

Subject: TEA INFORMATION!

Membership Communication #12

Dues Procedure Audit and Updates

In May, members will be asked to log onto the MyAccount system to review and update their membership information. Even if members paid their dues in full for the 2016-2017 school year they need to review and update their information. All dues payments will occur through the new software system. **No individual paper checks will be accepted next year.** Members will review and update the following information:

1. Personal Information
2. Dues Payment Option
3. Bank Account or Charge Card Information
4. Unpaid Leave Dues Option

The software that has been developed for the Association is called *Unity*. This software is secure and encrypted. The security systems incorporated in the software have equivalent security safeguards as online banking or bill paying software.

Members will be receiving directions via OneCallNow on when and how to review and update their MyAccount information. Dues will only be drawn using *Unity* software beginning in June 2017.

Fees associated with an ACH (bank account) payment or a credit card payment will be added to the amount deducted for dues. An ACH payment is roughly fifty cents and the estimated cost for a credit card payment is three dollars.

MEA Election Results

President – Paula Herbart

Vice-President – Chandra Madafferri

Secretary/Treasurer – Brett Smith

These new leaders have been elected to a three-year term.

TEA Election Results

All TEA Officers and Representatives were elected by acclamation at the April 18th Representative Assembly.

President – Tony Lucchi

Vice-President – Cindy Shankin

Secretary – Debbie Rosenman

Treasurer – Suzanne Cowie

Membership Chair – Patrick Koneval

PR Trustee – Angela Clemence

High School Trustee – Andrea McCune
Christiansen

Middle School Trustee – Cindy

Elementary Trustee – Betsy Murphy
Cichowicz

Elementary Trustee – Jason

Special Education Trustee – Dave Guzak

MEA Delegates – Cindy Shankin and Scott Gibbons

MEA Alternates – Betsy Murphy and Debbie Rosenman

SODA Council Delegates – Jason Cichowicz and Scott Gibbons (The Association has three unfilled positions on the SODA Council)

TEA Retirement Reception

There are 14 retirees this year. All members are invited to attend the TEA Retirement Reception to honor our retirees. The reception will be held on Thursday, May 25th from 3:30 to 7:30 at:

Michigan State University
Management Education Center
811 W. Square Lake Rd.
Troy, MI 48098

TEA Scholarship Deadline

The TEA Scholarship deadline is Friday, May 12, 2017. Dependents of TEA members who are graduating from a Michigan public school are eligible to apply for a scholarship from the TEA. Applications are available on the TEA website: troyeducationassociation.org Recipients may be awarded up to \$2,000.00.

MESSA Insurance Rates

The MESSA medical insurance rates effective July 1, 2017 have been released. The TEA will see an increase in rates as follows:

Choices will increase 3.31%

ABC will increase 2.54%

The amount the District will pay towards the hard cap is increasing by 3.3%. This means that there will be no increase for those on the ABC plan and a .01% increase for those on Choices. The rates are good for 18 months. In addition to the above increase to the hard cap mentioned above, the hard cap is due to increase again on January 1, 2018 at about the same percentage. This means that the medical premium that members pay will go down by about 3% for the 2018 calendar year.

The TEA Health Care Committee is reviewing new medical insurance products and options that can further reduce rates for members. The options vary from co-insurance to prescription drug tiered pricing. More information will be forthcoming.

Detailed Information About the TEA Dues Audit and Updating

Summary:

Five years ago, a state law was imposed on all public-school districts to stop withdrawing union dues through payroll deduction. This law immediately impeded unions from receiving dues from their membership. It was an insidious plan by the state legislature to try to destroy unions by cutting off their funding. Consequently, dues collection has been a very difficult undertaking for many public-school employees and their representative unions.

The Troy Education Association was the first unit in the Michigan Education Association to develop a plan to collect dues from its membership. The MEA even coined a phrase to describe the TEA's dues collection system; our local became known as the first "Locally Billed Local."

The system that the TEA developed five years ago has been successful. But, as with any system, there have been some drawbacks:

1. Members had to inform the TEA treasurer and/or TEA membership chair of any bank account information changes. In many cases this did occur. However, in some cases, it created added work for the treasurer and membership chair to track down the members and the information.
2. Members had to inform the TEA treasurer and/or TEA membership chair if they were going on a leave for longer than one month. The member had to inform the treasurer and membership chair if they

wished to continue to pay full dues, partial dues, or no dues. Retroactive requests to reimburse dues caused a great deal of work for the Association to get dues reimbursed from MEA/NEA, and in many cases, the Association had to absorb the added costs.

3. Members were limited by the original system to only pay dues through a deduction from their checking or savings account. No charge cards payments could be used to pay dues.

The 2016-2017 school year brought the Association to a crossroads on how to better address the dues collection system shortcomings.

Leadership sanctioned the development of a system for members to have access to their personal information and the dues process. This system became known as MyAccount and is located on the TEA website. The software for this innovative membership system is being written by an outside company for the TEA. There are four phases of implementation to the new system. What a member currently sees on his/her MyAccount is only the second phase. The next two phases will be operational for all members by June of this year.

Your colleagues at Smith Middle School will be the first group to test the new software. The Smith members will update their information on MyAccount. The software will allow them to update a variety of information from their personal information such as street address and cell number, to even change their dues deduction method from checking, saving, or charge account. Every change will be in real time. The Smith membership will have their April dues drawn with the new system.

The new system has been tested over 120 times prior to it being used with our members. In contrast to the processing company and system used to process the dues draws in September, October and November, this new system has been thoroughly tested and retested by the software company. The goal of the TEA Smith Middle School membership test is to have a limited final test before moving the entire membership to this system.

The MEA is co-sponsoring our efforts to develop a membership system that is both user friendly and responsive to the needs of the Association. We are piloting a membership dues system that could be used throughout the state by all MEA locals.