



30701 Barrington Avenue • Suite 125 • Madison Heights, Michigan 48071 • 248/585-3723

President: ROBERTA MASTERS *Vice President:* JOE MOCERI
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President's Newsletter

October 2007

October brings a different challenge this year as the state legislature decided state funding and the fate of Michigan schools at the very last minute. As of 4:30 a.m. on October 1st, it was evident that teachers across the state have diminished bargaining rights. It will take time and effort to determine just how deeply these changes will affect each of us and our families. One cannot but notice how the decision was made regarding the increase in state sales tax. Those services with a strong voice or lobbyists were not affected or at least not to the same degree compared to those services without such support. It has taken years of blood, sweat and tears of those teachers before us who fought so valiantly to achieve the current level of financial recognition we have for the services provided to children in our community and state. It has only taken a few hours, even minutes for state leaders to diminish or loosen the foundation of those accomplishments. While your 2007 PAC dollars were hard at work preserving some rights of educators across the state, your voice was not loud enough to preserve current practices. Each of us needs to decide what value for ourselves and families we place on the ability to determine benefits through bargaining at the local level. At this time it is not the PAC monies but rather the collective voice through leadership that needs attention. Each member has the capacity to make a difference for no role is less important than any other. The simplest of tasks in leadership when focused on the collective good will continue the cause forward. Maybe that role is as a head teacher who stands up for educators, a department head whose leadership decides the curriculum delivery, a committee chair who reviews policy and practices, a building representative or delegate to the Rep Assembly, our legislative body impacting change and direction for members, an elected trustee or officers of the Exec Board whose roles become more challenging or that of a vocal, involved, passionate EA member whose active involvement places membership in our Association on a personal priority list. The future rests with each of us and the success of this Association will only be as strong as the collective efforts of those who are involved. While tough decisions are never easy, that is what leadership is all about. Vacillation serves no purpose nor allows for forward movement. Even with an unpopular decision, parties can move forward as strategies are generated which may resolve the differences. Even in the most life-changing moment, split second decisions are made on awareness, faith and quick analysis. What active part do you play in this equation? Decisions made this fall will impact the future of our organization. Will you take the lead for your building, department, committee or Association?

One must step up to leadership, why not you?

Roberta Masters

Roberta Masters (work) 248.585.3723 (home office) 248.828.2812 Email: teaprez@gmail.com

Teacher Pride and PR This September, an additional eighteen (18) back packs filled with new school supplies were distributed to students with financial need. Working with Troy People Concerned (TPC), the Association has again helped students overcome difficulties. The TEA PR committee will repeat the project next May. In the meantime, keep your eyes open for special school supplies on sale that can be tucked away for such a good cause. We still have a few back packs available for distribution to elementary students. Please contact Roberta to make arrangements for drop off to your school if you have students who could benefit from this gift.

Negotiations Study Committee According to the TEA Bylaws under Article III Committees, the Association shall have a standing committee known as the Professional Negotiations Study committee and shall consist of at least one (1) member

from each building. The main role of this committee is to “study the Master Agreement in effect between the Troy Board of Education and the Troy Education Association to recommend areas for improvement.”

Please contact your building representative to find out more about this important step in preparing for the next round of negotiations which begin this school year and submit your name for involvement in the process. Take the lead!

New Teacher Event Newly hired EA members will meet with TEA leaders, MEA Financial and MESSA representatives on Monday, October 22. This important event will focus on the issues facing our latest members. Please encourage your staff to attend and gain insight into the role of the Association and their rights as members. More details will be available at the RA and an invitation has already been sent to those who qualify.

Retirement at Semester For members considering retirement at semester, it is important to note Article 28.4 on page 53 of the CBA, **Severance and Retirement/Resignation language/Mid-Year Notice Requirements**. “A teacher resigning or retiring must give a minimum of ninety (90) days notice in order to be eligible for severance, except in extenuating circumstances. . . To be within regulation, please have all letters submitted to Jasen Witt no later than the week of October 15, 2007.

Absence Code Changes Please be advised of the following absence codes through the AESOP system which are different than past years: 1) Personal/Family Illness 2) Personal Business 3) Conference Out-of-District 4) Department Business 5) Union Business 6) Vacation 7) Pre-Approved Comp Time 8) Floating Holiday 9) Jury Duty 10) District Inservice 11) Management Days 12) Religious Holiday 13) Athletic Coach Release 14) Field Trip 15) Annual Review/IEPC 16) Without Pay 17) 5th Grade Camp 18) Snow Day –TESA only 19) Release Time 20) NCA Release Time 21) IB Release Time

Grievance Training Mark you calendars for grievance training on November 1 by MEA Uniserv for all units in the SODA Council. This training is open to anyone who wants to be empowered by learning more about the process and your contract rights. The training will be held at the Services Building in Troy at 4:00 p.m. Contact Roberta for registration information.

Non-rep Positions Recently, non-rep positions have been posted for staff. The Association established Schedule A, B, C, and D positions and rates through bargaining. Non-rep positions are not part of the collective bargaining agreement for TEA members and are to be filled by other district staff.

Committees **Thank you** to those members who already serve on various Association committees and who responded to the previous requests. Some of these committees are behind-the-scenes opportunities that would build relationships with other experienced members and allow probationary teachers a valuable experience to grow with the Association. Please **complete and return** this portion to Roberta Masters at the SODA by inner office mail.

_____ **Judicial Committee**- Responsibilities include interpretation of the bylaws and how they are instituted. Members cannot serve in any elected or appointed position with the association. In order for the committee to be active, it must consist of 9 members, each level must be represented, and meet 9 times per year.

_____ **Grievance Committee** – Experience first hand how the contract applies and the steps needed to preserve its integrity. Members of this committee review grievances filed by Association members that are to be considered for further steps in the grievance process. This committee meets as necessary depending on number/type of grievances filed each year. We need middle school and elementary representation increased.

_____ **Public Relations Committee** – assist PR trustee with teacher recognition activities for the Association (internal); assist with mailings (external); assist with the goal to maximize “Teacher Pride” in the Troy School District.

Name _____ Building _____ Extension _____

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