things are here to stay even though change will always occur. Whether it is the cause or a characteristic effect, the personalities and talents of those who teach provide the greatest foundation for the educational success of Troy students. It is with great desire that this trend continue as the newer generations accept the challenge and commitment to a long time career in education. In order to do so, the funding of education must be viewed as an investment opportunity—a wise and fruitful investment—rather than a tax burden. The November edition of *MEA Voice* clearly outlines the rationale for such a paradigm shift in the article titled, “TEF is the Answer”. Please be sure to access the information and become a more informed member for better dialogue in school funding.

On another note, let us together embrace the greatness that we achieve in the classroom every day with our students and share that with the community by nominating colleagues for 2008 Teacher of the Year program. Please read below for more details. In the meantime, on behalf of the TEA Executive Board, may your holiday season and Christmas be filled with much love, laughter and good times. Enjoy the blessings of the season and have a healthy, Happy New Year 2008! *Roberta Masters* (work) 248.585.3723 (home office) 248.828.2812 Email: [teaprez@gmail.com](mailto:teaprez@gmail.com)

**Teacher of the Year Nominations** This is a wonderful opportunity to recognize a colleague who has made a difference in the lives of children and staff. While a TEA committee selects the 3 finalists representing each level, applications are due to Tim McAvoy by **Friday, January 18, 2008**. To acquire a copy of the application, see your building representative or download from the website at: [www.troy.k12.mi.us/tsdnews/teacheroftheyear.htm](http://www.troy.k12.mi.us/tsdnews/teacheroftheyear.htm).

**MEA Scholarship 2008 Application** It is not too soon to look ahead to scholarship opportunities for your senior who will be graduating from a public school in 2008. Since 1997, the MEA Scholarship Fund has provided more than \$175,000 in college scholarships to Michigan public school students. In 2007, 18 Michigan public school students and ten (10) college students won scholarships from MEA. Selected from nearly 1,200 applicants, the 18 new scholarship winners will receive stipends of \$1,555, while the ten college students will receive continuing MEA scholarships of \$1000 each. Your child could be the next recipient of an MEA scholarship. Offered for more than 11 years, the scholarship program is supported through local association donations and fund raising efforts. You may contact Athens or Troy **high school counseling offices** or download an application from [www.mea.org](http://www.mea.org) under “Members” then “Awards & Grants”, finally “MEA Scholarship”. Applications must be postmarked by **FEBRUARY 8, 2008** so do not delay! *The TEA Member Scholarship application for your child will be on our website in January of 2008.*

**Leave Days** Article 17 provides for 14 annual leave days for full time teaching staff. Any unused day can accumulate in a personal reserve bank throughout your Troy career. Upon retirement, a severance payout occurs for up to 90 leave days. See Article 28 for details. Recent discussions with members focused on the value of saving as many days as possible to cover those unexpected health challenges that may face us or family members during our careers. The Association encourages all members to recognize the benefit of leave days in your personal reserve. Just a reminder too that four (4) leave days per year may be used for personal business (Article 17.1.E) which roll over into your leave bank if not used.

**Universal Service Credit** Members have requested the procedure to buy universal service credit through the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System (MPERS). Call 800.381.5111 to access the MPERS system which requires member verification through a personal social security number. The prompts will lead you to the first step in the process, the request for an application, given that you had received wages in the prior year.

**PAC Drive 2008** With the chaos we have witnessed in the state legislature is it no wonder that school districts are unsettled and suffer from the lack of decision-making. The increased attacks regarding health care benefits in the form of PA 106 (SB 418) for public school employees, remind us of the need to be involved in political action. The TEA will continue such efforts in January 2008 with a Political Action Committee (PAC) drive. Stay tuned to the happenings in Lansing at the legislative level as this year ends and 2008 begins. Once again, the problem of out-sourcing work and other attacks such as the "**Right to Work**" scam that is out there in the form of a petition drive against school employees will not disappear; they just change dimensions and titles. We need to count on each TEA member to do his/her part with a collective voice as we face these challenges. Do not get caught in the scam!!!

**MEA Bargaining, PAC and PR Conference** Members interested in attending the February 7-9, 2008 training should contact Roberta Masters at [teaprez@gmail.com](mailto:teaprez@gmail.com) for a registration form to this year's event. It will be held at the Cobo Center in Detroit. There is much to see and learn as we move into another bargaining year.

**PR Committee** The TEA PR Committee will be working with Troy People Concerned (TPC) to bring necessary food staples to families who have been hit by the hard times. Boulan Middle School along with Hamilton and Barnard Elementary buildings will kick off the drive in January 2008. Each month from January through June 08, TEA staff will have an opportunity to donate necessary items to keep the food pantry in Troy stocked for needy students and families. More information will be provided through the TEA Building Reps and your building PR Representative.

**Plan Ahead** Please remember that Tuesdays are traditionally Troy Education Association meeting days. We appreciate your support and efforts not to plan or schedule meetings with staff which would conflict with Association gatherings and Representative Assemblies. When in doubt please, call Roberta to verify a date. Think Spring! Due to a change in calendar with comp time on the Friday before Memorial Day, please make an exception by marking your calendar for the **TEA Retirement Reception on Wednesday, May 21, 2008**. It will be held again at the Michigan State Management Center in Troy.

#### **December Calendar of Events**

Dec	4	PLC all day; TEA Executive Meeting 4:30 p.m.; TSD School Board Meeting 7:00 p.m.
Dec	6	Region 7 Meeting in Pontiac-Oakland Schools
Dec	11	TEA Representative Assembly at BAKER MIDDLE SCHOOL 4:15 p.m. **** change in location***
Dec	13	TEA PR Committee meeting at Hamilton Elementary 4:00 p.m.
Dec	24-January 1	Holiday Break-NO school staff and students
Jan	2	School Resumes

**Happy Holidays to you and yours!**  
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