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ACTION!

Vol. 28, No. 6

THE VOICE OF THE DELAWARE STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

June 2008

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New teacher evaluation system holds much promise

Not only is the new generation of the statewide teacher/specialist evaluation system (DPAS II) better, but it is perhaps the best example of successful collaboration with DoE when you compare its original version three years ago with today's regulations and training.

The biggest improvements to DPAS II over the past three years during its initial trial include:

- **Goal setting treats teachers and specialists as professionals.** Your evaluator is spending more time with you discussing how learning takes place, collaborating with you on the best way to determine improvement. No longer is your evaluation a snapshot of what your evaluator thinks he/she is seeing.
- **DSTP data is not required to measure student improvement.** You can use whatever assessment data is the most germane to your work, including classroom assessments.
- **Student Improvement is what matters,** not completely meeting a goal.



Red Clay's Margaret Donohoe, a 7th grade social studies teacher at the Cab Calloway School of the Performing Arts, asks if a teacher's goal can focus on a certain segment of students, as opposed to all students. The answer: Yes! DSEA invited leaders from all locals not currently rolling out the new performance evaluation system to an information session and Q&A with DSEA and DoE experts. For more see pages 6 and 7.

- **You will not be comparing the DSTP results of different cohorts of students,** as was the case in the initial version of DPAS II.
- **The factors that contribute to a rating of Needs Improvement or Ineffective are now determined in a fair manner.**
- **There is easy access to helpful information and resources** (www.doe.k12.de.us/performance/dpasii), and two DoE staff dedicated solely to making DPAS II implementation successful.

For the details of the roll-out of DPAS II this fall, see pages 6 and 7.

Look ahead to a better future

Over the last six years, together we have accomplished a great deal. DSEA is an educational leader in our state and among the NEA state affiliates.

- **Our locals** have grown stronger, our members have become more involved, and education in Delaware has moved forward as student achievement has increased and the achievement gap has decreased.

- **We are moving** towards a new state testing system that will look more like what we need to help us impact instruction.

- **Our relationships** with our elected officials and other friends who care about public education have blossomed.

ACTION!

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In her final president's message, Barbara Grogg urges us to look ahead to Election 2008 and its significance.

- **Our influence** is felt statewide, and we have many friends in elected positions.

It took all of us working hard to get to such a good place. And we can climb higher.

Six years ago I came to this job with a belief that I could make a difference for our members, that I would stand up for you when you needed it and stay out of the way when you needed that. I learned quickly that the work we do is held in high esteem by most, but that the obstacles to change are many.

As I visited each of our public schools, some several times, I was never disappointed by what I saw. I met many of you doing the work you do best, helping our kids learn. Helping them to learn the academics of course, but also helping them to learn how to interact positively with others, how to accept winning AND losing, how to work for what they want and how to grow into responsible, happy adults.

I have been with you at school board meetings, staff picnics, grievance hearings and arbitrations, Rep Council meetings, DPAS II meetings, Student Success Plan meetings, legislative hearings, RTI meetings, new teacher orientations, on the Winnebago Tour and just you and I one on one. As difficult as your work is, as hard as it is to find the time to do all you do, as tough it is to deal with all the new initiatives – you make it all work. You find ways to address the most difficult situations. And you come out of it all, happy to have the chance to make a difference.

So, as I prepare to leave this position, I will carry with me the memories of you – your willingness to do more and more for kids, your love of learning and sharing, your support for each other and your ability to touch the children and young adults that will create our future.

As I finish my time as DSEA President this August, I need to call upon you to continue moving ahead. As you know there is still much to do – there are still many member needs to address, and still more we can do for our students.

I encourage you to think big:

- **Be big players** in the upcoming elections in 2008 at every level.

- **Choose and support candidates who understand** your work and want to help you improve upon the great progress you are making.

- **Give your time and your energy,** your talents and your money to DSEA-recommended men and women who we know will make a difference.

- **Commit today to support forward thinkers** who understand where we need to go and what we need to get there. It is the only way to remain in a place where you can impact your own destinies.

Your union is strong because our members are strong. Your union is strong because our leaders are strong. And our union will become even stronger in the future because your new president will push you to new heights.

Diane Donohue, your next DSEA president, is a woman of conviction. She will gather information, think about the possibilities, and make informed decisions that will protect our members and support the important work that you do. She cares about our students, she cares about our members and she cares about our union. Please support her with the same conviction that you showed to me, and support your local leaders with the energy and enthusiasm that you share with your students.

Remember, together you will create a formidable energy that cannot be ignored, and a union that stands above all others.

Keep doing what you do so well and keep looking ahead.

In unity,

Barbara Grogg, NBCT
President

Questions? Comments?
Contact Barbara Grogg at
barbara.grogg@dsea.org.

Leading the way. . .

This month we salute. . .

Debbie Keenan, a Spanish teacher at Delmar High School. She has been a teacher for 18 years and is the



new president of the Delmar Education Association.

Why did you join/become involved?

The liability protection brought me to the association, but the collegiality is what keeps me involved. I enjoy being part of a group that is actively involved in protecting not only our working conditions at the

state and local levels, but also protecting the interests of our students.

What accomplishments as a local leader are you the most proud of?

I am encouraged by our local's increased cohesiveness this school year, and the number of members who have joined during the early enrollment period.

In a perfect world at work...

teachers would be treated as professionals, shown respect, and job assignments would be equitable. Additionally, students would come to school ready to learn.



**Moved?
Changed
your email?**

Let us know online.

When you go on the DSEA web site now and register to see the "members-only" pages, you will first be confronted with your member "profile." This allows you to easily update your name, address and e-mail address. Every time thereafter when you log in to dsea.org, you will have an opportunity to verify and/or update your contact information.

Questions? Call 1-866-734-5834.

New leaders ready to take charge

Donohue and Hoffmann to take helm at DSEA Sept. 1

On September 1, two newly-elected leaders will take office at DSEA: **President-Elect Diane Donohue of Indian River, and Vice President-Elect Mike Hoffman of the Colonial Paras.**

As president of DSEA, **Donohue** will be on leave from her position as a writing teacher at No. Georgetown Elementary School. Hoffmann is a one-on-one paraprofessional at Gunning Bedford Middle School and will have association days but will still be in the classroom.

Donohue and Hoffmann will lead the state's largest union over the next three years. They will be joined by NEA Director Mary Jo Faust, elected last year for a three-year term representing Delaware members on the NEA Board of Directors.

"My top priority will be to focus on increasing respect for our profession and our organization," says Donohue, talking about establishing Teacher/ESP for a Day programs. "I'd like to invite legislators, business leaders, education leaders to work side by side with you, to see and understand your triumphs and your challenges," she adds.

And not just inviting people in, but reaching out to more organizations and working side by side with them is also on her list of priorities.

"And for the near term, our most critical priority, by far, is to get our

members actively engaged in **Election 2008**. Only by electing leaders who are pledged to support our agenda can we achieve our goals on behalf of Delaware's schools and students," Donohue said.

Mike Hoffmann adds that he is honored and humbled to be DSEA's next vice president. "I look forward to working with Diane and Mary Jo to advocate for our members." He expects to meet many members in their buildings this year and talk to him about their needs and issues.

"I know there are many pressures on our members with RtI and DPAS II, not to mention the state's budget crisis. I want to assure members that their leadership team, staff and Executive Board, along with our 11,000 members, will continue to be the voice for public education."

Treasurer position will be vacant

Hoffmann, who is currently treasurer of DSEA, resigns from that position on September 1, at which time the Executive Board will accept letters of interest from any DSEA members looking to fill that position, until September 1, 2009.

Effective September 1, Executive Board members are:

New Castle County

David Bradley, Brandywine E.A.
Kelli Eckert-Bradley, Brandywine E.A.
Vanessa Cordeiro, Appoquinimink E.A.
Sharon Figard, Appoquinimink E.A.
Charlie Hoard, NCCVT E.A.



Your new DSEA officers come September 1 are (standing) Diane Donohue, president and Mike Hoffmann, vice president. NEA Director Mary Jo Faust (sitting, left) is a member of the DSEA Leadership Team, also. Retiring President Barbara Grogg (right) leaves office but is ready to help with Election 2008.

Barbara Jacobs, Red Clay E.A.
Frederika Jenner, Red Clay E.A.
Abraham Jones, Christina E.A.
Michael Kempinski, Christina E.A.
David Kohan, Christina E.A.
Victoria Seifred, Red Clay E.A.
Barbara Winkler, Colonial E.A.

Sussex County Representatives

Tom Chapman, Seaford E.A.
Lue-Ann deCastro, Cape Henlopen E.A.
Pat Murrell, Indian River E.A.
J. Cagney France, Cape Henlopen E.A.

Kent County Representatives

Cyndi Angermeier, Caesar Rodney E.A.
Karen Crouse, Lake Forest E.A.
Diana Farrell, Capital E.A.
Patricia Reid, Capital Paras
Denise Waples, Milford E.A.

DSEA-Retired

Norman Poole

Board will consider recommendations for top primary races

Go to dsea.org after July 10 for results

The DSEA Executive Board has decided that the Association should move forward with interviews and questionnaires from Gubernatorial and Lt. Governor candidates facing primary elections on September 9.

According to DSEA policy, President Barbara Grogg has chosen Interview Teams of members who will interview declared candidates who accept our invitation to



participate.

Following receipt of their questionnaires (questions are based on our legislative priorities), all participating Gubernatorial candidates will be interviewed on Tuesday, July 8; and candidates for Lt.

Governor on Thursday, July 10.

The recommendations from the Interview Teams will go to the Executive Board at a meeting called

for that purpose on the afternoon of July 10.

For each race, their recommendations may be:

- To recommend a particular candidate in the primary or the General Election
- To not recommend any candidate
- To declare that more than one candidate is acceptable.

To accept the recommendation of the Interview Team requires a majority vote from the Executive Board. To overturn a recommendation requires a two-thirds vote.

Should a recommended candidate lose in the primary, the Board will have the option to reconsider or stay out of the General Election race. Should a recommended candidate win in the primary, he will automatically have our support for the General Election November 4.

Your local Association Political Action Leader (PAL) and his/her team members will be invited to special Election 2008 training in early August.

Watch for more information this summer about working to elect our education candidates.

Wellness Team at Forest Oak wins \$10,000 "veggie grant"

How much is it worth to have fresh fruits and veggies available every day in just one school for a year?

For Hidden Valley Ranch, the ranch-style salad dressing company, it's worth \$10,000.

That's how much the Wellness Team at Forest Oak Elementary School (524 students in grades K-5) in Red Clay has won for its plans to interest students in eating more fresh fruits and vegetables. "We are also getting a three-month supply of their salad dressing!" adds **Nancy Nadel, RN, MSN, NCSN**, nurse at Forest Oak.

Nadel has helped her school win Delaware's \$10,000 grant from Hidden Valley Ranch, which is making awards to just one school per state this year. Their "Love Your Veggies" campaign is built around the premise that if you dip a piece of celery into ranch dressing, you'll probably do it again, and eat even more fruits and vegetables.

They conceived this grant program after a University of California/ Davis study found that kids eat 23% more vegetables when they are served with a moderate helping of ranch dressing. In an "Impulse Research" survey, 70% of kids said that ranch dressing is a must for veggies, but the majority of veggies are served plain. And, "fat soluble" veggies like carrots, spinach and broccoli have nutrients that are better absorbed with a moderate amount of fat, like - you guessed it - ranch dressing.

Forest Oak's Wellness Team, which has been creating imaginative, fun wellness programs and challenges for staff and students for six years, came up with the ideas for their winning grant proposal:

- Next year, all students whether they buy a lunch or bring one, will be able to help themselves to fresh fruits and vegetables from a Fresh Veggie Bar.
- Kindergarten students will be given fresh produce that coincides with the "letter of the week."



Nurse Nancy Nadel (left) and lead cafeteria worker Barbara Moore, vice president of the Red Clay Food Service Workers Assoc., will coordinate the implementation of much of Forest Oak's healthy eating grant.

- **Students will have** more nutrition education with the purchase of new materials from CATCH, Coordinated Approach to Child Health, www.catchinfo.org.
- **Classes will create** their own classroom gardens, with the help of the University of Delaware's Extension Service.
- **Healthy Cooking Classes** will be offered to families in the evening.
- **The school will publish** a student veggie cookbook.
- **Art and music curricula** will make connections with vegetables.
- **The whole school** will help plan and nurture an outdoor vegetable garden.

But eating vegetables, voluntarily?

