

the

FMEA Observer

We made it!



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A letter from the president, Scott Shulimson...

Hello FMEA members,

At this time last year, we had just learned who the new superintendent would be. The leadership of our district hadn't changed hands for nearly a decade, and we all wondered what direction Superintendent Cruz would take us. All in all, I think it was a good start for our new Superintendent. I see the potential for a stronger district and an ever-improving relationship between FMEA and administration.

FMEA Summer Calendar

Last Day of
School

June 10th

School Board
Meetings

June 14th

June 28th

First Work Day
August 16th

First Day of
School
August 22nd



Bargaining is one of the most important components of the FMEA/FMSD relationship. While I hope for quicker resolutions to future negotiations, I do think Mr. Cruz is generally fair-minded and wants to avoid divisive struggles that distract from the many things we work on collaboratively. Having a trustworthy partner like this is crucial in ensuring we can reach future agreements that are equitable and reasonable.

Currently, the FMEA bargaining survey is still open. Our Bargaining Team will be examining the results, and we will release our initial proposal to the district in the fall. It appears that the 2016-17 state budget will contain another decent increase to school funding, but the projections for future years aren't looking as good. Furthermore, districts throughout the area are almost all facing serious declining enrollment. FMEA has received a total of 12.5% in raises over the last three years, and hopefully next year we will receive another decent increase. Unfortunately, there's reason to think that raises in upcoming years may not be as robust as they have been.

There were a lot of new things in our district this year. Some were clearly visible like the successful employee appreciation day. Some were more subtle, like finally having a Director of Community Relations (Yelitza Pena) who can make sure positive messages about our district are getting out there, so it's not just charter schools who get to define us to the public. If you have ideas for improving FMEA or the district, I

encourage you to share them. I'm always a phone call away, and any district employee can meet with Superintendent Cruz.

One of the special things about FMEA is that our energies go not just to the needs of teachers, but also toward serving the students and community of FMSD. I'm moved by all of your dedication and hard work every time we put on an event like the FMEA spelling bee, literacy fair, basketball tourney, or track meet. These have all been hugely successful, and I'm deeply appreciative for the teamwork that makes them possible.

Next year we will focus on bringing together our union like never before. Through social media, fun events, and one-on-one conversations, it is my intention to increase the engagement and vitality of FMEA so that we can truly accomplish any goal. I'm grateful for the coming summer break, but I genuinely look forward to working with you all again in the fall. Happy summer!

Sincerely,
Scott Shulimson

Kids to Admins: Charter Schools Have Got To Go!

by Jenny Luna

In nearly 75 cities across the country, students, parents, and teachers marched at their public schools on Wednesday, protesting inadequate funding and charter school takeover, issues that especially affect black and Latino students in urban areas.

The organization Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools is behind the "walk in" demonstrations, and it's made up of large-scale organizations, such as teachers unions, and local community groups. The walk-ins began last spring and have doubled in size since February.

The alliance's executive director, Keron Blair, said that when charter schools replace public schools, parents lose their ability to vote on school board members—something, he argues, that hurts society at large. "We have to invest in public education if we want to fortify our democratic society," he said. "The two go hand in hand."

Charter schools have exploded in popularity since the 1990s; data shows that today nearly 5 percent of all public school students attend one. Charters receive funding that many educators feel should go only toward traditional public schools.

"People are seeing and hearing and saying, 'We want to walk in,'" Blair said. "Resources are being pulled out of the public sector and privatized...The very people they're supposed to help have no say," Blair said.

appreciative for the teamwork that makes them possible.

Although the general theme of the walk-ins revolved around charter school takeovers, the demonstrations also allowed students and parents to voice their own local issues.

Educators and parents from Oakland Unified School District in Oakland, California, protested an enrollment policy that has public schools and charters grouped together when

parents sign up their kids for school; some parents and educators are concerned that the policy favors charter schools. Organizers from San Francisco Unified School District protested the rising cost of living that has pushed teachers out of a city where a two-bedroom apartment typically runs upward of \$2,000 per month.

"The affordability crisis in San Francisco is raging out of control and turnover is happening at a breakneck pace," said Matthew Hardy, the communications manager for Unified Educators of San Francisco. "This is pushing too many educators out of the city and out of the school system."

For Detroit, a city continually plagued by public-education budget battles, Wednesday's walk-in came on the tail end of more teacher "sick outs" earlier this week. Since it is illegal to strike in Michigan, frustrated educators have been using their sick days to protest unpaid work days. Education advocacy groups like 482 Forward, a citywide education organizing network, used the national momentum against charters to present a list of demands that include manageable class sizes and more multicultural curricula. Nearly 84 percent of the public school student population in Detroit is African American.

