

INTRODUCTION TO THE GREA

The GREA represents over 1100 teachers and other professionals who work for the Grand Rapids Public Schools. We are affiliated with the Michigan Education association (MEA) and the National Education Association (NEA).

In addition, within the Grand Rapids Public Schools, we have four sister unions: the Grand Rapids Association of Office Personnel (GRAEOP), representing office personnel; the Grand Rapids Educational Support Personnel Association (GRESPA), representing custodial, maintenance, supply and food service employees; the Grand Rapids Association of Child-Care Workers, Employment Training Specialists & Non-Certified Teachers (GRACEN), representing non-certified teaching staff, child-care workers and employment training specialists; and the Grand Rapids Educational Officers Association (GREOA) representing the JR ROTC and family support specialists.

We also represent the drivers, mechanics and route planners employed by Dean Transportation (GRESPA-T).

Each building or division has an Association Representative (AR) – This person is your first contact for receiving information from GREA. Your Association Representative attends a monthly meeting called the Representative Assembly, held every 3rd Tuesday at the Grand Rapids MEA office. On the 4th Monday of each month, your Association Representative should hold a brief meeting to describe what is happening in GREA. Your current AR is listed on the GREA website.

Questions or concerns should always be brought first to your association representative.

If, for any reason, you are not receiving our mailings as a Member in Good Standing, please call GREA at (616) 957-4732 and let us know.

In addition, we have officers and an Executive Board elected by the membership to make Association decisions. **Your Association president, Mary Bouwense, is released full time to represent you and is available by calling (616) 957-4732 or emailing mary.bouwense@grea.org.**

The GREA office is staffed by a professional MEA staff member, called a UniServ Director (UD), who negotiates the master agreement with the Bargaining Team, provides grievance representation, assists in public relations, political action, and helps with other issues. The UniServ Directors are fully-trained, experienced labor representatives who assist members experiencing employment-related difficulties. They are assisted by two full time employees, a UniServ Field Assistant and a Field Organizer.

BENEFITS

The benefit package you receive from the Grand Rapids Public Schools is the result of many years of hard work. They are provided through the collective bargaining agreement (“contract”). Upon your hire, the District is responsible for providing you a copy of the contract. The contract can also be accessed through our website at:

www.grea.org

The following is a general summary of your benefits package. For more details, read article 14 of the contract. The GRPS Benefits office can be reached by calling (616) 819-2043.

If you are a full-time employee, you receive the following benefits:

MESSA

www.messa.org

Health

- MESSA Choices II – Full healthcare coverage for yourself and your family on a twelve month basis. There is a \$0.00/\$2.00/\$10.00/\$40.00 prescription drug card, \$500/\$1000 deductible, and a \$20 office visit co-pay. Your second choice is the MESSA ABC plan (\$1300/\$2600 deductible) which comes with a HSA.

Life Insurance

- \$40,000 group term life insurance on you with Accidental Death & Dismemberment Indemnity.
- \$5,000 Basic term life through the MESSA Health Insurance on all members enrolled in the plan.

Dental Insurance

MESSA Delta Dental Insurance covers 80% of most treatments with an annual maximum of \$1500 per person and a lifetime orthodontic maximum of \$1500 per child. If your spouse has Delta Dental Insurance, this benefit is coordinated with your spouse’s coverage.

Vision Insurance

VSP 3

Long-Term Disability

If you become disabled and are unable to work for a long period of time, you will continue to receive $\frac{2}{3}$ of your salary until you are recovered or you reach age 65, (see contract for more details and some exceptions). The current carrier of this program is The Standard.

Mail in Prescriptions

Members with MESSA health insurance have access to MESSA's mail-in prescription service. For most regular maintenance prescriptions, you can use the mail-in program and save both time and money by receiving a three month supply by mail. Brochures for the program are available at the GREA office or by calling MESSA at 1-800-292-4910, Monday-Friday, 8am to 12 midnight and Saturdays from 8am to 6pm or by visiting the MESSA website.

Discounts on Safety Products

MESSA/BCBSM cardholders can buy certain safety items at a discounted rate thanks to the BlueSafe program from BCBSM. Just present your MESSA/BCBSM card at Dunham's Sports Stores and receive a 20% discount on safety products like: protective helmets and padding for bicycles, in-line skates and scooters; athletic braces and supports; and life jackets. You also get a 10% discount on all regularly priced merchandise with the following exceptions: firearms and ammunition, licenses, trading cards, DVD's/Blu-Rays, Scout merchandise, select Nike products, Under Armor products, gift cards, gift certificates and special order items. This discount offer cannot be combined with any other offer or used when purchasing from Dunham's website. Also, when presenting your MESSA/BCBSM card at Wright & Filippis stores in Michigan, you get a 15% discount on all home medical equipment not covered by your health plan including: first aid kits, bathroom safety seats and grab bars.