"Our Wellness Team is amazing," praises Nadel. Six years ago she was awarded the first wellness grant from the University of Delaware. Over those six years, the Wellness Team used it plus succeeding grants for various incentive programs to help convince faculty, students and their families to lead a more healthy life by becoming more active, and by walking more.

"Our students are used to being surrounded by messages and activities about healthy lifestyles,"

responds Nadel. "And having fresh, in-season fruits and vegetables with a little ranch dressing next year will be another way for them to avoid the fatty snacks and sugary sodas."

Previous grants (from the Nemours Foundation, the School Health Leadership Institute and Delaware Action for Healthy Kids) have expanded their walking incentive programs, an after school fitness program, as well as the availability of healthy snacks at PTA events and on Report Card day.

For **Make a Difference Day**, the Wellness Team launched "Treats for the Troops," with \$600 in funding from Limestone Dental Associates. (They pledged \$1 per pound for candy, and the school collected 607 pounds of candy!) They sent the candy, along with \$600 worth of phone cards to the Delaware National Guard troops in Iraq. "We received a wonderful thank you card and picture from our soldiers in Iraq. It was a great activity on many levels," says Nadel.

Forest Oak's Wellness Team now includes Diane Dambach, their principal; Carol Backer, guidance counselor; Barbara Moore, the lead cafeteria worker and vice president of the Red Clay Food Service Workers

Assoc.; Teachers Bev Holcombe, Karla Teoli, Karen Ellis and Lauren Young; and Pam Sheffer, a parent.

Grant includes cafeteria worker training

Says **Barbara Moore**, "We have a great school and great kids." She doesn't mind the extra time and work it will take to cut up all the fresh fruit and vegetables for a veggie bar. The cafeteria staff puts out fresh vegetables and fruit daily, but they're only available for students who purchase lunches. With the new grant, they can expand that for all students, whether they buy a lunch or not. "Part of the grant will be used help us figure out how to best find the time to prepare fresh fruits and vegetables more often, how to better display them and keep them attractive for our students and staff," adds Moore.

"We have a tight-knit family here at Forest Oak and we have lots of fun, even with vegetables! For the students, we hope we can take away the stigma of plain vegetables, and make them a more appetizing and tasty part of their diets," says Nadel "and for the staff, we now have ten thousand reasons to really love fruits and vegetables!"

Response to Intervention (RtI) needs thoughtful implementation

Woodruff: “How can we best move forward with RtI? Let’s figure it out together.”

Response to Intervention (RtI) is about identifying students early who may need some extra help in reading to get on the right track.

It’s about using data to make decisions about instruction.

It’s about not over-identifying students who may not really need a pull-out program.

It’s about working as teams – classroom teachers, specialists, paras, administrators – to figure out a new way to use the time in the school day, if that is needed, in order to provide appropriate interventions.

It’s about using a tiered strategy so that fewer and fewer students end up in the top tier, where the most serious interventions are needed.

Whether you believe that it is mandated or simply allowed under the reauthorization of the federal IDEA law, most educators believe that its goals make perfect sense. As with most new endeavors, it’s the implementation that makes the difference between success and confusion.

At its May 15 meeting, the State Board of Education did approve revised regulations for implementation of RtI in elementary schools this fall. The new regulations provide that only elementary Reading will be implemented this fall, not elementary mathematics or any implementation in middle and high schools. DoE staff, working with local higher ed math folks, and local K-12 math specialists, are developing a universal math screening tool for use in elementary schools in a pilot in 2008-2009.

Over the past year, Michael Stetter and Lori Duerr of the Dept. of Education have been busy delivering RtI training to district teams, which in turn were to train building staff.

When the RtI regulations were approved by the State Board, Secretary of Education Woodruff did recognize the time limitations, training challenges, and overall implementation obstacles that DSEA leaders and members raised during hearings. She has agreed to the formation of an RtI Implementation

Committee with DSEA, to “oversee implementation and develop plans to overcome obstacles to successful implementation.”

DSEA and DoE to work together on easing implementation

DSEA members are now part of an “Implementation Committee” working with DoE staff to enhance communication and training as districts work this year to determine what supports they need to implement RtI as well as what it will look like - for their students, in their buildings.

Representing DSEA on this group are:

President-Elect Diane Donohue, a writing teacher from No.

Georgetown in Indian River

Donna Dippel, a third grade TAM teacher at Albert Jones E.S. in Christina

Mary Jane Short, a reading and mathematics resource teacher at Long Neck E.S. in Indian River

Vicky Cairns, DSEA dir. of instructional advocacy

Val Hoffmann, DSEA UniServ director, and

Pam Nichols, DSEA dir. of communications.

And from the Dept. of Education are:

Valerie Woodruff, secretary of Education

Mike Stetter, Ed.D., director, curriculum development

Lori Duerr, education association for Instructional Improvement and Professional Development

Diana Roscoe, education association, mathematics

Sandy Meyers, education associate, reading

Put your mind at ease!

Both Mary Jane Short and Donna Dippel – representing districts at different stages of readiness – were pleasantly surprised to hear –

If your building isn’t ready, if people still are uncertain, confused, alarmed even, then this will be the year to figure it out, a year to:

Form building teams to look at how your building can make this tiered model of identifying students and giving them the help they need

work. Discussions need to focus on how to use the RtI model to do your work, as opposed to adding RtI on as “one more thing.”

Determine which assessments you already use that will work best for you. They can be your own classroom assessments.

“Do what you know you can do,” affirms Woodruff. “Teachers do not have to use only outside instruments. We really do want you to think about your curriculum-based assessments. They can tell you what you need to know.”

Specialists and support staff play a key role, especially working on their building teams – whatever you call them - and working with students in Tiers II and III. Roles might include: RtI coordinator, RtI coach, administrator of Universal Screening Tool or Progress Monitoring Tool, interventionist, instructional support team leader or member, data coach or professional development provider.

If you are familiar with Reading First, Instructional Support Teams (the ICT Model) or Positive Behavior Support (PBS), or are a Title I school, then you already have experience with using data with colleagues on teams, to make instructional decisions. **These models don’t conflict, they will support RtI implementation in your school because they all use: instructional teams, a tiered approach to helping students, and the use of data to drive instructional decisions.**

The big unanswered question: Where do districts still need help?

This is the question DoE and DSEA are wrestling with. We need to find out who needs what training or support. DoE and DSEA staff are working on a survey tool for principals and teachers, some questions to answer that will help building teams figure out whether or not they are ready to implement.

The Department is also actively pursuing an online survey instrument open to all elementary school staffs to help them pinpoint how to best support implementation of RtI.

“If you’re not ready, then your building needs to come together to do what it can this coming year to

What is Response to Intervention?

It’s all about early intervention. The earlier a student is helped, the better his/her chances are of being successful later on. Early is better!

RtI is identified as a process, not a program. Its slogan could be “Early is better!” It is characterized by:

- **high-quality instruction**
- **assessment of student progress** toward end-of-year grade-level benchmarks
- **application of a problem-solving model** for informational instructional decisions matched to student needs
- **collaboration** to make instructional decisions
- **identification of students early on** in need of instructional intervention
- **development of intervention plans**
- **intervention and regular monitoring** for progress so that all students become proficient in the general curriculum.

Sec. Woodruff points to the University of Delaware study and others which clearly show that if a student doesn’t meet standards in the third grade, chances are slim that they will meet them in grades 5, 8 or 10. “Studies regarding readiness for Advanced Placement courses are also now pointing to the need for certain foundations to be in place early on. “Help them early; screen everyone early – so that the gifted, the middle-of-the-road, the needy student ALL have the best chance possible to excel.”

You can view the new regulations at <http://delaware.gov/AdminCode/title14/900/index.shtml#TopOfPage>.

The RtI provisions are in Section 925.

get ready,” affirms Woodruff. This will mean figuring out the time and scheduling challenges, and breaking down the communication and training barriers.

The Implementation Committee has another meeting scheduled for July to continue its discussions.

All districts to use DPASII for evaluations next year

New evaluation system emphasizes continuous improvement, support through professional development, and quality assurance – sufficient information and data to make informed decisions about the quality of one's work.

On June 2, DSEA President Barbara Grogg invited all local association teacher leaders to the DSEA office in Dover for an overview and update on the new evaluation system – DPASII (Delaware Performance Appraisal System II) – which will be implemented in all 19 school districts and charter schools this fall. Teachers, specialists and administrators in six districts (Appoquinimink, Caesar Rodney, Colonial, Lake Forest, Laurel and Sussex Tech) and three charter schools (MOT, Providence Creek and Sussex Academy of the Arts) are currently implementing the new system. For the remaining 13 school districts and charter schools, this will be new this fall.

Goal-setting the biggest difference in new system

Yes, next year, you – whether you are a teacher or a specialist - will set your own goal or goals for student improvement, measurable ones that are tied to your school and district goals and based on data. It is not accurate to say that your goal can be whatever you want it to be and that your evaluator has to live with it: your goal must be tied to school and district goals, be measurable, meaningful, and be a stretch.

Wayne Barton, DoE's director of Professional Accountability, explained it this way:

"The Teacher/Specialist sets the goal within the scope of the school and district goals. The goal must be supported and measured by data. The evaluator discusses with the teacher/specialist how the goal is developed and measured. This conversation is critical, as this collegial process to improve student achievement is the backbone of the entire DPAS II process. Yes, the goal belongs to the teacher/specialist and it is his/her goal. However, the teacher/specialist and the evaluator must come to an understanding as to how the goal relates to the school



Paulette Arnold, award-winning science teacher at Smyrna High School and former president of SEA, asks about how teachers and administrators find the time to adequately follow the new process.

and district goals and the validity of the data that supports and measures the goal."

Others added that the goals must be meaningful as well as represent a stretch in achievement. The goal needn't be academic in nature if that is not possible as in the case of some specialists, but you would need to explain why an academic goal is not relevant and how it fits in with school and district goals.

Can the goal relate to a specific group of students? Yes, absolutely.

In addition, you do not have to use DSTP data to formulate your goal(s). Barbara Grogg mentioned that we worked very hard to include this in DPASII. In the original version of DPASII regulations, every teacher and specialist had to use DPAS II data, whether their area was tested or not. "I think some teachers will find that DSTP data may help them create their goals. If that's the case, take advantage of it," she urged.

All mentioned that the goal-setting ideally is an opportunity to get support and help from your school's administrator. "Your evaluator should have some ideas to help you with research, data collection and resources," added Grogg.

And, an important part of the new DPAS II is that you don't have to fully attain your goals to be successful: you need to make progress, however, and be able to explain why the goal was not met.

Training almost complete

Pat Guzzo, education associate at DoE for DPASII, said that she and **Jeff Lawson,** also an associate for DPASII, have trained teams in every building. And by the end of June they will have trained all administrators. New administrators, by the way, must be trained by DoE. "This is not a train-the-trainer model for them. And an administrator cannot do a DPAS II evaluation unless he/she is first trained by one of us at DoE."

"We will be looking at the roll-out process continually, and make improvements to the training," she said. "I believe in this process, and the training needs to be done correctly. This is not about 'I gottcha!' It's about getting better as a teacher or specialist."

The trained district teams will then decide when they will train the staff in their buildings. Some have already started; some will wait until

the fall. The training the teams receive covers not only the DPAS II process, but also effective training strategies.

In addition, there is a summer training being developed for July which will cover just Individual Improvement Plans, since these have become an issue in some districts.

Robin Taylor, associate secretary for Assessment and Accountability at DoE, clarified that only if your entire lesson is deemed Unsatisfactory will you be required to develop and meet the requirements of an Improvement Plan based on one classroom observation. Suggestions from your evaluator, however, for ways to improve in certain areas are certainly valid, as they are today in DPAS I.

Continuous Improvement sought for DPAS II process

Wayne Barton noted that DoE will conduct annual evaluations of the new process, through an outside evaluator, as has been done since the first pilot year. Next spring all teachers and specialists will receive emails asking them to participate in an online survey about their experience with DPAS II. The outside evaluation company will also conduct some in-person interviews and host focus groups. Over the past three years, the feedback from members about their experiences has helped in making significant modifications to DPASII.

Agreement struck on transitioning from I to II in 08-09

Robin Taylor discussed the agreements struck between DoE, DSEA and DASA (administrators) for this year. A letter outlining these agreements will be sent to all superintendents and teacher union leaders later in the summer. Two highlights are:

Mid-cycle people - Those experienced teachers/specialists who are due a Performance Appraisal (now called a Summative Evaluation) in the Spring of '09 will receive their Summative based upon ONLY DPAS II documents and other documents previously shared. Since there is only ONE observation mandated each year for experienced people, it is possible for these educators to receive a Summative this first year based on only one observation.