"There's not a lot in the curriculum where kids can self-identify," said Wytrice Harris, a parent and school activist. "It doesn't reflect the lives that they see every day."

Keron Blair of the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools said small changes are being seen across the country and that the organization will plan more walk-ins for the fall of the coming school year.

Jenny Luna is a Ben Bagdikian fellow at Mother Jones. She covers education and immigration and her work has appeared in the Miami Herald, WNYC, and the Wilson Quarterly. Follow her on Twitter @J2theLuna or email her at jluna@motherjones.com.

Board Briefs

April 26th

- ✚ The Board approved adding 7th and 8th grades to Cornerstone charter school. Cornerstone is merging with Alpha charter school for these middle school grades. This is instead of Alpha opening an entire middle school her.
- ✚ CSEA released their initial Sunshine Proposal to the district.

May 10th

- ✚ Parents from Dahl school were recognized for their parent involvement with the Parent Project Junior (K-3) and Active Parenting Program (4 and up).
- ✚ The Special Education Department proposed changes to the PEBS program at Shirakawa.
- ✚ The contract with Catholic Charities for the Franklin-McKinley Children's Initiative was renewed for the 2016-2017 school year.

May 24th

- ✚ The Board presented Global Learner and Employee Spirit awards
- ✚ An overview of the 21st Century Teaching And Learning Plan was presented.
- ✚ A facilities master plan and needs assessment was presented. The district has \$365M of facilities upgrades needed. If it passes, the upcoming bond will bring in \$67M, so projects must be prioritized.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR'S RETIREES!

Bonnie Gustavson

Dianna Aguilar

Erika Hizy

Randall Landrith

Gail Moser

Ardell Eddy

Amy Kolb

Doris Dunn

Cathleen Cooper

Gregory Dawn

We will miss you!



Other Bits and Pieces

Congratulations and felicitations!

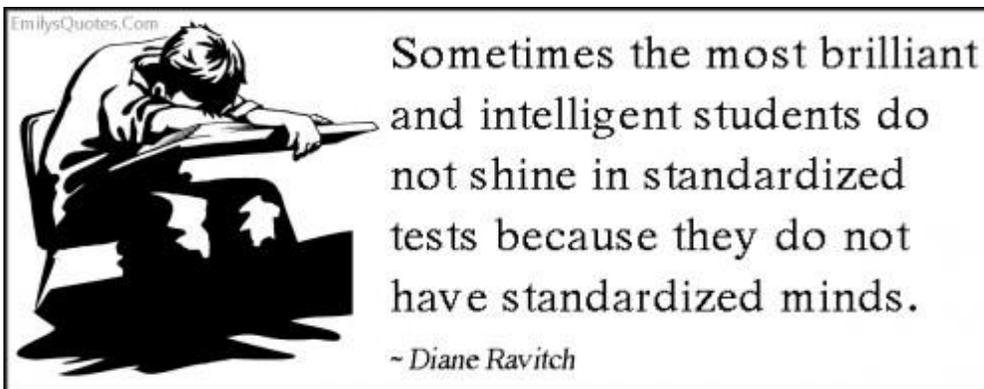
- ✚ Congratulations to County-wide WHO (We Honor Ours) winner, Lyn Irvine, and FMEA WHO winner, Carissa Harris!

Grievances

- ✚ The District and FMEA have settled the two “written verbal” arbitrations. There are still three outstanding arbitrations that both sides are still attempting to settle.

Reminders

- ✚ Make sure to join the “FMEA” group on Facebook if you haven’t already.
- ✚ The paper from H.R. that most of you received last week is not a binding contract. It is just a placement verification form. It's important to make sure you are being paid the correct amount, but it is not a binding contract. Whether or not you sign it, you have until June 30th to notify the district if you plan to resign or retire, but you must notify H.R. by that deadline if you aren't returning.



FMEA Election Results

President:

Scott Shulimson 249 votes

Kelly Bond 1 vote

Aaron Avery 1 vote

Vice President:

Kelly Bond 238 votes

Secretary:

Rachel M. Witmeyer 240 votes

Kelly Bond 1 vote

Treasurer:

Kristi Billings 243 votes

Director-At-Large:

Erik Whitaker 141 votes

Kate Adams 89 votes

Until next time!

Please email any articles, suggestions, and advertisements for the next issue of The Observer to hondita@gmail.com

The Observer is a publication of FMEA/CTA/NEA. Ideas presented by the editors are those of the editors and not of FMEA/CTA/NEA. Articles submitted by individuals solely represent the views of those individuals and not of FMEA/CTA/NEA.



Important Contacts



New FMEA Site: fmea.mobi

FMEA Contacts

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