

GEA Actionline

November 2003

News From the GEA President

Gary Wagher

Bargaining Time

It is time to get input from our members. Bargaining a new contract will take place before the end of the school year. The bargaining team needs your help to guide us in the right direction. Please respond to the survey on the back page and send it to Isaac Triplett or Gary Wagher. Isaac is at Churchill and I am at Galesburg High School. If you would like to send it through the AR at your building that would also work.

The last contract survey was sent to about 500 people and the GEA received 50 completed surveys. I would hope for a better response this time around. The GEA bargaining team will decide what to propose from these surveys. The results will be compiled and a second survey will go out for members to rank each item. If we have 50 items those items would be ranked 1-50. The higher the ranking the more likely the proposal will be kept on the table.

In our bargaining with District #205, 2 years of sick leave will be a hot topic. Please be careful with sick leave. Sick leave can now be accumulated to 325 days and we would like to see it read **“unlimited sick leave.” Sick leave is used for many reasons that are specified in the contract. However, it does not say, “so I can have a three day weekend.”** You may have the right to use it that way, but it could be at the expense of other members who would like to get 2 years of sick leave.

The GEA was able to get the people who were retiring at the end of this year and who did not have one year of accumulated sick leave credited with 180 days, or one year plus 10 days. This enabled several members to retire one year earlier than expected. Imagine the possibility of 2 years of sick leave if you can accumulate at least 170 days on your own. Giving days to teachers to attain 2 years of sick leave is necessary because of the cap of 240 in our previous contract. Having a teacher retire one year earlier will save the district anywhere from \$22,000 - \$39,000 in salaries, assuming a new teacher is hired at the beginning salary. This aspect would probably sunset after a few years. $(12 \times 32 = 384)$ $(2 \times 32 = 64)$ 448 possible sick days over 32 years.

Please remember to write down your ideas for bargaining by using the survey on the back. I am looking forward to reading your bargaining ideas.

Read Across America

Web Guide (www.nea.org/readacross) I have one copy of NEA's Read Across America Resource Guide.

Go to ieanea.org for legislative updates: tenure laws, early retirement option, retirement bonuses, etc... Call Representative Moffitt and voice your opinion.

Thank you,
Gary Wagher
488 Jefferson