DPAS II Update

However, that is a minimum, and if an educator requests another observation, that request should be honored. Likewise, the administrator may decide that he/she wants to observe more than once, and that will also be honored. This will only be the case during the first transition year. After that, everyone will be on a two-year cycle.

IIPs - If an educator is on an IIP under DPAS I, that Improvement Plan should be closed out at the end of this year. When the new year begins, the evaluator can then observe the individual again. Should the DPAS II formative evaluation be OVERALL UNSATISFACTORY, and it is stated so at the end of the Formative Feedback Form, a DPAS II Improvement Plan will be developed. Again, there is no mixing of DPAS I and DPAS II data.



(from left) Allena Brown and Lauren Novello, both elementary teachers in Smyrna, attend the DSEA/DoE DPASII update session. Novello is president-elect of SEA.

Please feel free to contact **Vicky Cairns** at 1-866-734-5834 or vicky.cairns@dsea.org should you have immediate questions!

What's different: Comparing DPAS I to DPAS II



Former Teacher Pat Guzzo of DoE emphasizes that she believes in the DPAS II process. "The training needs to be done correctly."

Resources are available

We expect that you have already received your *Guide to DPAS II* (different for teachers and specialists). You should receive your own copy no later than at the time of your training. They are also available online at the DoE DPASII web site. Those present who had already been trained praised the guides for their thoroughness and clarity. DSEA's Vicky Cairns helped edit and clarify the text in collaboration with DoE staff and the publisher. She advises you to not let yours gather dust. It is worth consulting!

DoE staff and DSEA staff are available to come to Rep Council meetings or other member gatherings to instruct and/or answer questions or concerns about the DPAS II process.

	DPAS I	DPAS II
What controls the process	Guiding documents were "guidelines", without force of regs behind them	Regulations assert that The Guide is the controlling document: districts must abide by what it says
Components	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instructional Planning 2. Classroom Management 3. Instructional Strategies 4. Interaction with Students 5. Evaluating Student Performance 6. Related Responsibilities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning and Preparation 2. Classroom Environment 3. Instruction 4. Professional Responsibilities 5. Student Improvement <p>As defined in goal setting process</p> <p>Assessed through Observation</p> <p>Form submitted by educator</p>
Forms Prepared by Educator	<i>Pre-Observation Form</i>	<i>Goal-Setting Form, Pre-Observation Form, Professional Responsibilities Form, Recommendations for Individual Improvement plan</i> [when necessary]
Formative Process [observations of teacher/specialist performance]	<p><i>Pre-Observation Form</i> → Announced Observation only</p> <p>Pre-Ob Conference</p> <p>Observation → Lesson Analysis → Post-Ob Conference</p> <p>All observations</p>	<p><i>Pre-Observation Form</i> → Announced Observation only</p> <p>Pre-Ob Conference</p> <p>Observation → Post-Ob Conference [comes first!] → <i>Formative Feedback Form</i></p> <p>All observations</p>
Goal-Setting for Student Improvement [Component 5 of DPAS II]	n/a	Educator uses applicable data to set measurable goals to improve Student Achievement, based on district and school goals. <i>Goals Form</i> begun → Conference → Collect and track data through school year → <i>Goals Form</i> completion → Conference. MEETING EVERY GOAL IS NOT NECESSARY FOR A SATISFACTORY RATING.
Professional Responsibilities	Included as part of <i>Performance Appraisal</i> . Administrator often asks educator to supply appropriate information	By Jan 31, educator completes <i>Professional Responsibilities Form</i> , outlining his/her activities/achievements. Can be updated at any time.
Summative Process [summary of observations and other information to develop overall rating of teacher/specialist performance]	<p>More than 3 yrs experience: at least 3 observations in 2 year period; Performance Appraisal at end of 2nd year.</p> <p>Less than 3 yrs experience or on an IIP: at least 3 observations per year; Performance Appraisal at end of each year.</p> <p><i>Performance Appraisal</i> received → Conference</p>	<p>More than 3 yrs experience: at least 1 observation per year; Summative Evaluation at end of 2nd year.</p> <p>Less than 3 yrs experience or on an IIP: at least 2 observations per year; Summative at end of each year.</p> <p>Summative Conference [comes first!] → <i>Summative Evaluation Form</i> received.</p>
Minimum length of observation	20 minutes	30 minutes
Overall rating for each component at end of cycle	Exemplary, Effective, Needs Improvement, Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory
Overall summative rating	n/a	Effective, Needs Improvement, Ineffective
Response submission timeline	15 working days	15 working days
Challenge Process	n/a	Disagreements as to content can be appealed to evaluator's supervisor. Supervisor must respond in writing within 15 working days. Decision is final.
Individual Improvement Plan	"Jointly developed"; sometimes nebulous timelines and unclear indicators of improvement	Cooperative development formalized by educator also completing the <i>Recommendations for Improvement Plan Form</i> before meeting with evaluator; specific timelines and indicators of success required.

Two Red Clay school board members toppled

Just how big is a three-to-one school board election win? How about two such wins?

“**L**andslide” doesn’t even begin to translate its significance to the employees of the Red Clay School District.

- 27-year board member Charlie Cavanaugh was beaten by Kenneth Woods, 1,774 to 522; and
- First-term incumbent Gary Linarducci lost to retired teacher Leah Davis, 1,816 to 611.

Both Woods and Davis were backed by RCEA, Red Clay Paras and the AFL-CIO, working together with any and all people who felt the same: that enough was enough. It was time for a big change.

With the help of their DSEA UniServ Director Tim Barchak and DSEA’s Director of Legislation and Political Organizing Jack Polidori, they put together a plan to unseat two school board members up for re-election in May.

“With Jack and Tim’s campaign experience and our manpower, we were unstoppable,” says **Barbara Finnan**, past-president of Red Clay E.A.

“I think we were all feeling that we could win at least one of the seats,” says **Vicky Seifred**. “But to win both, and to win so big, speaks volumes about how angry we and the public all were, what we can do when we’ve a mind to.”

RCEA members have been concerned for years about the lack of attention to the day-to-day operations of the school district. They were embarrassed and infuriated by the school board’s mismanagement of district finances, a fact which came to light this past year.

“There has been a disdain shown for teachers from this board, an arrogance, an us-versus-them mindset,” adds **Richard Lynch**, a fourth grade teacher and Association Rep. at Richardson Park E.S.

Finnan added that at her school, Baltz Elementary School in Elsmere, “Voters expressed frustration that

all children and schools in the District did not have the same benefits, and they want that to change. There were a lot of comparisons of Baltz, Warner and Shortlidge Elementary Schools to the ‘other side’ of the District, further out in the suburbs.”

For Finnan, “There is a real sense of accomplishment. RCEA took a frighteningly huge challenge, and risked a great deal. We can now look the District in the eye and say, ‘Back to you. Ball’s in your court now. The voters have spoken. How are you going to satisfy your constituents?’”

They had no trouble getting volunteers, fellow Red Clay employees as well as parents, to help out. For some, it was the disparity of treatment between schools. For others, it was the no-bid contracts that came to light during the investigation of the financial crisis. For others, it was the disdain for employees and parents.

Ousted Board Member Gary Linarducci shocked Red Clay employees and parents when he said during a school board meeting this past year: “Charter schools are the vaccine for public education.” It’s not the kind of sentiment you expect from a man elected to provide leadership in a public school district.

“We were united, and I think we shocked a lot of people with two such monster upsets,” adds **Seifred**, a Social Studies teacher at Stanton Middle School. “We had some momentum after the recent referendum win. People who have never made a phone call or worked at the polls were coming up to us and asking, ‘What can I do?’”

For Teacher **Kris Burpee**, “It was a real display of political sophistication on our part.”

The plan included understanding how many Yes votes they needed: looking at Election Dept. numbers to see how many people normally vote, who they are, where they live, and how many Yes votes it would take to win. With those numbers in mind, RCEA’s plan included a heavy dose of member communication – both employee and AFL-CIO members - to drum up Get Out The Vote (GOTV) activities. Their flyers to members included advice on enlisting neighbors, friends, relatives, high school students to vote. They knew that if they could get out their own members, they could win.



At their year-end Thank You Dinner, Red Clay E.A. officers, reps and committee people gather with one of their new school board member, Leah Davis, a retired Red Clay teacher. Seated from left are RCEA’s Vicky Seifred, Richard Lynch, Margaret Donohoe, Davis, Kelley Firko and Kristine Burpee. Standing from left are Brian Winnington, Frederika Jenner and Michael Banks. New School Board member Kenneth Woods is pictured with Jenner (president of RCEA) on the cover, top right teaser.

Jenner and Barchak used DSEA’s robo-call system to make two GOTV calls to members. “Everyone knew about the calls, why we were calling. It was a very positive response,” adds Seifred.

They took apart the incumbent’s

treated like a step-child by the school board, being squeezed out of their building by the Wilmington Charter School, and not being provided with the quality performance spaces an arts school requires. Along with the city schools, they feel the affects of the school board’s bias towards other schools, according to Jenner.

Kelley Firko, a nine-year elementary school teacher at Richardson Park, noticed that it didn’t matter who you were, you were behind this effort. “New teachers, more senior teachers, custodians, food service workers, secretaries, paras, parents – it didn’t matter. If you had any connection with Red Clay, you wanted a change and we all worked together.”

Red Clay Paras President Linda Calder credits RCEA’s Frederika Jenner with pulling it all together. “We participated in the candidate interviews and helped with phone calls. And we rallied members to vote on Election Day,” she says. Her members’ concerns were about the districts’ deep financial troubles. Last June forty paras were RIFed and only six of them were called back to work. “We were harder hit by the financial crisis than any other employee group,” she says.

Candidates understand the union power

Leah Davis, the retired teacher from Red Clay who was elected to the school board says that she now has hope that the Red Clay community can pull together for positive reasons. “For years, it’s been the teachers that have held this district together,” she adds. “They need support from the top for their wonderful work and for their students, no matter what building they are in.”

Added **Margaret Donohoe**, a social studies teacher at Cab Calloway School of the Performing Arts (a successful magnet school in Red Clay), “I am really a proponent of political action now. I understand much better what it’s all about. What we did was amazing, empowering – we needed this for our morale. I’m not a PAC donor but I will be now. This works.” All agreed.

Brian Winnington is another social studies teacher at Cab Calloway, a successful magnet school housed in the former Wilmington High School along with the Charter School of Wilmington. Despite repeated successes and a waiting list of students to get in or transition to its high school, this school is often

She taught for many years at Warner and Highlands Elementary Schools. "I see serving on the board as just another way to help students, a new opportunity." She views her election as a mandate for change. "It is all about the kids a referendum rallying cry – ALL of the kids," she emphasizes. "It shouldn't make any difference to the board what kids we have. They all deserve the same opportunities. They all deserve our best."

She adds that, "We don't need any more charter schools. They were supposed to bring the other schools in our district up. Instead, they've created a sense of elitism which has hurt, not helped, other Red Clay schools."

The collaboration with the AFL-CIO was key

RCEA leaders developed an active, meaningful collaboration with the AFL-CIO with one goal in mind: elect Davis and Woods. "We're all working families, voters, people with kids in district schools," says Jenner.

Kenneth Woods, one of the candidates endorsed by RCEA and AFSCME, is an organizer for the sheet metal workers union for the Mid-Atlantic area. He has lots of experience with budgets, building contracts, even school construction. He also provides educational and instruction programs for his members.

What did the RCEA endorsement mean to him? "It meant a win," he says with no hesitation. "I found as I knocked on doors that parents really rely on what teachers say." Adds

Jenner, "Ken was a great candidate. I think we've proven that we can change any race. No longer is it a given that the incumbent will win."

Ready to move on

Frederika Jenner has already talked to DSEA's Polidori about mentoring other local Association leaders who want to organize their members to elect school board members. "It works. After several decades of what amounts to disregard and abuse of power by an arrogant and often disengaged school board, we are ecstatic at what we've accomplished, ready to make school board election involvement part of our normal operations, and eager to mentor any other local association that wants to conduct a campaign," she offers.

Still paying for board's mismanagement with excessive lay-offs

Just 48 hours after this big win, employees were suffering from the board's past financial blunders. Red Clay E.A. took a big hit with RIFs, many more than the other teachers in New Castle County districts: 24 RIFs on top of 16 non-renewals of people with temporary contracts. "The Red Clay district can't withstand the current downturn as well as other districts because of their financial collapse this past year," explains Tim Barchak. "The employees and families are still paying for their sins."

