

Back to Basics

member run

MSEA is a member-run union. You've been seeing and hearing the term more and more lately. It's what makes MSEA different from so many other unions. But just what exactly does member-run mean?

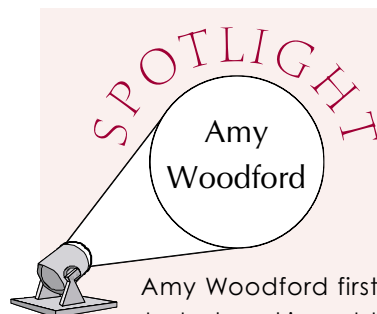
It's a philosophy, really, a belief that is eloquently stated in MSEA's mission statement (bottom of page). It is also one of the main reasons members choose MSEA to be their exclusive representative. MSEA believes in the democratic power of its members and strongly encourages them to take an active role in shaping the future of this union.

MSEA's commitment to local autonomy is **vital** to maintaining an empowered membership and is evident in the way we do business. For example, MSEA members:

- 1) **DETERMINE** what type of local leadership best suits their particular bargaining unit.
- 2) **CREATE** a unit operating policy to meet their specific needs.
- 3) **CONTROL** the bargaining process by selecting their negotiation team, surveying the membership, ratifying proposals and eventually voting on the contract.
- 4) **CHOOSE** whether or not to collect local dues - and how to spend it.
- 5) **SELECT** 2 delegates (at least) per school district to attend the Delegate Assembly to debate and vote on issues such as proposed changes to MSEA policies, Board elections and the dues schedule.

MSEA can be whatever our members want it to be. There are so many ways to stay informed and above all, make sure your voice is heard! Attend your next unit meeting and/or ask your chief steward how you can become more involved. Let's keep working together to strengthen our union and face the future together. MSEA is **PROUD** to represent each and every one of you!

I am MSEA



Amy Woodford first started working at the

Cass Lake - Bena Elementary School as a long-term substitute in 1997. The following year she was hired on as a full-time paraprofessional for the 2nd grade and really loves working with her students. Amy's duties include leading small groups in math, reading and writing. She is also responsible for daily math timings, weekly spelling tests, lunchroom and recess duties and also finds time to be a bus monitor!

For the past three years Amy has served as the Elementary School Chief Steward for her unit, which consists of 91 cooks, custodians, paras and secretaries. She has attended the last three Delegate Assemblies, including the 2004 Special Delegate Assembly, and hopes to continue representing her unit at future Assembly meetings.

P A R A P R O F E S S I O N A L

Electronic newsletter

SAVE A TREE!

Are you interested in receiving future MSEA newsletters via email (pdf attachments) **instead** of through the regular mail?

E-mail Melissa John at the MSEA office today!
(melissa@msea-mn.com)

"The Minnesota School Employees Association (MSEA), is a growing union which recognizes the dignity of the individual worker and the power of the organized body. It is a democratic union directed by its membership, and fiscally responsible to that membership. Through an empowered membership and a professional staff, MSEA provides the highest level of representation and service in the State of Minnesota."

MSEA

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GOING ON LEAVE?

Stay Active!

If you wish to remain an active member while on a leave of absence from your district, you must notify MSEA in writing and pay a one-time yearly due of \$25.00. If you return to work at some point during the same school year, the \$25.00 payment will be applied to your total dues amount for the current year.

Maintaining active status with MSEA allows you to receive all mailings and meeting notices during the year, vote on contract proposals and ratifications and hold a local or state office. It will also allow you to be eligible for all MSEA member-only benefits listed below.

Please notify Lynn Jansen at MSEA as soon as possible if you wish to maintain active status during a leave of absence. Have a good year!

email: lynn@msea-mn.com
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MEMBER BENEFITS

CONTACT MSEA FOR MORE INFORMATION
REGARDING THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS:

- ◆ ten \$500 annual scholarships
*registration forms available online
or in the November "Classified"*
- ◆ \$2,000 life insurance
(premium paid by MSEA)
- ◆ \$2,000 accidental death ins
(premium paid by MSEA)
- ◆ low-cost auto/home/cycle ins
- ◆ united educators credit union
membership
- ◆ msea newsletter "the classified"
- ◆ camp snoopy/valleyfair discounts
- ◆ member training available for bldg reps,
neg teams and unit leadership
- ◆ retirement gift for full members
- ◆ mn zoo/imax theatre discount
- ◆ **cingular cell phone discount - NEW!**
(where available)

From the PRESIDENT...

WELCOME BACK!



Summer went by way too quickly! I hope everyone had the chance to spend time with your family and friends this summer.

The Board is anxious to get back to work in September. One of the things the Board will be focusing on this year is the MSEA website. I would like to make it a secured site where additional web pages would be password-protected. That way we would be able to put more on our website to keep the members better informed.

We will also be taking a closer look at the pilot Shakopee unit website to hopefully implement that feature for other units as well. Our hope is individual unit websites will help units communicate with its members better.

At our July Board meeting the Board and staff got together and spent the afternoon brainstorming; it was nice to hear their ideas. One of the things that we talked about was bringing back the Summer Institute. If you have any ideas that you would like the Board to consider for a topic for the Summer Institute please contact us either by e-mail or phone. We're looking forward to hearing from you!

