

AUGUST - OPT OUT INFORMATION & NOTIFICATION

Understand that you must provide written notice to your local union during the month of August if you plan to opt out of the 'union' NEA/MEA/PEA. Only written notification is valid. Notification received before or after August is invalid for that school year and you will be obligated for dues payment. Know that by choosing to no longer pay dues you will cease being a member of the union(s). Among other things, you will not be allowed to: Have a voice in members' surveys regarding contract concerns or bargaining; vote on contracts; elect officers; run for or be involved in union actions or meetings; be protected by representation at tenure hearings; be represented by your local union beyond the bare minimum required by law.

Understand that your professional colleagues who remain supportive of the union(s) through membership and payment of dues to local (Portage Education Association), state (Michigan Education Association) and national (National Education Association) are the ones paying the costs associated with bargaining the very contract you are benefitting from under your local contract. By choosing to not support the union you are still represented in the case of a contractual grievance but nothing beyond the minimum level of support required by law will be provided.

Understand that failure to remain in the union and pay dues may adversely impact your career. After leaving the union, a person would not be entitled to representation, if the person rejoins once there is a need for representation. For instance you will not be able to join later if you suddenly find yourself in a situation where an administrator, parent, colleague, student, etc. threaten your employment or certification and expect protection if that occurred under non-member timelines. Once you are processed as *opt-out* status, during the month of **August**, you could rejoin if you re-enroll as a new member and notify, in writing, your local EA. Protections and benefits would only begin from the date you were processed.

As a career union member myself let me state I am concerned if you choose not to support our profession with membership in our educational union family. While the choice is entirely up to you, as has always been the case for the history of the union in Michigan, under '*Right to Work*', failure to join may have unintended negative ramifications not least of which might be:

- Divisiveness among colleagues as all teachers enjoy contract benefits without sharing in costs to bargain.
- Weakens the local's ability to represent teachers in the district by reducing union's budget.
- Erodes the voice of our educators and profession at the state level by potential cut backs in MEA services to teachers. (Legal, financial, certification, organization, training, professional development, etc)
- Jeopardizes our union's ability to fight against cuts to educational funding and similar state-wide attacks on healthcare, retirement, pay scale structure, and length of school year, class size, certification, privatization, continuing education and other issues.

To proceed and 'opt out' please both email and send written verification so that we are certain not to process you as a member/non-member in error. Please take a moment to do the *two* steps below. If you have further questions contact Portage Education Association president, Eric VerHey peapresident@yahoo.com or at union office phone (269) 373-3913.

1. During month of August, send an email to optoutofunion@gmail.com specifying your full name, contact phone number, private/personal email to reach you at if needed, home mailing address, local union, building to which you were most recently assigned for the majority of your contract, and department/grade level, a brief statement that is clear your intent is to not join. (*i.e Joe Smith; 269-323-0123; 1234 W. Main Street Portage, MI 49081; Jshmo@gmail.com; Portage EA; Central Middle School; Math; Effective 9/1/13 I choose to not be a member of the union for SY 2013-14.*)
2. During the month of August, complete the information and mail via USPS (post marked August,
2013) to local union president, Eric VerHey at:

Portage Education Association
c/o Eric VerHey – *opt out*
Atriums North
4341 S. Westnedge Ave., Suite 1210
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

THIS FORM ACCEPTED ONLY DURING AUGUST

August 'Opt - Out' of Union Notification

Last Name _____

First Name _____

Local Union affiliate - Portage Education Association

Phone # (____) _____

Home mailing address _____

Private/personal email _____

Primary building during SY12-13 _____

Signature _____

Date _____ **(MUST BE DURING A DATE IN AUGUST)**