No drama in Caesar Rodney's success

School board elections business as usual for CREA

Whether there has been conflict with school board members or not, for the past ten years, CREA has actively engaged candidates running for their school board seats. "It's just something we do," says Sherry Antonetti about Caesar Rodney E.A.'s involvement in interviewing school board candidates and then deciding whether or not to make recommendations to their members.

"It's expected now," she adds. "Candidates, in fact, will sometimes contact us before we contact them." For members, she says, the question is, Who is CREA recommending? "They don't wonder IF we are going to get involved. They know we are."

Hand-in-hand with school board elections is CREA's year-round contact with school board members. Their president or a designee attends school board meetings and at the end of the year, CREA leaders get together with school board members to evaluate, celebrate, and communicate.

"We don't always agree, but we have built up a relationship with our board where we have mutual respect, where doors of communication are open, not closed," she adds. "It's about treating each other professionally."

Recently, **CREA President Tom Keyser** (a physical education teacher at CR High School) spoke to the board about changing student time from days to minutes and its affect on the school calendar. The board listened and has now created a Calendar Committee which will have CREA representation.

During this spring's school board elections, CREA backed incumbent Dave Henderson, who is president of the School Board. On the interview team were **Tom Short, Linda Thomas (both very active para-professionals in this unified local), Cyndi Angermeier (school psychologist and a former CREA president), Antonetti (speech pathologist, former PAL and current treasurer of CREA) and Patty Foltz (CREA's new Political Action Leader).**

An unabashed political junkie, Patty Foltz, a 7th-8th grade social studies teacher at Postlethwait M.S., is CREA's new Political Action Leader. Taking over this year from Antonetti, she says, the two worked hand-in-hand so that she could learn the CREA process. She said each candidate is asked questions about why they are running; what they want to accomplish; what is their level of willingness to collaborate with and listen to employees and the public.



CREA had similar results in their school board elections as Red Clay – electing their recommended candidate – but for Patty Foltz (left) and Sherry Antonetti (right), now is not the time to jeopardize their history of steady communication and mutual respect with their school board. Communication and collaboration will continue throughout the year. "And," adds Foltz, "this win is a dry run for electing candidates in the statewide election in November."

"We kept our campaign geared towards Caesar Rodney members and other employees," she says. "And that worked." They helped Henderson with yard sign distribution, phone calls and e-mail communication to get the word out and then to get the vote out. Employees wore Henderson's campaign button. They also had volunteers at polling places on Election Day. Lots of people, Foltz says, did one thing. And it all adds up.

"This year Sherry and I went over to the Elections Office and were there with administrators and the candidates as election results came

in. It's really a great feeling, that your vote – and the combined CREA vote - is important, and the candidates know it."

This was the dry run for Election 2008 in November

Foltz really sees this school board experience as a precursor to the big election in November. "Many of us were involved in this one, but we need more involvement for the state and national election in November. With Sherry's help, I now have gone through it from start to finish. This was my dry run!" she says.

Signing up for a cluster? Beware!

There are numerous rumors circulating about clusters and whether they will be financially supported next year because of state budget cuts.

Here are the facts: If you are already receiving a cluster salary supplement, you will not be affected- you will continue to

receive your supplement for the complement of the five years.

If you are already actively participating in a cluster for which the sessions had started BEFORE May 21, 2008, you will receive your salary supplement when you complete the cluster and your instructor completes the appropriate record-keeping on the Professional Development Management System. However, if the cluster has not officially begun and you are not presently actively participating in a cluster, even if you have already registered, you will not

receive a salary supplement. The key date is May 21, 2008. If the cluster session had not started by that date, there will be no salary supplement awarded.

What will happen for fiscal year 2010 is unknown and will depend on the state financial situation at this time next year. Clearly, it is DSEA's hope that the moratorium is for one year only.

Questions? Please contact **Vicky Cairns** at vicky.cairns@dsea.org, DSEA's director of instructional advocacy, or **Jack Polidori** at

jack.polidori@dsea.org, DSEA's director of legislation and political organizing, at 1-866-734-5834.

Nothing definite yet

The state budget for the next fiscal year is never certain until it passes the General Assembly and is signed by the Governor. In fact, the budget bill will not even go to the General Assembly until the June revenue estimates are known. So, as of right now, this is what the Joint Finance Committee has done.

Joint Finance Committee makes cuts

Full-day kindergarten, salary schedules, health care not cut

Considering the significant state budget crisis and the fact that education was originally looking at devastating layoffs and \$80 million in cuts, the fact that the General Assembly agreed to limit those cuts to \$30 million (April 24, House Joint Resolution 14), is significant.

Salary schedules are still intact (although no raises, of course); step increases are still funded for next year; and health care is still intact (no increases in co-pays or deductibles!). The Governor's additional funding to implement Full-Day Kindergarten in more districts also remains untouched.

The cuts that the Joint Finance Committee did make - approximately \$28.9 million - include the following:

- State funds for **Professional Development** and **tuition reimbursement** have been cut for next year.
- **New Salary supplements** for skills and knowledge clusters and national board certification (both teacher and specialist) have been suspended. See related story above regarding clusters. The same goes for national certifications. If you are currently receiving a national certification supplement, you will continue to receive it. If you are in the process and are awaiting notification, you will receive the supplement

if you qualify. If you begin the process now and are successful, you will not receive the salary supplement until this budget line is restored. Will you receive retroactive payments? It is best not to count on it.

- **The DSTP will be modified** next year. Certain portions of the test that are not federally mandated - the writing portion of the test in grades 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9 will not be given. The end of summer re-test will be eliminated for the 08-09 school year and other administrative changes have been made.

- **The "Guaranteed Unit Funding"** which provides partial unit funding for any district that has experienced a decrease in enrollment has been cut.

- **Funds to support Paraprofessional** certification training at DelTech has been cut.

- **The teacher mentoring** program has been cut by \$500,000 with \$300,000 left.

- **The reading cadre** funding has been cut from 11 months equivalency to 10 months.

- **Reimbursement of transportation** costs for families of choice students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch has been cut.

- **Bus transportation** for private school students is cut by \$750,000, with \$2.25 million remaining.

- **Bus replacement** for older buses is cut from 38 buses to ten buses.

- **The Transportation allotment** for charter school students is cut from 80% to 75% of average county costs.

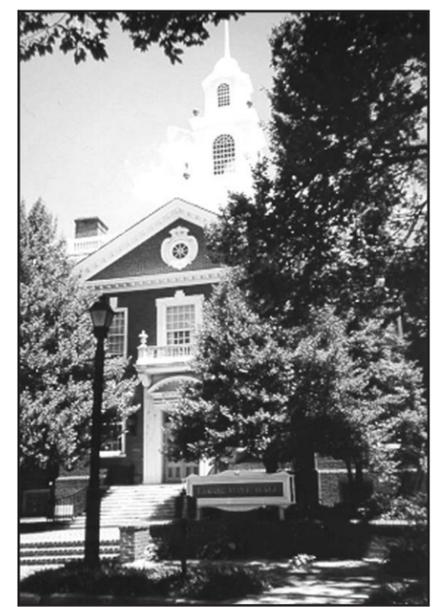
- **Division II - All Other Cost** unit funding is reduced by 5%.

- **Driver Education** for non-public students is cut by \$500,000. The Department of Education will develop a fee structure and require non-public students to pay for the classes. Public School Driver Education was not cut.

- **The Student Success Block Grant** was created and generates a savings of \$10.9 million. Details on this block grant have not yet been released.

Thirty million dollars is still a serious budgetary challenge for our local school districts. From information gathered from DSEA UniServ staff, it looks like the majority of cuts are coming from retirements, temporary contracts or non-renewals. As a result of these cuts, certain programs - such as elementary guidance - are being cut in some districts and those specialists are being transferred to the classroom.

Unlike teachers and specialists, **educational support personnel** do not have to be notified before the end of the school year. As a result, most reductions in force that might be decided for school secretaries, paras, custodians, bus drivers and food service workers, may not be known until August.



After the June revenue estimates come in, the Joint Finance Committee will reconsider the State's budget numbers for next year one more time before submitting the FY09 Budget Bill to the entire General Assembly for consideration.

ACTION: Please let your state legislators, especially Joint Finance Committee members, know that you appreciate that very few of the cuts centered on personnel, and that you appreciate that they must balance the budget. However, since these reductions will have a serious impact on education, please urge them to continue to examine other revenue streams, as well as restore these cuts should more revenue be available next year than is currently estimated.

Where we stand on moving education forward

After 13 years, the current charter school law warrants reform. The suggestion of segregation by race, income or by any other means is troubling.

“We must be vigilant, mindful of our ultimate goal of the best education for all students.”

So emphasizes **DSEA's Exec. Director Howard Weinberg.**

DSEA's interests, of course, are to improve the law, especially the application process for new charter schools. We had been talking to both Senate and House leaders about such a bill. However, “Given that we have so few days left in this legislative year and such serious education issues on the table, a one-year moratorium on new charter school applications makes tremendous sense.”

That's why, he adds, DSEA is supporting **Senate Joint Resolution 11** with Senate Amendment 1, which provides for a one-year hiatus on new charter school applications and allows for a girls-only charter school application. At press time, legislators were also talking about two other exceptions: an Hispanic-centered charter school in Wilmington; and a “First Responders” charter school focusing on safety, emergency medical, and security careers, also to be located in New Castle County.

On Tuesday, June 3, State Sen. Patti Blevins (D) and a number of other prominent legislators filed Senate Joint Resolution No. 11, “Instituting a One-Year Moratorium for New Charter School Applications.” Co-sponsors on this bill are leaders from both chambers and parties: Sen. Adams, Sen. DeLuca, Rep. Cathcart, Rep. Spence, Rep. Lofink, Rep. Oberle, Rep. Gilligan and Rep. Keeley.

Go to <http://legis.delaware.gov/LIS/LIS144.nsf/vwLegislation/SJR+11?OpenDocument> to view the entire contents of the Resolution, as well as its status, including various votes.

Adds **President Barbara Grogg**, “We are and always have been committed to improving all public schools. We support solid decision-making to ensure full accountability and transparency regarding new charter schools.”



Senator Patty Blevins, pictured here, is the prime sponsor of a Joint Resolution to place a one-year moratorium on charter schools. She feels there are several good reasons to delay any new applications until a full debate on the issue of amending the charter school law can take place when the General Assembly reconvenes in January.

Pointing to the impartial, unbiased Western Michigan University report which studied Delaware's charter school performance, she noted that the data reveals disturbing evidence of re-segregation, ‘skimming’ of top performing students, duplication of effective local district services and programs, and under-enrollment of special education and low-income students.

You can read this report, including a summary, at www.doe.k12.de.us/programs/charterschools/files/sbe_decseval.pdf.



House Majority Leader Dick Cathcart-R believes we need “...time to take a comprehensive look at how the charter school law is working and make appropriate changes.”

Moratorium gains support

The Dept. of Education, which commissioned the report, agrees with the Resolution's sponsors that the time has come to step back and consider a more thoughtful process about how we approve new charter schools.

Recently, the *News Journal* in a major editorial, the administrators, the chiefs and the school boards association have also weighed in to support a moratorium on new applications. And the Delaware Charter School Network has officially taken no position.

“We've talked to policy makers, legislators and charter school proponents,” Weinberg said about what's next, “about taking the time to read, digest, and discuss these findings, and work together between now and January to see if we can develop one charter school reform bill.”

Moratorium passes amidst insults to public schools

You almost have to hear it to believe it: **Senators Colin Bonini and Dave Sokola**, chair of the Senate Education Committee, attacking public schools and DSEA's support for SJR11.

The Resolution passed 14-5-2 not voting, but not before some ugly things were said. To hear the 38-minute discussion, go to www.dsea.org.

Standing up and speaking in support of the moratorium, in addition to Senator Blevins, were Senators Marshall and McDowell. Speaking against it were Senators Copeland, Bonini, Sokola, Still and Amick.

Sen. Bonini insults public schools on Senate floor



“I am stunned at how poorly our public schools are doing.”

“Parents have told us how to solve this problem: charter schools. The market never lies.”

“The graduation rate is only 64%.” **False.** Depending on whether or not you include transient students or students who take longer than four years to graduate, the rate is between **80.2% and 83.5%**. See below.



