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# Voice



## UTW Negotiations Team *(Pages 4-5)*



## The United Voice: Paper or Digital?

Many organizations have moved away from paper newsletters, choosing to put them online and/or email them. We have had the same discussions. There are merits to keeping the paper newsletter such as the United Voice. Some studies indicate that many people still like to hold the newsletter in their hands.

There are good points about too much paper and going green that make us wonder whether we should make the Voice purely digital.

So, we have decided to try the digital only format during the months of October and November. Then we will assess the feedback we receive and decide whether we continue printing the Voice, or go digital.

Remember, the Voice is already available on our web site, and that will continue no matter what decision is made.

~

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### *The United Voice*

Keith Welty, Editor

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# Contract Corner: Lesson Plans

*Must they be approved? How much detail?*

*What if they give me extra time to do them - can they require more?*

We are hearing questions and concerns about lesson plans this year, it seems, at a higher rate than usual. Sometimes, the concern is stated as the principal must approve the plans. Other concerns include directives that objectives be clearly stated, or they must be in sufficient detail for a substitute. Other concerns are in the nature of collaborative lesson planning, or quarterly lesson planning. These types of concerns may come with various names, such as Highlights.

All of these concerns are a violation of the contract. Specifically, the language in Article 4 dealing with lesson plans.

**Article 4: Section B: Paragraph 2:** *The teacher shall make his/her lesson plans and any other material which the teacher is using available to the principal upon request. Lesson plans shall be based upon standards, but are required only in sufficient detail to provide guidance to the teacher.*

UTW believes that teachers should be thoroughly prepared for the instruction of students, though the amount of actual written plans is determined by the teacher.

It doesn't matter when a teacher does lesson plans, they are still in sufficient detail only for the teacher. I know a National Board Certified teacher who says his lesson plans for a 90 minute block may only comprise half of a 4x6 card. Because of his years of experience and hard work to elevate his skills, he requires very little in terms of written lesson plans. The contract is written to protect his rights.

You don't have to be a National Board Certified teacher to have the same protection. If your principal tells you that you must turn in your plans for approval, or that you must use a certain format, or that a substitute must be able to teach from them, then your principal is violating your contractual rights.

Another situation that has arisen is where teachers are provided time over and above the 220 minutes per week for personal planning. In that extra time, some teachers are being told they must create lesson plans. No. You cannot be made to work on your lesson plans at a specific time, as if you were in a study hall. Nor can they make you write plans under those circumstances

with greater detail. The line from some principals is it is their time they are giving to the teachers, so they can require greater detail. No. The contract does not say 'in sufficient detail – unless the principal gives you more time'!

So, if your working environment involves lesson plans with concerns like those in this article, what do you do about it? You can talk to your principal and inform him/her that this is wrong. You could talk to your UTW Pro Rep and ask him/her to assist in bringing this to the administration's attention. You could call or email the UTW office and we will give you suggestions on how to solve the problem.

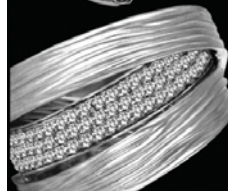
Bottom line? These problems can be solved. The biggest hurdle is not the contract or the principal or downtown management. The biggest hurdle is getting teachers to understand that acting as a professional includes standing up for your rights. We don't recommend picking a fight with your principal. We do recommend being willing to voice a professional concern about your working environment. Do the right thing.

\* \* \* \*

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# UTW Negotiations Team

*The United Teachers of Wichita will exchange proposals with the USD 259 Board of Education on Feb. 1, 2011. Those proposals will be for the 2011-2012 Teachers Employment Agreement. UTW members have had the opportunity to complete an online Negotiations Survey and the team is holding four open hearings for UTW members in October.*

*Between now and Feb. 1, the team will discuss and finalize proposals for the upcoming negotiations with the BOE. Here are this year's team members, along with a brief statement from each one.*

## Elementary Teachers



*Sara Harrison, Mueller*

Hello! I currently teach 1st grade and spent 4 years teaching Kindergarten. I have been teaching at Mueller Elementary for 5 years. This will be my second year being a part of negotiations. And I'm excited to be a part of it again this year! :) I look forward to working with our new team!



*Susan Phillips, Cloud*

I joined the union and became an employee of USD 259 in 1993. Since that time I have participated in our union activities and have taught at Franklin and Cloud Elementary. Currently, I teach the best group of 5th graders in Wichita.

## Middle School Teachers



*Nicole Herrera  
Mayberry*

I am a teacher at Mayberry Middle School, and have been teaching language arts in the district for the past ten years. I am also a UTW Pro Rep. I am married to Albert, also a teacher here in Wichita, and we have two children.

This is my 26th year of teaching. All of my teaching has been with USD #259, except for the six years I spent teaching in Las Vegas, NV. My first four years of teaching were at Gardiner Elementary. Then I moved to Hamilton when the district created middle schools. After seven years at Hamilton Middle School, I moved to Las Vegas, NV. When I returned to Wichita, I taught at Jardine Middle School for five years. I am currently teaching 8th grade science at Curtis Middle School.

***Shirley Rose  
Curtis***



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**High School Teachers**



***Dwight Goodman, East High***

I have taught in USD 259 for 15 years. I spent 2 years at West High, 5 years at Allison Traditional Magnet, and currently I have been at East High for 8 years. At East, I am a Special Education teacher working in the area of social studies.