Part-time Employees

The above benefits are prorated for part-time employees. See the contract for further details.

What if I don't need health insurance?

If you do not choose to enroll in the health insurance, you are eligible to receive the following, in addition to the above described LTD, Life, Dental, and Vision coverage:

- Additional Life Insurance – an additional \$10,000 life insurance on you.
- \$3,000 per year paid as cash. You may convert this into a tax-deferred annuity plan.

NEA

www.neamb.com

Car Rental Discounts

NEA has discounts with Hertz for their Hertz #1 Club Gold frequent renter program (discount code CDP #50655), Alamo, and Enterprise Rent-A-Car. For more information, go to: www.neamb.com/discount

MEA also offers discounts by using your member access card. More information regarding this program can be found at: www.mea.org

Home Financing

NEA home financing programs for members and their families have competitive rates and a free break-even analysis from NEA partner, Wells Fargo Bank. If you would like to learn more about this program, call 1-800-632-4968, Monday-Friday, 8am to 10pm EST, or visit:

www.neamb.com/loans

MEA Financial

www.meafs.org

Credit Cards

MEA Financial Services offers VISA and MasterCard with no annual fees and low interest rates. They are available by calling 1-800-292-1950.

Long-Term Care Insurance

No one ever expects to be in need of long-term care. Long-term care insurance protects you in the event you ever need long-term nursing care. MEA Financial Services offers special coverage for MEA members at a great rate! Call 1-800-292-1950 for more information.

Group Term Life Insurance

Planning ahead for your loved ones can be one of the most loving things you can do for them. Should you feel you need to purchase additional term life insurance, we have an MEA Financial Services plan for MEA members. Information is available by calling 1-800-292-1950.

Investments

MEA Financial Services offers a variety of excellent investment opportunities – especially for your tax-deferred annuities. For more information, call 1-800-292-1950 or visit:

www.meafs.com/Investments.aspx

Homeowners & Auto Insurance

Before you purchase your homeowners or auto insurance, call MEA Financial Services at 1-800-292-1950 for a quote. MEA Financial Services can save your hard earned money and keep it where it belongs, in your pocket! Many members report that they saved more than their annual dues by making this one call.

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MEA

www.meamb.org

MEA/ACCESS Discount Card

MEA offers a discount card that you register online at the MEA website. It offers savings on over 25,000 items such as hotel/motel accommodations, fast food coupons, fine dining and recreational discounts, and many more. Go to www.mea.org and click on the member discount section. Use the number on your plastic MEA membership card to log in. If you are traveling, it is recommended that you make your reservations prior to departing.

Local Benefits

GREA Rewards Program

The GREA Rewards Program was put into place to compensate members in good standing who are active within the Union. You receive Rewards points for attending various meetings and events, volunteering for GREA activities, completing GREA surveys, and many other activities. Those points can then be redeemed in our Rewards Store for items such as GREA shirts and merchandise, school supplies, Gift Cards to various stores, and even half off your local dues for next year.

GREA App

The GREA App is free for all members to download and is a useful tool to access your membership standing, school calendars, the GREA events calendar, the GREA Rewards Store, and contact information for your building reps and the GREA office.

Vision Discount Coupons

We often have vision discount coupons from local area vendors. We distribute them to building representatives as they arrive. However, if you need one, please contact the office at (616) 957-4732.

Discounted Personal Legal Assistance

The law firm of Kalniz, Iorio & Feldstein offers local MEA members discounted rates for your personal legal needs. If you have any questions about an auto accident, medical malpractice, negligence, product liability, wills/trusts, real estate or divorce/custody, please call Fil Iorio at (616) 940-1911. Be sure to mention that you are a GREA member.

Contractual Benefits

Tuition Reimbursement

Probationary teachers in their 3rd, 4th and 5th years of employment are now eligible for reimbursement from the District for the cost of your tuition expenses up to 6 credits. The full program is spelled out in the contract (Article 14).

Classroom Visitation

You may use up to two days per year to visit other classrooms or educational programs. These are not counted as part of your leave days for illness/bereavement and they do not accumulate.

Leave Days

At the beginning of your employment, you will be given 5 sick days which are reported on your pay stub in hours, i.e. 5 days = 30 hours. Then you will earn one (1) leave day per month worked for a total of 15 days your first year and 10 days each year thereafter. These days are for your illness, family illness (subject to a 9-day per year maximum), and bereavement/funeral leaves. There is no maximum on how many days you may accumulate over the course of your career. If you have days left when you retire, the District will reimburse for the unused days (currently \$40-\$55/day). In addition, you have six personal/business days each year which are listed on your paycheck, (or in a communication from GRPS for KISD dual employees). If you do not use these days within a given year, they are added to your overall leave accumulation the following year (Article 16).