Sen. Dave Sokola misrepresents our position

“DSEA has taken an anti-charter school position in recent years.” **False:** We accept public school choice in our state, that it enhances the fabric of our education system of local community schools, charter schools, magnet schools and vocational schools. However, blind faith in charter schools does a disservice to the legitimate issues raised in the Western Michigan study.”

“We should be able to close local school districts the same way we can close charter schools.”

Setting the record straight on graduation rates

There are four ways to calculate graduation rates. One is a probability rate - the one Sen. Bonini refers to above, which is calculated by the Economic Policy Institute and often repeated in the media. It answers the question, “What is the likelihood that a ninth grader will complete high school on time with a regular diploma given the school and conditions prevailing during a particular school year?” It is based on two years of data.

If, however, you ask, “What percent of students who started in the 9th grade in Delaware graduated four years later with a high school diploma?”, **the answer is 83.7%**.

If you ask, “What percent of students who started in the 9th grade in Delaware graduated four years later with a high school diploma, including those students who transferred in and out of the school during that time?”, **the answer is 80.2%**.

Source: Delaware Dept. of Education

If you ask, “What percent of students who started in the 9th grade in Delaware graduated four years later with a high school diploma except students going to Groves Adult Education High School (who are considered dropouts)?”, **the answer is 83.5%**. This later method, by the way, is how the federal government and NCLB determines graduation rates.

These are not guesses. They are based on real kids and their histories, tracked by individual student i.d. numbers.

Human and Civil Rights Banquet honors your students' work

Grades 9-12

1st place
Julie Garner
 11th grade, John Dickinson High School
 Teacher/advisor: Kristin Zerbe
 Topic: Ruby Bridges
 \$100 Gift Card

2nd place
Allison Gantt
 11th grade, John Dickinson High School
 Teacher/advisor: Kristin Zerbe
 Topic: Vision Undeafated

3rd place
Cassie O'Neal
 11th grade, John Dickinson High School
 Teacher/advisor: Kristin Zerbe
 Topic: Mahatma Gandhi

Special Recognition
Diana Villarreal
 11th grade, John Dickinson High School
 Teacher/advisor: Kristin Zerbe
 Topic: Thurgood Marshall



We thank the Cape Henlopen Jazz Band under the direction of Barry Eli who entertain before dinner.



Standing are Denise Waples (left) and Beth Kopicki of the HCR Task Force, posing with Computer Graphics Art winners (from left) Gloria Bontrager-Thomas, David Morton III, and Evan Hickey, all second graders at Banneker E.S. in Milford, students of Denise Waples.

Grades 5-8

1st place
DiNesha Stephens
 8th grade, A.I. duPont Middle School
 Teacher/advisor: Phyllis Rado
 Topic: Emmett Till
 \$100 Gift Card

2nd place
Yolanique DiLisio
 8th grade, A.I. duPont Middle School
 Teacher/advisor: Phyllis Rado
 Topic: My Race

3rd place
Lauren Amos
 8th grade, A.I. duPont Middle School
 Teacher/advisor: Phyllis Rado
 Topic: Running 4 Freedom

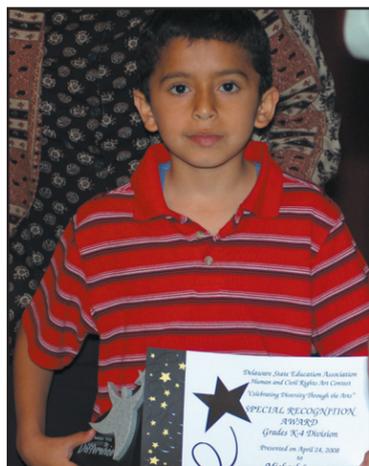
Special Recognition
Tranise Monroe
 8th grade, A.I. duPont Middle School
 Teacher/advisor: Phyllis Rado
 Topic: A Shot to Vote



It's a clean sweep for English teacher Phyllis Rado (center) of A.I. DuPont Middle School in Red Clay. All of the winners in the Grades 5-8 Division of the "Service to Others Writing Contest" are her students: (from left) DiNesha Stephens, Yolanique DiLidio, Rado, Lauren Amos and Tranise Monroe.



Kristin Zerbe (left), English teacher at Red Clay's John Dickinson High School, celebrates with Julie Garner, an incoming senior, who wrote about Ruby Bridges.



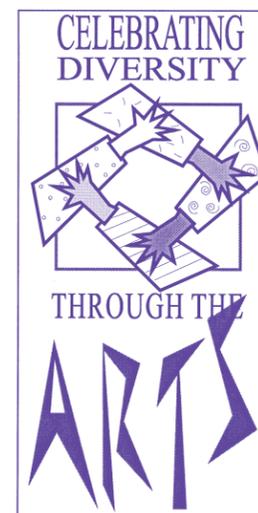
Michael Nieves Lorenzo wins Special Recognition for his artwork. He's a third grader in Todd Weller's class at Lake Forest North Elementary School.



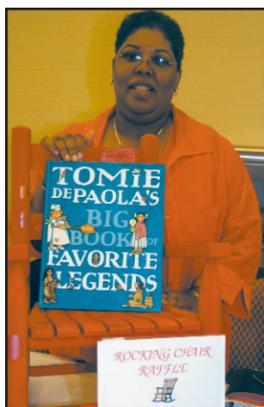
Beth Kopicki of Seaford, a member of DSEA's Human and Civil Rights Task Force, poses with Ethan Vogt, 2nd place art contest winner from Lake Forest No. Elementary School.



Samantha Sautter is part of Judith Loeber's art class that won first place in the high school division for their set of "clay lessons" that reflect both diversity and service!



Sonia Everson of Caesar Rodney sells chances to raise money for the next Human and Civil Rights Celebration of Diversity banquet and Student Contests. A child's chair is hand-painted and decorated each year by HCR Co-Chair Marlene Lacy, an art teacher at Mt. Pleasant H.S. in Brandywine and donated by her.



This annual celebration is sponsored by the Delaware State Education Association and its Human & Civil Rights Celebration Task Force

Marlene Lacy, co-chair, Brandywine Education Assoc.
 Denise Waples, co-chair, Milford Education Assoc.
 Kevin Elzie, Sussex Tech Education Assoc.
 Sonia Everson, Caesar Rodney Education Assoc.
 Beth Kopicki, Seaford Education Assoc.
 Geraldine Thomas, Capital Paraprofessional Assoc.
 Howard Weinberg, DSEA Staff Liaison
 Betty Cash, DSEA Program Assistant

Students express service to others

Art Contest Awards

Grades K-4

1st place

2nd Grade Dragon Team

Lake Forest North E.S.

Teacher/advisor: Todd Weller

\$100 Gift Card

2nd place

Ethan Vogt

3rd grade, Lake Forest North E.S.

Teacher/advisor: Todd Weller

3rd place

Adrian Santiago

1st grade, Lake Forest North E.S.

Teacher/advisor: Todd Weller

Special Recognition

Michael Nieves Lorenzo

3rd grade, Lake Forest North E.S.

Teacher/advisor: Todd Weller

Grades 5-8

1st place

Kristopher Toy

8th grade, George Read M.S.

Teacher/advisor: Barbara Winkler

\$100 gift card

2nd place

Rose Zappacosta

5th grade, Southern E.S.

Teacher/advisor: Susan Stiles

3rd place

Shrey Patel

6th grade, George Read M.S.

Teacher/advisor: Barbara Winkler

Special Recognition

Raven Riddick

8th grade, George Read M.S.

Teacher/advisor: Barbara Winkler

Grades 9-12

1st place

Haley Diksa

10th grade, Middletown H.S.

Teacher/advisor: Brian Miller

\$100 Gift Card

2nd place

Clay Lesson Art Class

Sussex Central H.S.

Teacher/advisor: Judith Loeber

3rd place

Rachel Newcomb

12th grade, Lake Forest H.S.

Teacher/advisor: Amy Reed

Special Recognition

Ayana Randolph

10th grade, Middletown H.S.

Teacher/advisor: Brian Miller

Special Recognition

Velece Baxter

10th grade, Lake Forest H.S.

Teacher/advisor: Amy Reed



Sean Hopkins, a 10th grade student at Sussex Tech, accepts Special Recognition in the new art category of Computer Graphics.



Susan Falise leads DeAngelo Burdette and Brooklyn DeLong up to receive accolades for their prize-winning dragon.



Adrian Santiago wins third place for his Native American representational artwork. He's a first grader at Lake Forest North with Todd Weller.



Haley Diska, a 10th grader at Middletown High School in Appoquinimink, captures first place for her artwork. Art Teacher Brian Miller (above), who often has student winners in this contest, had another winning student: Ayana Randolph who received a Special Recognition.



Our board room was full of three-dimensional dragons, all symbolizing various cultures, geography and peoples. They were submitted by second graders from Lake Forest North E.S. This is the winning dragon.

The winning team is shown below with (standing from left) Denise Waples, Beth Kopicki, Teacher Todd Weller, and Marlene Lacy.



Stephen Boyd delights the crowd as he accepts his First Place Award as part of the 2nd grade team that created the dragon above.



New Category: Computer Graphics Art Contest

Grades K-4

1st place- Students of Room 205

2nd grade, Banneker E.S.

Teacher/advisor: Denise Waples

\$100 Gift Card

2nd place - Gloria Bontrager-Thomas

2nd grade, Banneker E.S.

Teacher/advisor: Denise Waples

Grades 9-12

1st place - Brittini Wallace

10th grade, Sussex Technical H.S.

Teacher/advisor: Sabrina Neal

\$100 gift card

2nd place - Rebecca Lonski

12th grade, Lake Forest H.S.

Teacher/advisor: Amy Reed

3rd place - Courtney Tibbet

10th grade, Lake Forest H.S.

Teacher/advisor: Amy Reed

Special Recognition - Sean Hopkins

10th grade, Sussex Tech H.S.

Teacher/advisor: Sabrina Neal

Rachel Newcomb (right) accepts an award for her artwork from Marlene Lacy. Behind her is her Social Studies Teacher Amy Reed of Lake Forest High School.

Contest attracts 200 entries

Started in 1998 as a way to get kids excited about reading, NEA's Read Across America has become the nation's largest reading event.

The year-round program culminates each year on or near Dr. Seuss's birthday, March 2.

Each year here in Delaware we sponsor a reading contest for all K-12 public school students associated with reading and Read Across America. This year's contest involved producing and describing a billboard poster which would invite the community to keep learning, to keep valuing education - no matter who they are, where they live, how old or young they are. We suggested they use the message in the Dr. Seuss favorite, *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* There were 200 entries from 18 schools.

All of these winners were featured, with their winning designs, on a full-page display in the *Wilmington News Journal*, Monday, March 3, Read Across America Day. The *News Journal's Newspapers in Education* program, along with the Dept. of Education and the DuPont Company, partner with DSEA to promote this contest.

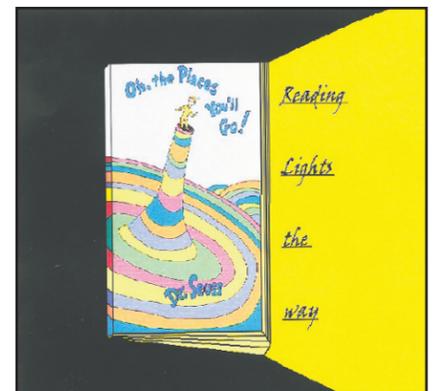
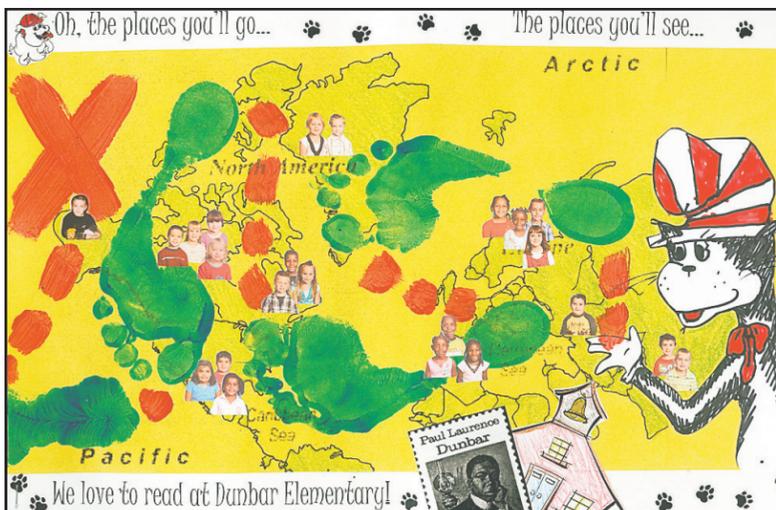
Hats off to legislators!

