



◆ Billings Education Association ◆ 510 North 29th Street ◆ Billings, MT 59101 ◆ 1-406-248-9812 ◆

Family makes Contribution

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At its May 18, 2004 meeting, BEA Representative Council voted to rename the *BEA Scholarship Fund*, the *BEA Karen Cox Scholarship Fund*, to honor this dedicated member and School District 2 teacher. Cox, one of Montana's great educators, lost her life last April, doing what she loved, working to improve public education.

The *Montana Professional Teaching Foundation* also started the *Karen Cox Memorial Grant Program* to fund classroom assistance grants for Montana educators. This program assists educators who often resort to reaching into their own pockets for classroom supplies. Because Cox was often involved in programs to support her fellow teachers, it is fitting that this grant program be named after her.

Karen's husband, Phil and his family recently contributed over \$12,000 to the *BEA Karen Cox Scholarship Fund* and the *MPTF Karen Cox Memorial Grant Program*. The BEA thanks Karen's family for making it possible to continue her legacy of mentoring students and colleagues.

Contribution checks to the *BEA Karen Cox Scholarship Fund* can be mailed to: BEA, 510 N. 29th St., Billings, MT 59101. Donation forms for the *Karen Cox Memorial Grant Program* can be downloaded at www.mea-mft.org/karencox.pdf or contact Cathy Warner at the *Montana Professional Teaching Foundation* at 406-447-1479 or cwarner@mea-mft.org.

See page 4 of this issue for information on the 2005 *BEA Karen Cox Scholarship Program*.

MARK CALENDARS

& GRAB YOUR HAT!



March 2, 2005 is the day of the nation's biggest reading celebration! *NEA's Read Across America program* knows reading is "Where it's Hat" and *NEA* is leading the nation in a "multicultural, multi-hatted" way! The event started in 1998 as a way to get kids excited about reading.

BEA members can go to www.nea.org/readacross to get information and ideas to help plan reading celebrations and to request the 2004-05 Resource Kit. The BEA will again provide bookmarks and certificates of participation for each school's *Read Across America Celebration*. Contact BEA Building Representatives before January 18th to place an order.



BEA Members receive National Board Certification



Three Billings teachers earned a distinction shared by only 40 other teachers in Montana: *National Board Certification*. **Janet Nickoloff**, a librarian at Riverside Middle School; **Deanne Gemmill**, a math teacher at West High; and **Julie Carlson Blakeslee**, a music teacher at Meadowlark Elementary and Poly Drive Elementary earned their endorsements but admitted the program was demanding but rewarding.

In addition to the Billings teachers, two other *MEA-MFT* members also earned their *National Board Certification*: **Linda Shilling**, Libby, and **William (Tim) Joern**, Whitefish.

All certified teachers earn a one-time bonus from the *Office of Public Instruction* and some earn an annual salary or an additional one-time-only bonus—whatever their local school districts may have agreed to provide. The *Billings Education Association* encourages teachers to reap the fringe benefits.



To obtain the certificate, each teacher was required to present several portfolios that showed their work with students. Portfolios must be completed in April and teachers are tested in May.





Gemmill's decision to attempt the national board certification was financial. The *State Board of Public Education* (actually the *Office of Public Instruction* via a specific legislative appropriation) provides a one-time, \$3,000 payout for certified teachers. School District 2 pays certified teachers \$2,000 a year for 10 years. Blakeslee said the pay increase is a reward that shows the district values professional development. Nickoloff added that the district benefits from the certification because it provides a deeper pool of quality teachers.

Retirement Notification Deadlines

GOLDEN DAYS



Teachers planning to retire this year should keep in mind the following *Severance Notification* deadlines. Staff must submit a notification by the following dates to receive the listed percentage of benefits.

 Before March 1	105%
 After March 1	100%
 After April 1	95%
 After Last day of School	90%



What Reauthorization of IDEA Could Mean

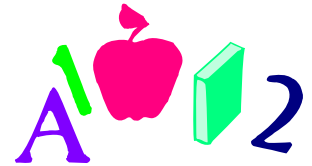


Allan Audet
BEA President

As of November 19, the U.S. House of Representatives supported the latest version of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) H.R.1350* by voting 397-3 in favor of the new law. The Senate quickly followed suit and by voice vote passed *H.R. 1350*.

The components of the new reauthorization law will change the way Special Education services are delivered and mandate measures of teacher quality that are comparable to those found in the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* legislation.

Key components of the proposed legislation are:



Allow districts greater flexibility when disciplining students with disabilities.

Unless a disciplinary infraction is the direct result of a child's disability, districts will be able to discipline them in the same manner as non-disabled students.



