

# AEA FOCUS

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On the heels of the excitement and the history that surrounded the inauguration of President Obama we find ourselves amidst turmoil of both hope and concern. On the one hand we have witnessed millions of men, women, and children come together as one to celebrate the birth of a new era in our nation's history. We have watched the world react positively to our new leadership and we eagerly await the fruits of our new direction. Even educators and policy makers are excited that perhaps the "rags to riches" rise of President Obama will inspire and motivate our youth to unprecedented levels of effort and success. On the other hand we still find ourselves mired in an economic recession, involved in turbulent wars overseas and with the many domestic problems resulting from both weighing ever-increasingly on our daily lives.

Time is what it will take to generate and implement solutions to all of these problems and in the mean time we will have to continue to find ways to adapt to these pressures in both our daily and professional lives. The large-scale worldwide nature of the problems that face our new administration in Washington will serve to delay activity and prioritization of issues near and dear to us such as the NCLB act. This teamed with the fact the new Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, is a noted believer that teacher accountability is the basis for success or failure in the public school system makes our path, although safer, an uneasy one. Duncan concurs that the unfunded/underfunded nature of NCLB act as a mandate is its biggest flaw but indicates that any further funding would be met with more requirements from teachers.

As we move forward it will be our job, along with PSEA and NEA, to keep our voice heard. To make sure that our issues remain in the forefront and that NCLB reform remains a priority issue. We will battle on and make sure that the changes at the top are reflected in our daily lives both at school and at home.

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[www.allentownea.com](http://www.allentownea.com)

(610) 432-7329 FAX (610) 821-3011

Allentown Education Association

2200 W Hamilton Street, L - 8

Allentown PA 18104

Melvin email – [AEARiddick@aol.com](mailto:AEARiddick@aol.com)

Carolyn email – [AEASchafer@aol.com](mailto:AEASchafer@aol.com)

Melvin After Hours # 610-433-0348

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## **HEADS UP!**

**Heads Up is our forum to bring you critical issues as well as current local and state information.**

- **Attention! New teachers and any other interested members. Join us on Thursday February 26<sup>th</sup> at Allentown Brewworks beginning at 4:00 PM. Come join us to socialize, meet fellow members, and learn what we are all about! We have a special guest we promise will delight and entertain you. Look for your invitation in the coming weeks.**
- **Remember to use your last pay stub in December 2008 to write off your union dues at tax time.**
- **Please remember that sick bank days cover catastrophic conditions. According to state regulations, there are stricter guidelines governing what conditions are eligible. Our previous sick bank program allowed a maximum of 15 days to be given to an individual. Our new sick bank allows up to 60 days with an additional 30 days as needed for a total of 90 paid days. To determine if your condition qualifies, please call the AEA office.**
- **Please be aware that coaches and facilitators are not certified supervisors. They cannot evaluate or be empowered by an administrator to supervise. They cannot observe and report back for the purpose of evaluation. They cannot be mandated to give directives by order of an administrator. Please contact your building rep with information if you are being affected by this.**
- **Tuition reimbursement – Please be aware of the proper procedure.**
  - 1) **You are financially responsible to obtain 6 post-baccalaureate credits on your own.**
  - 2) **You must obtain PRIOR authorization before the start of each class. The Tuition Reimbursement Forms are available in each building – see your faculty rep or building secretary for the location. Be sure to complete ALL parts.**
  - 3) **To qualify for tuition reimbursement, you must earn no less than a B.**
  - 4) **Next have an official sealed transcript sent directly from the college or university or hand deliver an official sealed transcript to Danielle Trevorah at the administration building.**
  - 5) **Send a copy of your payment receipt to Danielle Trevorah.**

### **AEA Calendar**

Feb 11.....Faculty Rep Meeting @ UT

Feb 26.....AEA New Teacher Social  
.....ASD Regular Board Meeting

March 4.....Executive Committee Mtg

### **DEADLINES:**

**March 1.....** Deadline for Retirement Letter  
(to Qualify for any incentives)

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Professional Development Sabbatical Requests