Many legislators donated books given to teachers of the winners for their classroom libraries.

To see the winning artwork more clearly, go to www.dsea.org/read



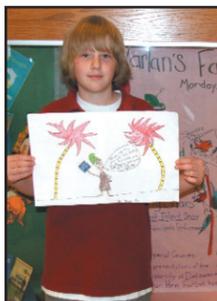
Jolene Cross-Morris (left, back, standing) and her Kindergarten Class from Dunbar Elementary School in Laurel will see their Grand Prize Billboard art (below) on local highways this summer.



Newark High's Christian Booth (marketing student of Edina Buzgon) wins the High School Division with powerful simplicity.



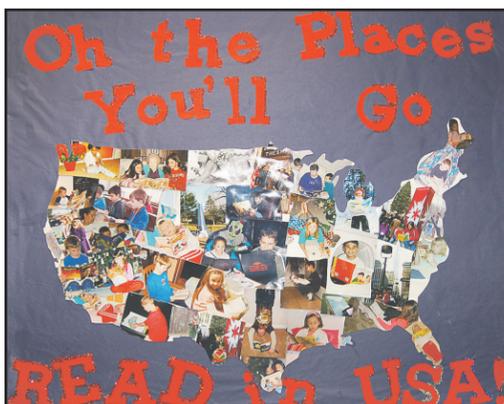
Alexa Rosenblatt and Amy Snyder, grade 6, Harlan Elementary School are the winning artists in the grade 6-8 division. Their teacher is Julie O'Leary.



Brian Orr, grade 5, Harlan E.S., wins an Honorable Mention for grades 3-5. His teacher is also Julie O'Leary.

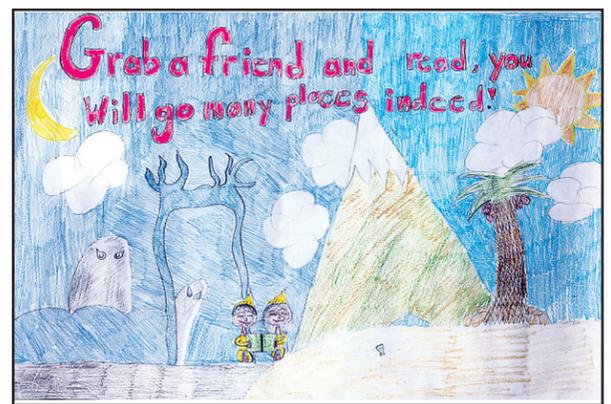


Bob McMullen's Polytech High School student Julia Luedtke wins an Honorable Mention. Her artwork will grace the cover of the DSEA calendar datebook for 08-09.



Cedar Lane Elementary School's Art Club wins an Honorable Mention for literally Reading Across America. Their advisor is Appoquinimink's Carrie Bryan.

Nancy Ventresca's student Devon Herrington (grade 4 of Christiana's Thurgood Marshall Elementary School) wins the grades 3-5 division with this poster (right).



Retirees gather for annual Fellowship Breakfast

Imagine a luncheon with old friends and lots of information you can take home and use right away.

This year's annual Fellowship Breakfast sponsored by DSEA-Retired was actually more packed than usual: membership has doubled since 2000 when there were 455. Today there are 919: 39 pre-retired members (people who have joined while still active DSEA members), 279 annual payers and 599 life members.

About 50 people heard updates about legislative developments with the state budget crisis; information about what's new on www.dsea-r.org; new ways to save on member-only discounts; a remembrance and moment of silence for those colleagues who passed away during the year and for those fighting for the protection of our freedoms. In addition, DSEA President Barbara Grogg presented DSEA-Retired President Norman Poole with one of her trademark Delaware chickens. DSEA-R officers in turn thanked her for her years of advocacy, for being a DSEA-Retired member already, and then presented her with several gifts.

Upcoming DSEA-Retired dates and events are on www.dsea-r.org, as well as in the upcoming newsletter.

Lt. Governor candidates take questions

A highlight of the DSEA-Retired's recent Fellowship Breakfast was hearing from the two candidates running for Lt. Governor this fall: **State Senator Charles Copeland (R)** and **State Insurance Commissioner Matt Denn (D)**.

In Delaware, the Lt. Governor candidates run independently of the gubernatorial candidates. While the Republican and Democratic candidates often campaign together, Delawareans have elected top leaders of different parties.

In Delaware, the Lt. Governor chairs the Board of Pardons, is a member of Delaware's Healthcare Commission, and presides over the State Senate.



(From left) Rudy Norton (staff liaison for DSEA-R), Mary Ann Pry (former DSEA President, retired from Colonial), Carla Pyle (DSEA-R vice president, retired from Red Clay) and Steve Smith (DSEA-R webmaster, retired from Smyrna) are joining others to energize the Retired organization by building up membership, communication and activities.

State Senator Charles Copeland believes that because of the funding system and its lack of transparency, the public can't weigh in and help fix it.

"When I was first elected to the state senate, I asked to be on the Education Committee. Why? Because 50% of the state's education budget does not make it into the classroom."

"I recognize full well that I don't know what you know. But I do believe that we need a more open view of where the money goes, how much things really cost."



Annette Hubbard takes a moment to ask Matt Denn an insurance question at the Fellowship Breakfast.

Insurance Commissioner, Matt Denn is a proud product of Delaware public schools.

"My family is full of teachers – sister, mother, grandmother. As Insurance Commissioner, I am on the State's Employee Benefits Committee. I agree that lots of government doesn't work very well. But we've done some things very efficiently: we've held co-pays and deductibles steady. We've put \$30 million in an account for retiree health benefits."



Charles Copeland talks with DSEA-Retired Member Wendy Campbell.

"Success in education comes out of the classroom, not out of the education bureaucracy."

"I would love to promise Cost of Living increases for retirees, but we have to pay for what we've already promised. We do, however, need to recognize years of service."

"We need –

- Health insurance for every child
- Stricter enforcement with environmental polluters
- To be more serious about clean, renewable energy"

"The Lt. Governor is there when decisions are made; you are at the table. You would also help the Governor set his legislative priorities. And of course, the Lt. governor has a bully pulpit for the administration's issues."

"Leaders set priorities. Providing for retirees is a promise we need to try to keep."

"We are moving in the right direction. The answer is doing better with our budget. Giving cabinet secretaries incentives to operating more efficiently would help."

Interested in joining DSEA-Retired now? Contact Debbie Weaver at 1-866-734-5834 or Debbie.Weaver@dsea.org and she'll mail you a membership packet.

Elder abuse on the rise

Lester Johnson, special investigator for Elderly Abuse and Financial Exploitation with Delaware's Dept. of Justice, gives these hints about scams and problems to many seniors.

1. **Sweepstakes** are today's most common scam. Approximately 99% of sweepstakes are illegal.
2. If you submit a **check** for anything, it has the basic information needed to get into your account. Your bank's routing number and your checking account number are easily accessible.
3. **Maintenance work on your house, driveway, car, etc.** Only deal with a reputable company. If someone comes to your house with a great offer, they're probably scammers. Call the Better Business Bureau and ask for credentials and references.
4. **Auto fraud** – insurance, car dealers, garages - can also scam you for your money by convincing you to buy more than you need.
5. **Reverse mortgages and foreclosures** have caused problems. The general rule is to be very wary of strangers who come to you unsolicited.
6. Even the **economic stimulus checks** are being exploited. Special offers promising you more money if you cash the check with them are bogus and can cause you identity theft problems.
7. **"Best friends" or even family members** have been known to take advantage of seniors, the infirm or disabled through inheritance, checking and bank accounts, power of attorney, wills, etc.
8. **Computer hackers** can get into your computer and steal your personal information or take complete control of your computers, especially if you have insufficient firewalls, spyware and security updates.
9. **Traveling gypsies** are people who approach your house and steal from you. This usually happens when one person politely knocks on your front door while a partner enters your house through the back door or window and robs you. Keep doors and windows securely locked. Check into an alarm system.... or a barking dog!



No Child Left Behind is “one of the emptiest slogans in the history of American politics,” Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL) says at the final day of last year’s NEA Representative Assembly. Watch him in a video that will get you on your feet applauding: www.nea.org/annualmeeting/raaction/07candidates.html#obama.

Weaver to recommend Obama in General Election

NEA RA delegates to decide on Presidential recommendation

WASHINGTON, June 4, 2008 - National Education Association President Reg Weaver announced today that he will ask the 9,000 delegates to the Association’s Representative Assembly to take a formal vote to recommend that NEA’s 3.2 million members support Barack Obama in his bid to become President of the United States. NEA delegates will hold their annual meeting in Washington, D.C., over the 4th of July holiday.

“Ideally, NEA would have endorsed a candidate during the primaries, but our members were like voters everywhere,” said Weaver. “They were split between Senator Barack Obama and Senator Hillary Clinton. But it’s now apparent that Senator Obama has secured the necessary number of delegates to win the Democratic nomination. With such a clear picture of what Senator Obama will do for public education and his commitment to partner with NEA on issues that affect our members across the country, every public

school employee needs to get squarely behind the Obama candidacy.”

Presidential candidates from both the Democratic and Republican parties worked to get the NEA’s recommendation and access to its seasoned army of political member activists.

“Senator Clinton has an outstanding record of support for children and public education,” said Weaver. “As long as she was a viable candidate in the Democratic nomination process, many of our members felt a passionate need to return the loyalty she has earned over decades of support.”

McCain contrasts with Obama on education issues

The contrast between Obama and McCain on issues that matter most to NEA members – the economy, education and health care – is indeed stark. Obama opposes using public tax dollars to provide financial support to private schools. McCain is already on record with votes supporting vouchers.

- Obama has made it clear that the Bush Administration’s No Child Left Behind law must be changed. McCain has been crossing the coun-

try saying he’ll expand the very provisions of NCLB that the nation’s educators cite as its greatest flaws, most especially its one-size-fits-all high-stakes testing provisions.

- Obama supports making health care available to every American child. McCain has voted against expansion of existing federal programs designed to provide health care for the nation’s neediest children.

- Obama has said repeatedly that, while teachers need to be held accountable for what goes on in the classroom, every teacher deserves a living wage. McCain has called for paying teachers based on student test scores.

- Obama supports reducing class size to improve student achievement. McCain has already voted against attempts to reduce class size.

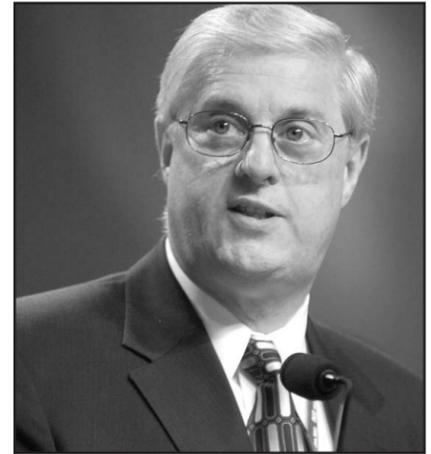
“You can go down any list of what public school employees believe they need to truly help every child be successful, and you’ll see that Senator Obama supports that list and that Senator McCain not only opposes it, but has probably already voted against it,” said Weaver. “There are big and important issues in this campaign, but none is more important to the long-term future of America than public education. And there’s a clear choice in 2008. I will be asking our members to make the right choice for public education.”

NEA members to address tough issues at Representative Assembly

More than 9,000 NEA members from every state in the Union (including 36 from Delaware) will gather in Washington, D.C., for the National Education Association’s annual Representative Assembly.

Delegates will make decisions that will guide the Association for the coming year and beyond, when they meet in early July.

One major change that will result from actions taken at the 2008 NEA Representative Assembly will be the election of new NEA officers. NEA President Reg Weaver has served six



Dennis Van Roekel, a high school science teacher from Arizona, is the president-elect of the NEA.



Utah’s Lily Eskelsen becomes NEA vice president following the RA. A new secretary-treasurer, her current position, will be elected by RA delegates.

years as NEA’s top elected leader, but is term-limited by the Association’s constitution to another term.

NEA delegates will be asked to confirm the election of current NEA Vice President **Dennis Van Roekel** to serve as NEA president, and current Secretary-Treasurer **Lily Eskelsen** to serve as Vice President. Both will be confirmed by acclimation since no other candidates filed to run before the April 15 nomination deadline. There will be a contested election to select a new secretary-treasurer for NEA.

Delegates will be asked to decide if the National Education Association will favor organizing teachers and other staff who work with preschool children, a move which the DSEA Representative Assembly made last April.