Define highly qualified special education teachers.

Teachers must be fully certified in special education with elementary certification or, if teaching above the elementary level, must demonstrate the ability to teach at the appropriate instructional level. New teachers must also meet the *NCLB* requirements by holding a major in at least one of the core areas: language arts, math, or science. Once employed, teachers must show competency in other core areas by completing the *NCLB High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE)* within two years. Veteran teachers who teach in multiple areas must also take the *HOUSSE* to show competency in these disciplines.



Reduce meeting time by allowing minor modifications to *Individual Education Plans (IEP's)* without convening a full *IEP* meeting.

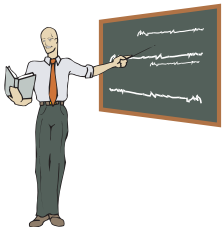


Reduce frequency of lawsuits by conducting meetings of parents and staff before due process hearings, implementing a two-year statute of limitations for complaints, and have hearing officers make determinations if a child was denied an appropriate education due to procedural errors.



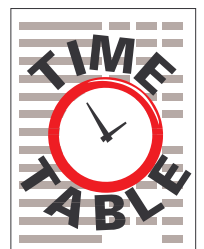
Reduce the paperwork burden on teachers.

Parents in 15 test states will have the option of selecting a 3-year *IEP* for their children and consider the use of teleconferencing and streamlining to reduce duplicative required paperwork.



The new law allows special education teachers to become highly qualified by taking the *High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE)*, as other teachers who do not hold a major in their respective teaching area. Currently, Montana has not developed a *HOUSSE*.

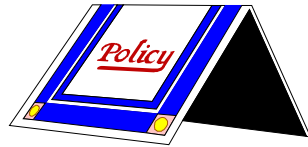
The Montana Office of Public Instruction currently recognizes teachers as highly qualified if they hold a *Montana Teachers Certificate* and teach in the areas in which they are endorsed. *Carolyn Snowbarger*, a *US Department of Education* representative, will discuss Montana's definition of a highly qualified teacher with the *Office of Public Instruction* this month. Hopefully, an agreement of the definition of "highly qualified" will be realized between the *US Department of Education* and the *Office of Public Instruction*.














KNOW Your Master Agreement

Teacher Evaluation



Understand these key facts:

-  A single uniform instrument (form) must be used at all times. An evaluator must not use multiple instruments throughout the school year.
-  Each teacher must have a single administrator designated as evaluator throughout the year.
-  The formal evaluation must be in writing.
-  Non-tenure teachers must be evaluated at least twice a year with the final evaluation completed by May 15. This date can be extended if it is agreed upon by the teacher and administrator before the May 15 deadline.
-  Tenure teachers will be evaluated at the discretion of the administrator or at the teacher's request. If no evaluation occurs, it is considered a positive evaluation for that school year.
-  Evaluators cannot use "unsubstantiated hearsay" as a basis for formal evaluations.
-  Each formal evaluation must be followed within 10 working days by a personal conference between the teacher and evaluator. A written evaluation must then be provided to the teacher and a copy must be placed in the teacher's personnel file.
-  Teachers have 20 working days to respond in writing if they believe the evaluation is incomplete or inaccurate. The response will be attached to the evaluation in their personnel file.
-  See *Article XIV Teacher Evaluation* of the Master Agreement for the exact contract language.



Class begins in January

ER&D's Foundations of Effective Teaching I begins on January 31 and will meet on Mondays from 4:30-6:30 p.m. through April 4. Completion of this course earns two step-up credits, one college/graduate credit, and 20 OPI units.



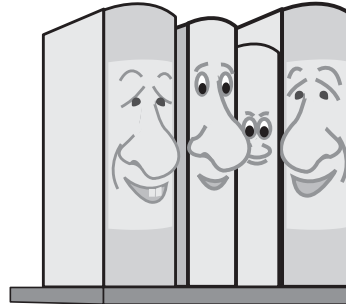
To take this course for step-up credits or OPI units, teachers must register at the *Lincoln Center Community Education* at 247-3700. The cost is \$110 plus a \$5 printing fee.



To earn college credit, contact *MSU-Billings* at 896-5890. The fee for this college credit course is \$125 which includes the printing fee.

For more information about the class contact the instructors, **Juline Kosmicki and Tania Klein** at 255-3882.

Retirement Workshop Scheduled



The *MEA-MFT Pre-Retirement Workshop* for certified, classified, and state employees will be held in Billings on Tuesday, January 11. This is an opportunity to learn about *TRS* benefits and procedures, Social Security benefits, and the basics of pre-retirement financial planning.

