

The Tell Tale

Rockwood NEA Newsletter

Volume 42 Issue 2

Navigating the Waters

Erik Graham, Vice President

As a current history teacher, I am reminded of those in the past who were faced with difficult challenges and situations. For professionals working in Rockwood there are many similarities between the challenges others have faced in the past and the challenges we face today. Helping us with these challenges is the RNEA, working everyday on behalf of our 1200+ members. For example, here are two of the more recent examples of how the RNEA are making a positive difference in the professional lives of the Rockwood teacher:

Online Teacher Grade Book/Infinite Campus:

When OTGB was first introduced 3+ years ago, the RNEA and its members were out in front warning the district about the weakness of the current technological infrastructure as well as the inadequacy of safeguards regarding student information. Over the course of those 3 years those concerns have borne themselves out, resulting in the adaptation of a completely new student information system, Infinite Campus. The RNEA has served a vital role in the early phases of the adaptation of this system. On October 19th the RNEA will continue its fight to insure teacher needs are met under this new student management system. The policy and procedures committee, consisting of dozens of RNEA members, will convene to discuss best practices and procedures regarding the gradebook regulations to be put into place with Infinite Campus.

Association/District Communication Initiative:

As a result of an RNEA Exec Board and RSD BOE/Administrative Cabinet retreat in June of 2005, every building in Rockwood is now required to create a formal communication structure within buildings as a means of creating better working relations between administration and staff. On August 15th the RSD, the RSD and RNEA held a joint one hour training session with all building administrators and RNEA AR's to begin implementation of this policy. While not all buildings are where they should be, this long-term commitment to creating better building climates is clearly a step in the right direction for all members.

As we enter into a full bargaining year, there are two central issues facing our Association.

Issue 1: Money

To be candid, the greatest issue facing our Association and its membership concerns the district's unwillingness to address its financial situation in a manner that insures that the quality professionals employed in the district are compensated at a level commensurate with the competition and reflective of the outstanding results produced by its professionals. The RNEA will make this a primary focus during the upcoming bargain.

Issue 2: Membership Ownership

The RNEA is committed to making our members feel like partners in the enterprise that is the RNEA. This year the negotiation team is reaching out to all members asking for their "stories" about the efforts that they put forth on a daily basis. Every building RNEA Association Representative has been given copies of "personal testimonial forms" that ask the membership to relate your real life experiences

about your efforts outside of the classroom, your concerns regarding district policies and procedures, and your suggestions/solutions about issues you continue to face on a day to day basis. We are asking EVERY RNEA member to take the time to complete these forms as a means of communicating to the bargaining team and the district the very real challenges you face everyday as an employee in Rockwood.

I want to thank all of you who have taken any sort of role in representing the RNEA. It is because of your professionalism and dedication that Rockwood is the most outstanding school district in Missouri. As your Vice-President and a Bargaining Team member I look forward to working on your behalf to insure that your concerns and needs are being met, and more importantly that the Board of Education and the District Administration reward you with the compensation and acknowledgment you deserve for being the best professional staff in the state of Missouri.

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Manchester, MO
Call **636-527-2535**
Fax **636-527-7474**

Dates to Remember

Oct. 12 AR mtg 4:30pm, Crestview
Oct. 26 Exec. Board mtg 4:30pm, Office;
Oct. 28 – No School

In this Issue...

**Social Security ▪ Bargaining Survey ▪ MNEA Fall Conference
Rockwood Schools Foundation Grant ▪ Founder's Drive**

Buying Back Social Security-Covered Employment

Legislation awaiting the governor's signature will allow members to purchase credit for Social Security-covered employment while age 18 or older, if the employment was for 20 hours a week on a regular basis. Important facts to keep in mind:

- You must be vested (have at least 5 years of credit in the system)
- You can not purchase more credit than you earn with PSRS prior to retirement
- You can not purchase credit to service that is also being used to receive benefits from another public retirement system (other than Social Security or military service)
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For more information: www.psrs-ntrs.org/HB443Summary.htm

RNEA Bargaining Survey

We will launch the Zoomerang survey to GroupWise on Oct. 17. The window will be open until midnight on Oct. 21. **All members need to participate** in order to provide valuable feedback to the Bargaining Team. Thanks in advance for your input!

MNEA Fall Conference

November 10-11, Adam's Mark Hotel, Downtown St. Louis

Session topics include: Teaching Respect for All, National Board Certification, What New's with ADHD, Using Good Children's Literature, Collective Bargaining, History Brought to Life, But I'm NOT a Reading Teacher, Handheld Computers... See your October issue of Something Better for a complete list!

Attention New Teachers: By attending the "I Can Do It" Classroom Management session on either the 10 or 11, you fulfill your Beginning Teacher Assistance requirement. Register on-line at www.mnea.org/teach/begteach/htm or contact Tina.Morton@mnea.org

New Membership Cards

You will receive your 2005-2006 NEA membership card in November. Until then you can continue to use your 2004-2005 ACCESS card for discounts by logging onto the Members Only site at www.mnea.org.

AOL users may experience problems using the Members Only portion of the MNEA website. If you have a problem logging in, switch to another browser (Internet Explorer, Safari, etc.). If you still have problems logging on, call ACCESS customer service at 1-877-428-4697.

Rockwood Schools Foundation Grant

Any teacher or team of teachers can apply by completing a quick and easy application that can be found on the Insider or on the RNEA's new website, www.rnea.org. Applications are due October 24th.

Rockwood Schools Founders Drive

The Rockwood Schools Foundation Board of Directors invites you to attend the annual Founders Drive on Wednesday, November 9, 2005. There will be a cocktail reception, recognition program, and gala. Please RSVP by Monday, October 24, 2005. Reservations and donation invitations can be found on Insider and www.rnea.org.