Another important agenda item will be the presentation and discussion of a special NEA “White Paper” outlining the Association’s best thinking about the proper and most effective role for the federal government to play in support of the nation’s 14,000 local school districts.



Joe Biden has introduced legislation to create a college tax credit worth up to \$3,000.

Opening college doors for all students

- by U.S. Senator Joe Biden (D-DE)

College is on the verge of becoming a luxury good – and the doors of opportunity are in danger of being shut to all but the wealthiest.

It is this time each year that America's educators are rewarded with the knowledge that they have had a lasting impact on the lives of so many young people, and I congratulate those who played an instrumental role in the graduating Class of 2008.

For some, the upcoming months will be daunting as parents confront the challenge of figuring out how, or if, they can pay for college.

I'll never forget the look on my dad's face during my senior year of high school when he told me the bank didn't give him the loan he needed to send me to the University of Delaware.

Eventually, he got the loan, I had a summer job, and I went to on to college the following September. But the look on his face – I could tell he thought he was letting me down – has been a memory that has lasted a lifetime.

The price of going to college has increased dramatically in the last two decades. In fact, over 400,000 students across the country who qualified to go to a four-year college this year will not go because they cannot afford it. Nearly 200,000 of those students won't attend any college at all. You know, as do I, that this is unacceptable.

In the last 18 months, Congress has worked across party lines to make a college education more affordable.

Congress boosts grants and loans

We committed an additional \$20 billion in new and enhanced student aid and benefits, including lower interest rates on Stafford loans, larger Pell Grants, and capped loan repayments. This past May, we also increased the amount of federal loans that a student can borrow, and provided families who are behind in their mortgage payments or medical bills with flexibility in obtaining and repaying student loans.

Still, we must do more. Just as our workforce and economy must innovate to stay a step ahead of the competition, our education policies must as well. You've seen first hand students who think college education is

out of reach lose motivation. We have to keep them engaged by starting the conversation about college sooner and ensuring the cost doesn't put higher education out of reach. That is why I introduced the College ACCESS Plan last year.

New plan will create \$3,000 tax credit

If enacted, my plan would consolidate two of the existing tax incentives for college (the Hope Credit and the tuition deduction), creating a single, refundable tax credit worth up to \$3,000 per student. This would fully cover the average cost of tuition and fees at a two-year college and cover more than half the cost of tuition and fees at a public four-year college. The credit would also be tied to inflation – so that when the cost of tuition goes up, the amount of assistance increases with it. The ACCESS Plan would also build on recent increases to the maximum Pell Grant, boosting it to \$6,300.

As educators, you know the importance of instilling high expectations in students. My plan would create a **demonstration program to guarantee Pell Grants to 8th graders** in order to launch the formal college planning process much earlier, cultivating an expectation that the stu-

dent's future includes higher education. My hope is that this will also encourage families and students to plan ahead for college. I am pleased to say that this initiative was included in the renewal of the Higher Education Act passed by the Senate, and I am working to see that it is included in the final bill.

Let me hear from you regarding NCLB

Looking ahead, one of the first priorities of Congress next year will be to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. While I have heard from some of you already at DSEA's annual Representative Assembly meeting back in April, I encourage you to share your views with me on the current law – both its successes and its shortcomings. Your insights and experiences working on the front lines will be enormously helpful in the development of a new bill.

I will continue to fight just as hard as ever to ensure that you and your students have the resources and support you need and deserve. We all know the stakes are high, and that every door we fail to open for our students today is a missed opportunity for our country down the road.

To find out more about the resources available to help pay for college, go to <http://biden.senate.gov>, and click on "Education" under the "Issues" tab.

For more information, check out these college affordability sites:

www.myspace.com/collegeaffordability

www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2215127719

www.youtube.com/collegeaffordability

www.collegeaffordabilityconcernsme.org

www.facebook.com/pages/edit/?id=22206065709

www.change.org/changes/youthagenda

Share your experience with *Reading First*

Do you have an opinion about Reading First, lauded by President Bush as part of the No Child Left Behind law? Are you in a Reading First school? According to Grover J. Russ Whitehurst, director of the Institute of Education Sciences at the Department of Education following a study of the program,

"There was no statistically significant impact on reading comprehension scores in grades one, two, or three."

Do you agree? Disagree? See what colleagues around the country are saying about its effectiveness at <http://blogs.nea.org/ednotes/2008/05/reading-last.html>, and join the discussion.

To share your views on education with Senator Biden, click on "Contact Joe" under the "Issues" tab at <http://biden.senate.gov>.

Summer discount tickets now available

Discount tickets available online

Go to www.dsea.org – log in – click on Discount List – then click on the theme park or program

Anheuser Busch Adventure Parks: *Busch Gardens (Williamsburg or Tampa Bay); SeaWorld (Orlando, San Antonio or San Diego); Sesame Place; Water Country USA; Adventure Island*

DSEA members receive a 15% discount on tickets and 10% off on dining by purchasing these tickets through this website.

Morey's Piers Splash & Ride Combo Pass

After clicking on **Morey's Piers**, then enter Company ID of **DSEA** to order tickets at 29% savings!

Adult over 48" Tall - \$39.00 Children under 48" Tall - \$30.00

Six Flags Great Adventure w/Safari (New Jersey)

Click on **Six Flags Great Adventure** and you will be directed to the site with discounted tickets for sale.

Username - DSEA; Password 3CON

Regular Admission (ages 3 and up)	\$25.00
Age 2 and under	Free

TicketsAtWork Program – Disney, Broadway, Theme Parks, Attractions, Entertainment!!

After clicking on **TicketsAtWork**, sign in using our Company Code **DSEA** and order tickets!

Clementon Amusement Park & Splash World

Go to www.clementonpark.com, click on **Tickets**, enter Promo Code **DSEA**, click submit

Adult over 36" Tall - \$19.50 Children under 36" Tall - Free

Kings Dominion

Go to www.kingsdominion.com, click on **tickets**, then **corporate partner**, Company ID is **FUNTIX**

Adult	\$37.95	Age 2 and under	Free
Under 48" Tall	\$27.95	2-Day Ticket	\$49.95
Seniors 62 & older	\$27.95		



Discount tickets available at www.dsea.org through ACCESS

Go to www.dsea.org, log in, then click on the picture of the DSEA membership card to enter the ACCESS savings site. Click on Recreation on the left.

Dutch Wonderland

Florida Ticket Station - The FloridaTicketStation offers deep discounts on all major Orlando area attraction tickets, including Walt Disney World®, Universal Studios Orlando®, Water Parks, Dinner Shows including Arabian Nights®, Medieval Times®, Sleuth Mystery Dinner Theater® and more.

Hershey Park

Discount coupons available at both DSEA office locations

Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom

Six Flags America (Baltimore/Washington D.C.)

Discounts available by showing your membership card

Battleship New Jersey - Located on the Camden, NJ waterfront, is now giving a 10% discount to all DSEA members. Prices for DSEA members for a guided tour are: Adults - \$13.50 instead of \$15; Seniors and children 6-11 - \$9.90 instead of \$11. Overnight encampments for families and youth groups every Friday and Saturday night - \$44.55 per person instead of \$49.50. For more information on school programs, the battleship's history, ticket purchasing and directions go to www.battleshipnewjersey.org.

Medieval Times Dinner & Performances – www.medievaltimes.com. With locations around the country, the closest is in Lyndhurst, NJ. Go to their site for locations, ticket prices and a description of their performances.

Caesars Pocono Resorts Getaway Club

Save 25% on weekdays and 20% on weekends on all-inclusive packages by showing your membership card, or reserve online at www.CPResorts-Getaway.com using the Promo Code: **GA25753**.

Discounted movie tickets available at both DSEA offices

Carmike Movie Tickets - \$6.00 each
Cinemark Movie Tickets - \$6.00 each
Regal Cinema Movie Tickets - \$7.00 each

For a complete list of all of the member-only discounts, log in at www.dsea.org and then click on Discount List from the left-hand side.

Looking for educational research?

More and more of you are using data to make your school, classroom and work decisions. One of the “best kept secrets” about ongoing educational research are the federally-funded Regional Educational Laboratories. These laboratories work in tandem with regional universities and research organizations “to meet educational needs through research, dissemination, training and technical assistance.” They exist to serve you and policy makers.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory, known as REL Mid-Atlantic, has a comprehensive web site at <http://edlabs.ed.gov/relmid-atlantic>. Check it out.

For a list of all of the research reports from the organization that oversees all of the regional labs (the Institute of Education Sciences), go to: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/index.asp>.

More specifically, REL Mid-Atlantic links research to policy and practice. It -

- **Attends** to the concerns of the region through state coordinators and lab extension specialists who listen to education stakeholders, gather information, and communicate research findings;
- **Conducts and summarizes** rigorous research that addresses the region’s needs through studies on priority issues;
- **Translates and packages** the work of researchers for use by education practitioners;
- **Disseminates** national research findings through a variety of methods;
- **Conducts** ongoing needs assessments that ensure the relevancy and value of the research agenda to education stakeholders; and



The Mid-Atlantic region includes Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

- **Utilizes** innovations in technology to increase access to research on effective classroom practices that lead to increased student learning and student achievement.

The REL Mid-Atlantic is currently working on:

- **Implementing No Child Left Behind** and its key provisions;
- **Improving schools** at the state and local level by responding to requests for technical assistance for

evidence-based decision-making and promising or proven school improvement strategies; and

- **Raising achievement** of all PreK-12 students in reading, mathematics and science.

If you are interested in participating in studies conducted by REL Mid-Atlantic, either serving as a research school or simply providing data to further the research, please call 1-866-RELMIFYI or email them at info@rel-mid-atlantic.org.

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Plan now for a stress-free summer vacation

What makes for the most memorable summer vacation? Time. Time to savor the anticipation and planning and time to be flexible so you can take advantage of the best deals.

Summer vacations can be sweet. Or they can be pure stress, start to finish. Stress is nearly inevitable if you work until you're so overtired and stretched so thin that you can't go another step and then fall into whatever vacation happens to be available, such as visiting the in-laws, who have always been the focus of family quarrels.

Stress is inevitable, too, if your family is in crisis. The health of the family – mental health and good communication – are key. Nobody will morph into the perfect husband on Christmas Eve or the perfect daughter on a summer camping trip. Your son will still be your son and you'll still be you. Talk it over in advance and get everyone's input. Keep expectations realistic. Set some personal goals.

For younger members

If you are 20 something, your goal might be a great adventure. OK, maybe you can't afford an African safari or a trip to Italy, given the weak dollar. But you can expect to



Mary Rowland is a nationally known business and finance writer. The former personal finance columnist for the *New York Times* and former co-host of a nationally syndicated radio show, she is the author of several investment books and speaks regularly to consumers and financial planners about investing and personal finance.

have fun if you like white-water rafting or hiking or museums or just about anything else. A passion adds a lot to a vacation.

One of the great things about being young with fewer family responsibilities is that you can just pick up and go. Start a list of places that intrigue you, both near and far, and watch for opportunities. Suppose you find out that the next weekend will be gorgeous. Call a favorite resort or hotel and ask what's still available – and cheap. They might be eager to sell empty rooms at a bargain rate.

I have a friend who makes his entire vacation an adventure, refusing to plan ahead and, instead, driving up to, say the Ahwahnee Lodge in Yosemite National Park to ask what's available that night.

Ahwahnee Lodge takes reservations one year and a day in advance and books up within hours. So my

friend (he is not young) gets some spectacular deals and some disappointments. But he always has an adventure. The Internet is a great resource. Check a website like www.lastminute.com for ideas.

If you're traveling with very young children, don't get too ambitious. Your children will be more affected by the pleasure – or anxiety – they pick up from you than by seeing the Grand Canyon. Pick a relaxing destination where you can even take a little time off from the kids.

For mid-career members

If you're vacationing with school-age children – especially teens – include them in the planning. Send your teenager to the library or Internet to do some research. Maybe you can let him pick a destination. And maybe not. Maybe you pick the destination and ask him for one thing he'd like to fit in for each day.

Talk about great vacations you've taken and your worst vacation. Talk about what a summer vacation is and what it represents to you. To him, it might be "that miserable two weeks mid-summer when I'm forced to spend every day with my parents with no distractions."

If you're planning a road trip, don't rely solely on www.MapQuest.com for directions. Call someone at your destination to ask if road construction or weather damage has affected the route. Plan to stop at interesting places for the kids, even if it's just the Route 66 Diner on the road in Arizona. A good guide book will make suggestions.

