

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF TEACHER EDUCATORS



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M.A.T.E. is dedicated to promoting knowledge and understanding of the teaching profession, to working to improve teacher education, and to promoting needed changes in teacher education for the ultimate benefit of all students.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

♦ PRESIDENT'S LETTER	1-2
♦ GUEST EDITORIAL	3-5
♦ PAST EVENT SPOTLIGHT	
· Professional Conference	5
· Student Workshop	6
♦ ANNOUNCEMENTS	
· Michigan Student/Intern Teacher of the Year	6
♦ M.A.T.E. BOARD	7

A Message From Our President

Teaching is leaving a vestige of one self in the development of another. And surely the student is a bank where you can deposit your most precious treasures."

Eugene P. Bertin

It is with great pleasure that I sit amongst a group of people on the Michigan Association of Teacher Educators Executive Board, who are dedicated to investing their talents and knowledge into education. As President, I look forward to coming along side my colleagues in working toward promoting equity in education, and develop collaborative partnerships with other educational services and institutions to advocate for Michigan education. We bring voices from all levels of education in order to make sure we are serving all populations of teacher educators as well as serving as mentors to our pre-service teachers who will one day be teacher educators.

We have several new educators to our executive Board. Dr. Derek Anderson comes to us from Northern Michigan University in Marquette, MI and is one of our University at Large Representatives. Mr. Dan Martini is a long time teacher, principal and administrator who has joined us as the Treasurer for M.A.T.E. We welcome you and are thrilled to have you be a part of this organization!

There are many exciting opportunities coming your way this year. We just had our Fall Professional Conference,

(Continued on page 2)

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A Message From Our President (continued)

hosted by Eastern Michigan University. We had some great speakers willing to leave a “vestige” of themselves to enhance awareness and ideas that will assist in being lighthouses for others in education.

Our Spring Student Teacher Conference planning is underway. Our Professional Development Chair, Lynne Nowicki, along with Dr. Sandy Alber are creating a conference to assist our student teachers and young educators in a valiant effort to add more rich diverse information that they will use in their teaching career. Check our website at www.MichiganAte.com , for more information on the dates, times and location of this upcoming event.

For those who are student teaching, please go on our website for information on our State Student Teaching/Intern of the Year Competition. This contest is designed to encourage individuals who are preparing to become teachers to demonstrate exemplary teaching skills. We want you to show us your stuff!! The publicity and recognition of the winner and finalists will help increase respect and prestige for all teachers today and in the future. M.A.T.E. receives videos from colleges and universities all over Michigan and encourage you be a part of this wonderful rewarding opportunity. You can find more information on this competition on our website, www.MichiganAte.com .

We encourage our members to take part in all we do. If you are a member who would like to share your gifts on the many committees we have, share your knowledge by publishing in our journal or newsletter, feel free to email me at mwalsh2@emich.edu and I will get you connected to the appropriate people that match your interest. Or if you prefer, simply contact anyone on the board by going to our website for contact information. We encourage you to be a part of M.A.T.E. and share your ideas and gifts. Thank you for all your constant support as we all move forward to make Michigan education #1.

Warmest Regards,

Mary Kathleen Walsh, President
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 **Guest
Editorial****Senate Education Committee Proposes Creation of
Neighborhood Public Schools**

Four Senate Bills (S.B.) have recently been recommended for immediate effect by the Senate Education Committee chaired by Wayne Kuipers (R-Holland). Senator Kuipers introduced S.B. 636, which would allow virtually any citizen to apply for a performance contract to organize and operate a Neighborhood Public School (NPS). Potential eligible sponsors include certificated teachers, parents of pupils, local governmental units, community colleges, universities, and government agencies. Such sponsors could apply for their performance contract from The State Board of Education, the board of a school district, the governing board of an ISD, the board of a community college, the governing board of a State public university or the mayor of a city with a population of 65,000 or more. Under this bill each NPS could establish their own admission requirements, limiting those who might enroll in these publicly funded institutions. Sponsors would be permitted to create cyber schools offering full-time online instruction. Moreover, if a teacher chose to transfer to an NPS, the school district would be mandated to grant that teacher a leave of absence from his/her position in the public school to do so.

This bill also requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to establish alternative routes to certification that would allow teachers to teach in an NPS. As such, it would be informative to examine current proposals for alternative routes to teacher certification. Currently under consideration is the Teacher Certification Alternative Process (TCAP). On October 29, 2009, Senator Kuipers introduced Senate Bill 965. Under this proposal, the Superintendent of Instruction is required to establish a process to earn an interim teaching certificate leading to a permanent teaching certificate after four years of satisfactory performance. The TCAP requires a minimum of 12 credit hours in child development or psychology, family and community relationships, diverse learners, instructional strategies and "a form of field-based experience in a classroom setting." Any TCAP would be required to accept any person with a bachelor's degree with a G.P.A. of 2.75 or better. The Superintendent would be empowered to accept passage of alternative exams, other than the basic skills and subject area exams, should s/he deem them equivalent. Moreover, the Superintendent has sole discretion in establishing supervision requirements for those teaching with an interim teaching certificate. After Education Secretary Arne Duncan's recent speech decrying teacher education programs across the nation as "mediocre" with inadequate hands-on training and instruction on the use of data to improve student teaching, it is difficult to see how minimizing such instruction through alternative routes to certification will overcome these perceived deficiencies.