The Board hopes everyone has a great year!

In Unity,
Les Schermerhorn
MSEA President

AFL-CIO Split

NATIONAL
news

At the end of July 2005, seven unions, representing more than 6 million workers, left the AFL-CIO and formed the Change to Win coalition. This was the most significant event for the American labor movement in 50 years. It is critical that MSEA, as an independent union, understands the reasons behind the split and what this split means for our future.

The primary cause of this split is the age-old battle between politics and organizing. Should labor focus on organizing the un-organized or continue to focus on passing legislation and electing pro-labor politicians? Labor unions have been debating these important issues for more than 100 years. The Change to Win coalition wants to devote more resources to organizing the un-organized workers of America while the leadership at the AFL-CIO chooses to continue to devote more resources to political activity.

Once more than 50% of American workers belonged to a labor union - today less than 10% of workers are union members. The Change to Win coalition wants to reverse that trend by organizing new workers and new industries.

The current AFL-CIO leadership contends that without friends who can pass and enforce labor friendly legislation, organizing efforts are going to continue to falter.

MSEA understands the value of both organizing and political action. The Board is committed to growing the union through organizing while staying connected to the political arena as our fate as public school employees is in the hands of elected officials. The Board welcomes your ideas on both important issues, so feel free to contact your Association Officers or Board members if you would like to further discuss these issues.



Deadline Restored

The legislature recently restored the January 15th contract settlement deadline for teacher contracts, which all expired in July of this year. The deadline, which had been in law for many years, but had been suspended by the legislature every year since 2000.

The penalty imposed upon school districts for not settling the teacher contracts is a loss of revenue to the school district equal to \$25 per pupil. Non - teacher contracts are not covered by the deadline.

ANNOUNCEMENT

2006 Para Conference

Mark your calendars - the 2006 Nat'l Para Conference will once again be held in Minnesota.

Sheraton Bloomington Hotel
Minneapolis South
May 11-13th

How Can You Become a Consortium Member?

The Para Consortium is now looking for the following members:

- Parent (Spec. Ed. student)
- Parent (Title student)
- Principal
- Special Educational Para
- Staff Development Coord

Check the Para Consortium web site at (<http://ici2.umn.edu/para/>) for more information.

MSEA
&
NACSE



MSEA belongs to the National Association of Classified School Employees (NACSE), a group of independent unions all exclusively representing classified school employees. NACSE consists of MSEA, the California School Employees Association (CSEA) and the Public School Employees of Washington (PSE) working together on national legislative issues.

NACSE has hired federal lobbyist Jerry Klepner to keep us updated on national issues affecting all of our members. He provides a weekly Washington Update that is posted on the MSEA web site and will periodically be in telephonic contact with MSEA leadership over important issues. Jerry is able to clearly articulate the political and legislative situation in DC and has been a welcome guest at our Delegate Assembly. He also coordinates appointments with top administration and legislative leaders during our Washington lobbying sessions.

But Jerry doesn't set our lobbying agenda; that is established by the NACSE Board, consisting of the presidents of MSEA, CSEA and PSE, each of whom has only **one vote**. The presidency is rotated among the member organizations and currently MSEA President Les Schermerhorn is serving as the NACSE President.

The legislative priorities established for the past year are No Child Left Behind, Federal Education Funding and Social Security. Position papers on all three subjects were prepared by MSEA, CSEA or PSE and are available on our web site. Both MSEA and NACSE can share in the success of convincing Congress to pressure the Education Dept into delaying the NCLB para requirements beyond the initial January 2006 date.

Year End legislative Update

By Kevin Fahey, Executive Director

After several years of only bad news out of the legislature, we ended up with a little good news. School districts will receive their first significant increase in quite some time as a result of the K-12 Education bill that was finally agreed to by the Governor and the legislature. The bill provides for a 4% basic funding increase in each of the next two years. It provides for \$800 million in new money, although \$139 million of that will come from local property taxes and \$95 million more from payment delays.

Unfortunately we were unsuccessful in our attempt to pass the Statewide Health Insurance Pool for school employees despite having broad bi-partisan support. In the end, governor Tim Pawlenty, Speaker Steve Sviggum and House Education Chair Barb Sykora wouldn't agree. Again, this was not a partisan issue as we received support from both sides of the aisle, liberal and conservative alike, based on the common sense merits of the proposal. We worked very hard on the statewide insurance pool as it was second only to increased funding in our priorities. We worked closely with a coalition of other education unions, Education Minnesota, SEIU Local 284, AFSCME Council 5 and the leadership of the AFL-CIO. Interestingly, the union that was trying to raid our members during the legislative session, AFSCME Council 65, sided with our opponents.

The January 15 contract deadline for teachers was restored. This will probably change some of our negotiating timetables due to the statutory requirement for teacher settlement contracts. There were also changes made to PERA with both employee and employer contributions set to rise. Refer to the table above for more details.

NEW PERA RATE CHANGES

Year	Employee	Employer
2005	5.10%	5.53%
2006	5.50%	6.00%
2007	5.75%	6.25%
2008	6.00%	6.50%
2009	6.00%	6.75%
2010	6.00%	7.00%

Beginning in 2012, the PERA Board will be able to make contribution rate changes of up to 1/4% without legislative approval.