For pre-retired and retired members

Perhaps you are an empty-nester. So many options! Planning and reading travel books can get you going.

Picture yourself watching the sunrise at Mesa Verde in the Four Corners of the Southwest and thinking about the basket makers who gathered in the area more than 2,000 years ago to build what evolved into the spectacular cliff dwellings that are there today.

How about an art class in another city – Chicago, Boston, Denver – that includes a special exhibit of your favorite artist? Canoeing in the Boundary Waters of northern Minnesota? Visiting the Black Hills or Yosemite National Park? If you choose the Dakotas, read something by Kathleen Norris, a New York poet who moved to her grandmother's farm in Lemmon, S.D. to find out what this part of the country is about. Dakota is a good choice.

Once you know what kind of experience you want, check www.Kayak.com, a free website that scans 140 other web sites and gives you the best options available for travel. Kayak is not a travel agent and does not sell tickets. But it provides travel tips and links to the sites where you can buy the tickets listed.

Whatever your age or family situation, think about what kind of experience might stir your soul and help you to come home a different and happier person. A closer family.

Try to see travel fiascos as an adventure rather than an inconvenience. OK. I know I said that we should manage our expectations. Don't expect a summer vacation to make you thin or erudite or anything else that you are not. But if you pick the right spot, it might be the beginning of a rebirth of what you are.

Planning for retirement: worse than going to the dentist?

- from NEA Member Benefits

Many of us hate going to the dentist. We put it off, and what may have been a workable problem becomes much more difficult (and painful). Results of a new survey indicate the same may be true about saving for retirement. In April, the Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI) released the results of its annual Retirement Confidence Survey®. The percentage of Americans who

said they were very confident they would have enough savings for a comfortable retirement was at a 15-year low—only 18 percent. Over a third indicated they were not confident they will have a comfortable retirement.

If you lack confidence about your retirement, there's something you can do about it. Contact an NEA Valuebuilder® representative to discuss how you can supplement your

state-sponsored retirement plan. Some experts say you should plan for as much as 100 percent of your pre-retirement income in retirement. Your state pension and Social Security will likely fall short of that goal.

Another resource to help you gauge your retirement readiness is **NEA Member Benefits' Five-Minute Retirement Checkup**. Answer a few quick questions and

you'll get a snapshot of where you stand in saving for retirement. Check out the "Checkup" at www.neamb.com/5toRetire.

For more information about the EBRI survey, visit www.ebri.org. Call 1-800-NEA-VALU (632-8258) to contact an NEA Valuebuilder representative about starting or reviewing your retirement savings plan, sooner rather than later.

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

NEA introduces online buying service: Click & Save



NEA Click & Save, the new online buying service for NEA members, highlights select retailers and merchants each month. These “Buy-lights” have no expiration dates—that’s right, you can count on getting your discounts all year long!

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Veterans Day 2008 5th Annual National Poster & Essay Contest

Veterans: Thank You for Your Service is this year's contest theme.

This Veterans Day, children can express their thanks for America's veterans by entering Paralyzed Veterans of America's (Paralyzed Veterans) fifth annual National Veterans Day Poster and Essay Contests. It is a great opportunity for children to express what America's veterans mean to them.

This year's competition is open to students in grades 1-8. The poster contest is open to students in grades 1-4, which will be separated into two categories for judging: 1st-2nd grade and 3rd-4th grade. The essay contest is open to students in grades 5-8 and will be separated into two categories for judging: 5th-6th grade and 7th-8th grade.

The grand prize winners - one student from the poster contest and one student from the essay contest - will receive an award plaque and an all-expense paid trip for the student accompanied by a parent or guardian to Washington, DC for Veterans Day 2008.

For contest rules, visit www.pva.org. If you have any questions regarding the contest, please email your questions to postercontest@pva.org.

NEA provides research-based resources

The NEA-supported IRIS Center provides research-based, high-quality resources for Pre-K-12 educators working with students with disabilities. The Center, housed at Peabody College at Vanderbilt University, offers free, online, interactive training modules.

A brochure listing programs, services, and how to access both can be downloaded at http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/IRIS_Handout.pdf.

Museum director position open

James Neal, president of the Delaware Academy of Science, has let us know that the Iron Hill Museum, a small historical museum and learning center in Northern Delaware, is looking for an executive director. Send your resume to academympresident@gmail.com.



Student sculpture sought

Open to all students, ages 6 to 18, *Barbaro: Expressions of Love* is a tribute to the 2006 Kentucky Derby winner, Barbaro, who suffered from Laminitis and was euthanized in January 2007. Students are encouraged to create their expressions of love for Barbaro through the use of sculpture.

These works of art should celebrate and express what Barbaro meant to you. Roy and Gretchen Jackson will select a few pieces as keepsakes from this special exhibit.

All accepted sculptures will be on display within the Kentucky Derby Museum. At the completion of the exhibition, the pieces will be auctioned with the proceeds benefitting The Fund for Laminitis Research at the University of Pennsylvania's New Bolton Center.

The Kentucky Derby Museum is accepting submissions for the exhibition beginning immediately, and continuing through April 30, 2009.

Visit the website for more details on size and shipping requirements; to download an entry form; and to see the spotlight sculptures of the month. Go to www.derbymuseum.org.

Education information about the court system now on web



The Administrative Office of the Courts has created a new section of the Delaware Courts' website.

The new Education and Community Outreach section includes information about the Delaware Courts, educational and outreach programs offered by the Courts, and information about other law-related educational resources and programs, both local and national.

You can visit this new section of the Courts' website at: <http://courts.delaware.gov/AOC/Education%20and%20Community%20Outreach/?index.htm>.

Sign up for free Delaware Technology Academy classes this summer

DCET, the Delaware Center for Educational Technology, has posted its schedule for its summer Delaware Technology Academy. You can find the list of FREE professional development opportunities at: www.dcet.k12.de.us/instructional/DTA2008/index.shtml

There are a variety of half and full day sessions available. Courses include:

Introduction to Videoconferencing, Thinkfinity, iSAFE, Cool Tools for School, GIS (Geographic Information Systems) in Education; and Introduction to Blogging.

- All courses are FREE and are open to all Delaware educators.

- All courses will be offered at the John W. Collette Center at 35 Commerce Way, Dover, DE 19904 (with one exception)

- Course hours are:

- Full day: 8:30 - 3:30; courses include a one hour lunch break (on your own)

- Half day: 9:00 - 12:00 PM

- The first class is July 14; the last one is August 6.

- Registration is limited to 20 participants in each course

- It is recommended that participants bring a USB drive to save any work they create.

- Delaware clock hour certificates for teacher/specialist/administrator relicensure will be provided.

Seating is limited and all seats are on a first-come basis. Register now at www.dcet.k12.de.us/instructional/DTA2008/index.shtml.



Hagley Museum looking for volunteers

"I have been asked many times, "What made you decide to do volunteer work for Hagley Museum?"

"Hagley has always been a favorite hands-on field trip to help children compare home life of the past with the present. Local history is an area often overlooked. The DuPont Powder Works was an important industry that helped shape a community. I also had ancestors who left France to work for the DuPont's. Another reason to give back to the community.

"A training session and opportunity to shadow volunteers in both the Brandywine Manufacturing Sunday School and Gibbon's House on Worker's Hill prepared me for the role of interpreter. This experience of imparting information about home life in the nineteenth century to children and adults is rewarding for a teacher.

You are given the opportunity to speak with visitors interested in the DuPont history, life in the powder mills, education and what a home was like in the late 1850's.

"It is not difficult to volunteer for a minimum of three days a month. You may demonstrate quill pens, relate the DuPont involvement in early education in Delaware, and bake in a wood stove while showing the Gibbon's House kitchen.

You could also work in the restored machine shop demonstrating period machinery. Do consider a rewarding opportunity for volunteer work at Hagley Museum.

Signed: Pam Worrall
Retired First Grade Teacher
Current Volunteer Interpreter at Hagley Museum and Library

For information on how to volunteer, visit www.hagley.org or call 302-658-2400 and ask for Angela Williamson, or email her at awilliamson@hagley.org.

Items described on this page are not always endorsed by the Association, but are provided to members for their information.

Don't let rising health care costs turn your life **upside-down.**

If you're hospitalized because of a serious illness, accident or injury, you may not only be impacted physically, but financially as well.

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- You choose the level of your benefits, based on your budget

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IH090308

What I do really matters

So says Pam Ingram- our Education Support Person of the Year – a paraprofessional in the Colonial School District.

-by Joel F. Glazier

Flexibility and what she calls “dancing through the day” is how Pam Ingram describes the most important aspect of her job as a paraprofessional at Colonial School District’s William Penn High School in New Castle. Always smiling, her eyes dance because she loves her work.

Several aspects of Pam Ingram’s professionalism, however, are anything but flexible. Those aspects are displayed constantly in her work - leadership, dedication and respect for students. “You must respect yourself, others and the job you do. What we do for our students really matters to them, their future lives, their families,” says Ingram who is this year’s DSEA Education Support Person (ESP) of the Year.

Another aspect of Ingram’s days is often worn near her collar—a pin inscribed “The CFSWA”—The Colonial Food Service Worker’s Association. This fine jewelry piece was presented by CFSWA colleagues to Pam’s mother, the late Marie Deamer, the first president of that local.

Pam Ingram thought her own career would follow her mother’s, as a commercial baker, the area in which she majored at Delcastle Vocational High School. However, for the past thirteen years, she has been a paraprofessional at William Penn. She has followed her mother’s involvement as a local union leader as the newly elected vice president of Colonial Paras.



Colonial Para’s Pam Ingram is a role model, just as her mother, Marie Daemer, now deceased, was a role model for her as the first president of the Colonial Food Service Workers Association.

Local, state, national involvement

“We should take advantage of all that DSEA provides. The locals are only as strong as the people in them,” declares Ingram. She is proud of her own 90-member local, which for three years has had 100% membership. Many of those members are pursuing the on-line Fort Scot professional development program (negotiated by CPA with the district), of which Ingram has passed all five levels. She has been involved in the Colonial Paras Association (CPA) Executive Board, Job Description and Evaluations Committee, Negotiations Team, served as a DSEA RA delegate and leads CPA’s political action work, as well as being involved with a district level Liaison committee.

“Knowing when to be a leader is crucial for having a strong local,” Ingram says.

She has been included in the NEA/ESP Leaders for Tomorrow training that includes ESP leaders from all over the country. “Pam is a great person and can be depended upon 100% of the time. She also works great with the students, and was recognized as an emerging

leader last year at a national ESP conference in Nashville,” says **Shirley Redmond**, president of the Colonial Paras.

Challenges every day, every year

In her years at William Penn, Ingram has worked with special needs students in different levels of integration. She has worked with students who are assessed by portfolio and not the DSTP; worked one-on-one with a student and his high technology aids; worked in the adult program; and now works with a group of 15 “Integration B students”, that is, those who are administered the DSTP with Ingram there to assist the teachers. This group travels together and she is in the classroom with them. “This year has really been a challenge to me psychologically and academically with all the preparation for the DSTP,” Ingram says.

For newer paras and all ESP employees, Ingram advises, “Make sure you’re in the job for the right reason. Kids are the primary focus and we must always be an advocate for them.”

She fondly remembers the student she was first hired to work with on a one-to-one basis. “He had cerebral

palsy, profoundly handicapped, and I saw him graduate. No training prepares you for all the challenges. On our job we have to jump into it with both feet to succeed.”

“At the ESP award dinner,” says Ingram, “I was able to remind our Governor and other government leaders there how underpaid and under-appreciated ESP employees are. Establishing living wages would be a good place to start to correct this. Many of our members could probably make more money at a different job, but they are in this because they are devoted to the kids,” shares Ingram.

With her award came a check from DSEA. Ingram donated half of the amount to the Roll Models Club whose members are students at Wm. Penn who require the use of a wheelchair.

Her husband of 29 years is a William Penn graduate as are her two children. When Pam is not spending time as an officer for the Wilmington Manor Volunteer Fire Company after work, she also looks after nine dogs, two rabbits and four cats.



Ingram donated part of the \$250 honorarium from DSEA to CPA colleague Debbie Falgowski for the purchase of t-shirts. The shirts are for the members of the Roll Models club of wheel chair students that Falgowski started at William Penn High School.

And her two miniature horses? Those she brings to a local 4-H Club where she and the horses give the students with handicaps the opportunity to be responsible for these special animals.

Joel Glazier, DSEA-Retired, is a regular contributor to *ACTION!* You can reach him at jglazie@aol.com.