Nancy Cassis (R-Novi) introduced S.B. 637, which states, "Any provision of this act or of a rule promulgated under this act is subject to waiver by the Superintendent under Section 538 of the Revised School Code, MCL 380.538, for a Neighborhood Public School that is a cyber school." This provision grants the State Superintendent unlimited powers

(Continued on page 4)

to waive any provision required of all other public schools and public school academies. Already built into this bill is a waiver for NPS cyber schools from the following requirements:

- a. A minimum of 1,098 hours of instruction.
- b. Reduction in state funding for failing to meet minimum instructional hour mandates.

S.B. 638, sponsored by Patricia Birkholz (R-Saugatuck Township), amends the Teachers' Tenure Act to indicate that a teacher in an NPS would not be considered a teacher for the purpose of continuing tenure. The last in this package of bills is S.B. 639, introduced by Bill Hardiman (R-Kentwood). This bill restricts from collective bargaining "decisions concerning the grant of a leave of absence to teach in a Neighborhood Public School." This provision, coupled with the requirement to grant all requests for transfer to NPSs, could have many unintended consequences.

In this package of bills, it is not clear if an NPS must accept all teachers who request transfers from their public schools. These regulations also leave open the possibility for site administrators to urge faculty to apply for transfers, should they want to find a way to remove a teacher from their building, potentially stalling their advancement toward tenure. The movement of teachers around the district would certainly disrupt the establishment of common culture and consistent expectations for academic excellence and decorum at any given site.

Together these bills would further dismantle the public school system by allowing virtually any citizen or group to sponsor the creation and operation of a publicly funded school, regardless of their expertise or experience in educating children. By regulating who can/can't attend any particular NPS, those with the most challenges are likely to be left in the public school system; at the same time, experienced teachers can elect to teach in these more selective institutions, leaving those with less experience to teach in classrooms with increasing percentages of students with challenges. The waiver of NPS cyber schools from minimum instructional hours would encourage the creation of many online schools that could teach as little as they wanted while still collecting full funding for per-pupil attendance. These are dangerous precedents to set in our public school system, already struggling to increase graduation requirements and matriculation to post-secondary education. The teaching profession in the State of Michigan must respond forcefully to these attacks on the public school system if we are to maintain and improve our students' opportunities for academic and professional success.

Moreover, the creation of the Teacher Certification Alternative Processes bypasses existing quality control systems, such as accreditation by national bodies (e.g. NCATE, TEAC), which puts the quality of our programs at greater risk, rather than

(Continued on page 5)

Guest Editorial: Senate Education Committee Proposes Creation of ...

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supporting their improvement. We already have “expedited” routes to certification through established and accredited teacher preparation institutions (Central, Grand Valley, Ferris, Saginaw Valley and UM Ann Arbor) which do much to address the needs for accelerated field-based initial certification, while still adhering to all Michigan laws and policies. Any changes must come from or in close consultation with teacher preparation institutions, the experts in the field, to work to find creative ways to attract, train and retain quality, effective teachers without diminishing quality control.

The time is now for Michigan teacher unions and teacher preparation institutions to become vocal and actively involved in helping to frame pending reforms of accountability practices. We must work together to create and implement innovative, workable solutions before they are dictated to us, or worse, bypass us.

Tim Larrabee, Ph.D.

Oakland University

Department of Teacher Development and Educational Studies

PAST EVENT SPOTLIGHT**2009 Professional Conference**

The MATE Fall Professional Conference was a great success! We teamed up with Teaching Content Area Teachers to Teach English (TCATTE) for a unique spin on our traditional conference. The presenters were focused on our theme “Equity and Social Justice for All” and the conference attendees were very welcoming to our Keynote Speaker, Ms. Michelle White from Henry Ford Academy: School for Creative Studies. Overall, the conference was well received and well attended. We are looking forward to future conferences and continuing our partnership with TCATTE!

Special thanks to Jeff Popko and the TCATTE team for all of their hard work and support throughout the conference. Also, thank you to Tim Larrabee and Carolyn Logan for assisting with registration on Saturday morning. It is also important to recognize Kathy Walsh and Elizabeth Johnson for all of their assistance in the final days leading up to the conference.

PAST EVENT SPOTLIGHT**2009 Student Workshop**

In an effort to reinforce MATE's mission for teacher educators, we added a student workshop to our conference this fall. Almost 100 university students were activated and engaged by "living legends". Educators that are in the field make a difference for students every day! The students were enticed with reenactments and drama, costumes, tips and interactive lessons throughout the day from three amazing teachers that are bringing kids from boredom into stardom! The university students are interacting and contacting these living legends to observe and engage with them in the classroom and are taking their understanding of teaching to a whole new level. Overall, this workshop was a huge success for engaging and teaching pre-service teachers to be active in the classroom.

We would like to recognize our living legends Lynne Nowicki from Henry Ford Academy School for Creative Studies, Ed Abate from Crestwood School district, and Leslie Nalepa from St. Joseph Catholic School for their dedication to student academic success and for reaching students in different and exciting ways!

ANNOUNCEMENT**24TH ANNUAL MATE STUDENT TEACHER/INTERNS OF THE YEAR COMPETITION**

Information materials for the 24th Annual Michigan Student Teacher/Intern of the Year competition is now available to current student teachers/interns on the MATE website, http://michiganate.com/student_teacher.htm. Please contact Dr. Larry Corbett at corbellj@cmich.edu or (989) 774-3816 with any questions regarding the competition.

M.A.T.E. Board Members

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