Jury Duty

You continue to receive full pay while on jury duty.

Unpaid Leaves

Various unpaid leaves are available for child care, self-improvement through study, career exploration, public office, and short term leaves for up to 10 days for any reason. There are various restrictions and deadlines on these leaves. Consult Article 16 of the contract for more details.

Are my personal items protected if I bring them to work?

Generally they are not. Many teachers bring in their own teaching supplies and supplementary materials at their own expense. **The District does not provide insurance coverage for these items.** We recommend you make sure your homeowner's or renter's insurance does cover them. **MEA Financial Services offers Homeowners Insurance that will cover these items. Call 1-800-292-1950 for more information.**

If you are assaulted at work, or your car is vandalized, there are contractual protections available to you. Consult Article 13 of the contract for details. You have every right to file assault charges through the Grand Rapids Police Department.

WHAT'S TENURE AND HOW DO I GET IT?

Under Michigan law, certified classroom teachers receive tenure after five full school years of successful teaching. Before you achieve tenure, you are called a “probationary” employee.

Under the contract and law, the District must provide periodic evaluations of your performance. In addition, the District may assign you a mentor and provide you with at least 15 days of in-service training during your first three years. For those employees covered by the Tenure Act, the Board Policy that governs evaluations is #5520.

If you had previously acquired tenure in another Michigan public school, you only need to serve a two-year probationary period, though the district can provide tenure at any time.

Once you achieve tenure, if the district seeks to terminate your employment, or discipline you with an unpaid suspension of more than 15 or more consecutive days, you will have certain rights to appeal to the State Tenure Commission.

Regardless of tenure rights, depending on the facts of the situation, you may have protection under the contract. You should consult with your MEA UniServ Director if you experience difficulties.

WORKING PART-TIME UNDER THE GREA CONTRACT

This is a summary of the contract provisions concerning part-time work under the GREA contract. Please verify all information against the actual contract language. With the changes in the law, please review cost with the GRPS District. If you have further questions, please contact the GRPS Benefits office at (616) 819-2043, or call the GREA office at (616) 957-4732 and ask to speak to a UniServ Director.

- Pay is pro-rated to the percentage of the employment.
- Number of PD hours is prorated based on percentage of employment and hire date. See PD document in the contract (Appendix K).
- Insurance
 - Health – You are entitled to either health insurance or the option payment pro-rated at your percentage amount. If you choose the health coverage, you are responsible for paying the remainder of the premium (Article E.1.g).
 - Long Term Disability – You are covered by the Board’s insurance as long as you work fifteen hours per week.
 - Dental – See Article 14.E.4.a of your contract.
 - Vision – See Article 14.E.4.b of your contract.
 - Life Insurance – Under the contract, the employer must purchase \$40,000 term life insurance for you, regardless of your percentage or appointment.
- Tuition Reimbursement is prorated based on your percentage of employment (Article 14.E.8).

MUST I JOIN THE ASSOCIATION?

No. By law, no one is obligated to join the association. The union provides a handful of services to you whether or not you join the Association. These services include negotiation of the contract (that gives you the benefits in the previous section, among other things) and representing you in a grievance, if you have one.

Annual dues for full time GREA members currently are (paid over a ten month period):

MEA 1.5% of previous years wage

NEA \$187.00

GREA \$150.00

If you are less than full time, or work less than a full year, these dues are prorated. If you have questions or concerns about your dues, contact Teresa Boyer at (616) 957-1944.

If you choose **not** to become a GREA member, you will **LOSE** the following benefits:

- ❖ NEA's \$1 million Professional Liability coverage.
- ❖ Access to NEA's Member Benefit Programs:
 - Life, accidental death & dismemberment insurance.
 - Supplemental Medical Insurance
 - Income Protection Insurance
 - Homeowners Insurance
 - NEA Valuebuilder Annuity
 - Money Market Account
 - NEA GoldCertificate CD
 - NEA Credit Card
 - NEA Money Management Programs (credit plans)
 - ED STAR computer systems
 - NEA America OnLine
 - Magazine Service
 - Car Rental Program
- ❖ Voting privileges in GREA, MEA, and NEA elections; voting privileges on contract ratification.

- ❖ You are not eligible to hold office at the local, state, or national level.
- ❖ The right to attend Association meetings or training sessions.
- ❖ The right to file Board of Reference charges.
- ❖ You are not eligible for NEA's free life insurance program, DUES-TAB.
- ❖ You cannot access MEA Financial Services Programs:
 - Group Automobile Insurance
 - Group Homeowners Insurance
 - MEA Visa or MasterCard
 - MEA Long Distance Service Discount Program
- ❖ The MEA Member Benefit Card which entitles you to numerous discounts
- ❖ The many local member benefits listed later in this brochure such as VIP discount cards, Universal Club cards, etc.