***Sara Harjo, South High***

I have thoroughly enjoyed each of my four years as a High School English Teacher here in USD 259. One of the aspects of my job that I enjoy the most, is the opportunity to collaborate with and learn from such a diverse and talented group of teachers. I am delighted to be representing you as a part of the negotiations team.

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**Also on the UTW Negotiations Team**

***Larry Landwehr, UTW President***

Larry has been teaching since before dirt. He has taught elementary, most recently 4th grade at Linwood.

***Randy Mousley, UTW Vice President***

Prior to being elected to the office of UTW V.P., Randy was a science teacher at Stucky M.S. He has been in the district for 18 years.

**Advisors to the team**

***Greg Jones, UTW/KNEA UniServ Director***

***Keith Welty, UTW Professional Staff***

# Frustrated With Inservice?

*How to express your opinions - whether complimentary or critical*

Quite often, UTW receives direct feedback about building-based and District level In-Services activities. The opinions expressed range from excellent to “it doesn’t do a thing for me professionally”. We understand and appreciate all of these views but just telling us is not enough. Every teacher has at their disposal a means to express their opinion on Professional Development when they utilize the In-Service Feedback Form on My Learning Plan, anonymously.

Once you complete the In-Service activity, simply click on that event hyperlink on your MLP homepage. This will take you to the activity status page. You will then click on the –Building Inservice Feedback Form- link. The survey has four quick questions to answer by clicking the statement that best describes your experience.

Lastly, there are three additional questions with drop down menus that allow the data to be further disaggregated. There is also a comment box where you can share your unique thoughts on the

activity.

The Professional Development Council can then review the data generated from District level In-Services. This type of data report can also be generated at the building level by the Building PD Rep for Building Committee discussions as well. Specific training to this effect is ongoing.

This survey option is vastly different from the long gone “Knowledge Validation Form”. If you choose not to participate, you will still receive your Knowledge Level PD points for the activity. This survey tool was developed by the PDC, with classroom teacher input, over the last few years.

If you aren’t satisfied with Professional Development you receive, this is really the main opportunity you have to affect change. Participate and be part of the process. It is how your opinion is heard and it is anonymous.

\* \* \* \*



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# Speak Out!

Is it just me or does it seem as if this particular election cycle has gone on forever? I'm not sure how many more candidate ads I can stand to see on television trashing opponents and tying local races to Obama/Pelosi/Reid. The rancor in this election season has definitely reached new heights (or lows). It also seems strange the perception that it is okay for the mega-corporations to dump literally hundreds of millions of dollars into the campaigns but the unions are demonized for supporting candidates who will look after the interests of the members, the actual working man or woman. Why can't people just civilly debate the issues anymore? I suppose that is an issue for another day though.

It would appear that the next Governor of the State of Kansas will most likely be Senator Sam Brownback. I could be wrong about this but the poll numbers currently look very strong for him. What Brownback's administration has in store for public education in Kansas is indeed a mystery. Sam has a "Road Map" for Kansas that allegedly contains a "plan" to improve public education. About the only definitive information we have heard is that he wants to freeze the state budget. Given that over half the state budget goes to K-12 education funding, it doesn't take much to figure out what Senator Brownback has in mind for our schools. State Budget Director Duane Goossen was recently quoted as stating: "In order to keep spending flat, state general fund spending has to go up". There is also the five hundred pound gorilla in the room that Brownback is ignoring; the federal stimulus funding is going away for the next fiscal year.

Now let's look at the Kansas House. The House is a curious mix of Democrats, conservative Republicans and moderate Republicans. It seems from the last few sessions that most of the positive legislation has been achieved by bipartisan coalitions of Democrats and moderate Republicans. The last eight years, we also had the luxury of pro-education governors who could yield a veto pen to stop legislation that would hurt our schools. Now

we will not. The best thing we can do is to vote for the candidates, from either party that express pro-public education viewpoints in order to maintain the coalitions and possibly elect a more moderate Speaker of the House.

November 2nd will be here and gone before we know it. Is our political activism over then? No, it will be time to analyze the legislative landscape and prepare for the 2011

session in Topeka. In January, education related bills will start to surface at the Capital. We can expect the usual attacks on due process, KPERS and whatever is currently the popular trend with the anti-public education crowd. There will also likely be a concerted effort to change the school finance formula as well. The only plans that have surfaced so far will only pit the school districts with a wealthier tax base against those not so fortunate by shifting much of the funding back to the communities in the form of local property taxes. This inequality was the main reason the current system was put in place some twenty years ago.

It makes you wonder if some legisla-

tors actually know that Article 6, Paragraph 6, Section (b) of the Kansas Constitution states: "The legislature shall make suitable provision for finance of the educational interests of the state." The courts ruled that the legislature has not fulfilled its constitutional obligation in the Montoy case back in 2005. Why can't the legislature do what is required of them constitutionally?

Almost every week I receive a call or two from teachers who object to the fact we, as a professional association, are involved in the political process at all. In an ideal world, there would be little to no involvement of politics in education. Unfortunately, this is not an ideal world and we must advocate for what we see as the best interests of the public education system. After all, we are the day to day practitioners of this profession. Who else would know better what the needs of our students truly are? If it isn't the teachers taking a stand for the students and the future of our nation, who will?



*Randy Mousley, UTW V. P.*

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