

AEA FOCUS

Volume VIII, Issue 1

SEPTEMBER 2006

President's Message

As we begin another school year, we sense the hope and excitement that accompanies a fresh start. At the same time we are also aware of the many needs and challenges facing public education and the Allentown School District. We the teachers of this association want the finest possible educational opportunities for our students. We want the voice of our members heard, known and recognized because we are truly knowledgeable of the best practices in the classroom and we are the experts on public education.

Summer is over and I hope you are rejuvenated and fired up about the meaningful contributions we have made and will continue to make throughout our careers. As teachers, we have been called on to educate and advocate for every child who enters our schools. We have a responsibility to educate ourselves about the issues that confront our profession and our students. And we have a responsibility to speak up for and educate others about public education.

This summer I had a few opportunities to reflect and hash over in my mind my years as the Association President. As I looked back over that time period the one concept that kept resonating in my head was "as things may change many things remain the same".

Things that have changed, do you remember Act 16 or Empowerment and being one of twelve districts to deal with that issue. With your hard work, and the help and effort of support personnel, students and this community the District prevailed over Act 16's possible penalties and embraced some needed changes. Now we have the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) you know it as NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND (NCLB) what is the outlook for this districts future? One of changes or are we going to be penalized for our dedication to this profession, with more of the same.

Act 72 property tax reform and educational funding reform was nothing but a tax shift that would have created an additional tax burden on the educational system throughout this state. Appropriately this was voted down by 480 plus school districts because it did not address the problem of inequities in the way school districts are funded. State legislators passed Act 1 which brought in property tax reform and referendum which means the community has the right to vote on school District budgets. After all these changes the real problem of inequities in how school systems are funded remains the same.

Stay tuned for more changes, Allentown teacher's evaluation restructuring, POSSIBLE Statewide Health Care Coverage and AEA contract negotiations. Will negotiations result in a positive change or will things remain the same.

What are you willing to do to bring about the needed changes in our bargaining agreement?

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www.allentownea.com

Allentown Education Association
462 Walnut Street, 2nd Floor
Allentown PA 18102

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

Melvin email – AEARiddick@aol.com
Carolyn email – AEASchafer@aol.com

Melvin After Hours # 610-433-0348

This publication is an official publication of Allentown Education Association and is affiliated with Pennsylvania State Education Association and the National Education Association.

EASTERN REGION WEBSITE

If you are interested in attending PSEA workshops or trainings you can visit their site @ www.psea.org then click on "About PSEA" then select "Regions" and then go to "Eastern".

GRIEVANCES

Please remember if you have a problem and are not sure if it warrants a discussion with ASD or the filing of a grievance by AEA or yourself please call AEA to discuss the issue.

We do not know what is going on in individual buildings unless someone reports it to us. Sometimes we are unaware of things that are taking place district wide.

Whether a situation is cause for a grievance or not is not your colleagues or building reps decision, but it is an AEA and/or PSEA decision.

AEA Calendar

**ASD Regular Bd Mtg
Sept 28 @ 7:30 P.M.**

Oct 2 HOLIDAY

**AEA Exec Committee Mtg
Oct 4 @ 3:45 P.M.**

**Deadline for RSVP to attend
Retiree's Mtg Oct 5**

**PSEA Retiree's Meeting
Oct 10 @ 7:00 P.M.**

**ASD Education Mtg
Oct 12 @ 7:00 P.M.**

**Faculty Rep Mtg @ Trexler
Oct 18 @ 3:45 P.M.**

AEA Retirement Guidelines Booklet

Our booklet is in the process of being updated and will be ready by October 1. If you would like one please call the office @ 610-432-7329 and we will send it to your school. This booklet includes important ASD & PSER's phone numbers and meeting dates.

Personal Information Update

If you have changed schools, your name, phone number or moved recently **PLEASE** call the AEA office @ 610-432-7329 and give us the new information. It is very important that our contact information for you is accurate.

We don't want you to miss out on information that we send out. We have had situations when someone has left a message and we have not had their updated home phone number or had the person listed at the wrong school.