

## Portage Education Association

### Did you know...

MEA President  
Paula Herbart

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MEA Secretary Treasurer  
Brett Smith

## Snow Days and Additional Forgiven Time Waiver

<https://fs10.formsite.com/SASF/form9/index.html>

### What is forgiven time?

Section 101(4) of the State School Aid Act provides districts with six (6) days or the equivalent number of hours of “forgiven time” that can be used when pupil instruction is canceled due to conditions outside the control of school authorities, such as severe storms, fires, health conditions, and infrastructure issues. These initial days or hours can be used at any point throughout the year without prior authorization from the Department given the cancelation falls within the acceptable reasons.

In addition, Section 101(4) provides the State Superintendent the authority to allocate *up to three (3) days or the equivalent number of hours of “forgiven time” to districts to be used when instruction was not provided due to unusual and extenuating occurrences resulting from conditions not within the control of school authorities, such as those described above.*

### Requirements for requesting additional forgiven time:

The request for additional forgiven time must exhibit the need for the additional forgiven time, including a strong rationale supporting why these days cannot be rescheduled before the end of the school year. The request must also demonstrate how the district initially prepared for cancelations for the current school year, as well as indicate how they might improve upon their planning process for subsequent school years.

As always, the Department encourages districts to be proactive in planning calendars that meet and exceed the days and hours requirements so that there is ample time built in to assure that students receive the amount of instruction required by law. Eligibility for the additional forgiven time will be based on the unusual and extenuating occurrences reported, and through a review of the district’s preparedness for cancelations.

*To be clear, it’s up to the district to apply for this.*

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## Personal E-mail Distribution List

Kat Frink is our PEA Communications Chair. If you need to update your email address, please contact her at [peacommunications2016@gmail.com](mailto:peacommunications2016@gmail.com).

## Recap of Lame Duck Legislative Action

<https://mea.org/recap-of-lame-duck-legislative-action/>

The 2018 Lame Duck session is in the books and while some negative legislation passed, many of the significant attacks on public education, labor unions and the incoming Democratic administration were either stopped in the Legislature or vetoed by outgoing Gov. Rick Snyder. Of note:

- HB 5707, which would have kept the percentage of teacher evaluations at 25 percent instead of increasing to 40 percent this school year, died in the State Senate after passing the House. MEA will work to have this legislation reintroduced and passed in 2019.
- Watered-down legislation creating an A-F grading system for schools (HB 5526) passed, but left much of the control for the new system in the hands of the Michigan Department of Education, rather than creating a new “shadow” school board. MDE has already asked Attorney General Nessel to weigh in on how this new law may conflict with federal rules under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
- New online sales tax revenue was diverted from the School Aid Fund to road and environmental projects under late-night amendments to HB 4991. NOTE: this is NOT a cut to current per pupil funding – the additional funding from the online sales tax had not been appropriated yet and is not part of this year’s budgeted state school aid payments. However, it IS money that should have gone into the School Aid Fund to allow for increases in coming years.
- Bills attacking labor rights – including release time (SB 795-796), recertification elections (SB 1260), and banning bargaining over calendar and schedule (HB 4163) – were all stopped in the Legislature, thanks in large part to the thousands of calls and emails from MEA members to lawmakers.
- Several bills attempting to limit the power of Governor Gretchen Whitmer, Attorney General Dana Nessel and Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson were either stopped in the Legislature or were vetoed by Gov. Snyder in the final days of his term.

For a complete status rundown of the bills that MEA lobbyists were monitoring in Lame Duck, read [MEA’s Lame Duck Recap memo](#).

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## 2018–2019 Academic Calendar

Did you know the PEA has its own Google calendar with important events and dates preloaded? Do you need to know if the upcoming half days are professional records or professional development?

You can add this calendar to your Google Calendar by going to:  
<https://tinyurl.com/y6wd7bpd>

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## MEA Deals and Savings

<https://mea.accessdevelopment.com/home>

**Did you know that as an MEA member, you have access to deals on a variety of things such as groceries, restaurants, hotels, and theme park tickets?**

Check out the *My Deals* app in [Google Play](#) or [Apple Store](#) to see what savings apply to you!

Only registered members can use this app and access these exclusive deals.

Members can now enjoy a deal-finding app that delivers big discounts from the brands you know... and at local places you actually want. Whether you're close to home or on the road, simply show the coupon from your mobile device and save up to 50% on dining, shopping and more. You'll find tons of savings in every big city, and in most small towns in America.

Our deals are negotiated directly with the merchants, which means you get the best offers available. You'll save hundreds on the things you buy every day.

### FEATURES:

- No printing! Just show your mobile coupon and save.
- Multiple-use coupons. Save as often as you wish.
- GPS search. Find deals near you—wherever you are.
- Over 150,000 locations... and more being added daily.
- Deals near home, the office, or wherever you travel in the U.S.

To start saving, simply download the app, log-in with your registration code and find big deals at great places near you.

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## Weingarten Rights

Weingarten Rights were established by the United States Supreme Court in 1975. They state that an employee who reasonably believes that an investigatory interview could lead to discipline is entitled to ask for union representation. An investigatory interview is a meeting with administration at which the employee will be questioned or asked to explain his or her conduct, and which could lead to disciplinary action against the employee.