The workshop begins at 4:10 p.m. in the School Board Room at the Lincoln Center. Hors d'oeuvres and refreshments will be provided by Retired *MEA-MFT* at 5:50 p.m. Representatives from *TRS* and *PERS* will speak at 6:50 p.m. with the *TRS* presentation in the School Board Room and the *PERS* presentation at the BEA Office.

Information on school finance reform, the *PRO & K12 Statewide Health Insurance Program (SHIP)*, *NEA Long Term Care and Member Benefit* programs, *NEA A+ Auto/Home Insurance*, and the *Retired MEA-MFT* program will also be presented. Mark the date, January 11, on your calendar and plan to attend.



K-12 Library Online Courses

Spring Semester 2005



Interested in acquiring your *K-12 Library Media* certification? Check out the spring 2005 courses online at *Montana State University* beginning January, 2005.

Registration for spring 2005 (January 26-April 28) through *Library Media certification* courses are available through the *Burns Telecom Center at MSU*. Courses are: EdCi 522 and EdCi 549. <http://btc.montana.edu/courses/credit/#EDCI>

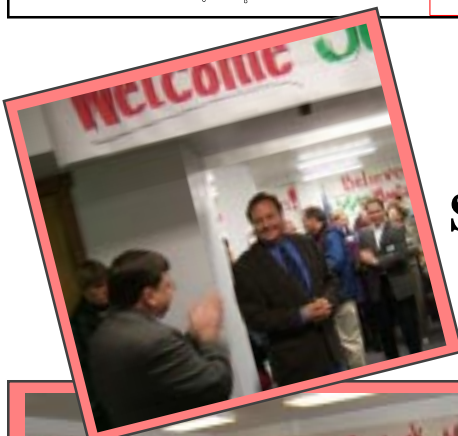
EDCI 522-01 Information Resources and Services

Dates: Jan 26 - Apr 28
Cost: \$675
Location: Online with WebCT
Credits: 3

EDCI 549-01 Applications of Literature for Children and Young Adults

Dates: Jan 26 - Apr 28
Cost: \$675
Location: Online with WebCT





BEA
thanks
Schweitzer
&
Kennedy



Over 125 people welcomed *Governor-elect* Brian Schweitzer and supported *Yellowstone County Commissioner* Bill Kennedy. Teachers, school board members, legislators, and state employees attended a special reception at the *BEA* office on December 7. Everyone enjoyed delicious food and good company. Thanks to all who helped to make this event a huge success!



NEA Delegate Candidates To Be Chosen



The 2005 *NEA Representative Assembly* will take place in Los Angeles on July 1-6. The *BEA's* delegation consists of the *BEA* Executive Board and representatives to be elected on February 15th. *BEA* members interested in becoming an *NEA RA* delegate candidate should call *BEA* President Allan Audet at 248-9812 to receive a nomination form. The form, short biography, and a photo of the candidate must be submitted to the *BEA* office by February 1.

Classifieds

Need your house interior repainted this winter?
Call for that exterior job too!
—Big or Small—

Dave Barnett & Mike Cantrell can do the job!
 Call 656-7767 or 628-7122.



December /January CALENDAR

Dec.	21	Representative Council
Dec. 23-Jan.	2	<i>Christmas Break</i>
Dec.	25	<i>Merry Christmas!</i>
January	1	<i>Happy 2005!</i>
January	11	Retirement Workshop
January	12	<i>BEA</i> Board of Directors
January	15	<i>BEA Karen Cox Scholarship</i> Applications available
January	18	<i>Read Across America</i> orders due Representative Council
January	31	<i>ER&D Foundations of Effective Teaching I</i> begins



BEA Karen Cox Scholarship Fund
Applications Available

Each year the *BEA* Scholarship Committee selects at least three scholarship recipients. The recipients will be notified by April and will receive their scholarship in January of the following year. Due to changing interest rates, the amount varies each year but the three 2003 scholarship recipients each received \$500 last January.



Eligibility for the scholarship is limited to:

- ✓ Students whose parents have been *BEA* members for five continuous years.
- ✓ Students whose parents have retired from the Billings Public Schools and were *BEA* members for five years prior to retirement.
- ✓ Seniors who have attended a Billings Public High School for at least two years and whose parents are not eligible for *BEA* membership.

Applications for the 2005 scholarships will be available after January 15 in the counselors' offices at Senior High, West High, Skyview High and the Career Center. A downloadable version will also be available on the *BEA* website, www.beabillings.org. The deadline for completed applications, accompanied by all required documentation, is March 1, 2005.



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