If you think a meeting is investigatory SAY:

**“If this discussion could in any way result in my being disciplined, I respectfully request that my union representative be present at the meeting. Prior to an investigatory interview, I wish to be informed of the subject matter of the interview. Following such disclosure, I am requesting a pre-interview conference with my union representative”**

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## MEA Scholarship

<https://mea.org/mea-scholarship/>

Educational Opportunity: Provided by the Members, Staff and Friends of the Michigan Education Association

### The Scholarship

The amount and number of scholarships offered each year shall be determined by the trustees of the MEA Scholarship Fund. Such scholarships may be offered on a renewal basis limited to four times in a five-year period.

**Deadline is February 21, 2019.**

### Eligibility Criteria

- Dependent of MEA member or MEA-Retired member in good standing.
- Graduate of a Michigan public high school or private high school that has an MEA bargaining unit. (Diploma must be received in the year of application.)
- Will attend or is currently an undergraduate student of a Michigan public community/junior college, four-year degree-granting institution, or vocational training institution that grants a degree, certification or license. Those attending the following private institutions ONLY are also eligible: Baker College-Flint/Owosso; University of Detroit–Mercy; Adrian College; Finlandia University; and Albion College. (The aforementioned private institutions are existing local MEA affiliates.)

Note: Children of MEA officers, fund trustees, and MEA staff are not eligible. (A child of an MEA, MESSA or MEA-FS staff person is eligible if the other parent is an MEA member in good standing).

The scholarship will not be awarded for the purpose of working on a post-baccalaureate degree.

### Selection Criteria

- Priority is given on the basis of:
- Academic achievement
- Extra-curricular activities
- School and community service

In addition:

Scholarship determination will be made strictly on the merit of the applicant's performance against the above criteria. The selection and award of scholarships is a nondiscriminatory process.

MEA Scholarships will be awarded by the trustees of the MEA Scholarship Fund. This body is composed of MEA members and persons appointed from the general public. The fund is financed through the voluntary contributions of the members, staff and friends of the Michigan Education Association.

### Method of Application

Eligible students seeking the scholarship must complete the [application form](#).

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## Launch Michigan Survey

<https://mea.org/mea-president-joins-bipartisan-coalition-were-trying-something-radical/>

Starting February 4th, 2019, a statewide online educator survey is being fielded by Launch Michigan, a diverse alliance of education, labor, business and philanthropic groups. MEA is a partner in Launch Michigan, representing the interests of school employees in the coalition.

You will be receiving an email shortly from LaunchMichigan inviting you to take part in the survey. **MEA is encouraging all K-12 school employees to take time this week** to participate and to make your voices heard about what you need on the front-lines of public education to help every student succeed.

“We owe it to our students and our professional colleagues to take part in a survey like this,” said MEA President Paula Herbart, one of Launch Michigan’s co-chairs. “For years, educators have wished for policymakers to ask them – the experts on the front lines – what’s needed to help students succeed. Launch Michigan is asking those questions, and I’m hoping every Michigan educator shares his or her views.”

The survey will take about 15-20 minutes to complete – please take time by this Sunday, Feb. 10, to make your voice heard.

Survey responses – which are confidential – will be used by Launch Michigan to guide a set of policy recommendations it intends to propose to the Governor and state Legislature.

Shortly, you’ll receive a separate email from LaunchMichigan with the subject “Statewide Educator Survey” – that email contains your personalized survey link.

If you don’t get the survey by this evening, email [info@ewhiteresearch.com](mailto:info@ewhiteresearch.com) and let them know you’re an educator (include where you work) and they’ll send you a link to complete the survey.

Please note that the survey firm, Emma White Research, has your email information only for the purposes of this survey – they are required to delete them after their work is complete, so your information is secure.

Thank you for sharing your opinions with Launch Michigan!

Excerpts from an interview with MEA President Paula Herbart and MEA Voice Editor Brenda Ortega about Launch Michigan can be found [here](#).

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*Portage Education Association*

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**Any member in good standing can attend representative council meetings.**

2018-2019 Representative Meeting Dates

*February 18*

*March 18*

*April 15*

*May 20*

**Putting Kids First**  
**www.portageea.org**

**Know Your Contract!**

ARTICLE 22 - RETIREMENT INCENTIVE

Section 1: The District will deposit into a 403(b) Special Pay Plan account, on behalf of an eligible, full time Teacher, an amount equal to 0.6 of Schedule A B.A. step 1 . Part-time Teachers shall receive a pro-rata share, unless they have been employed in the group full time within the past 5 years. This deposit will be made not later than the first day of the month in which an eligible Teacher's resignation becomes effective. The Teacher will have the ability, once the deposit has been made, to utilize the funds in a manner consistent with the options within the Special Pay Plan, which includes an option to purchase service credit to the extent permitted by MPSERS.

Eligibility requirements are: a Teacher is on the 25 step of Schedule A, or has taught twenty-five (25) years for Portage Public Schools, provided that written notice of retirement must be received by the Human Resources Department **on or before February 15** in their final year of employment. Teachers who are eligible for the retirement incentive who plan on retiring at the end of the first semester must provide written notice to the Human Resources Department on or before October 1 of their final year of employment.

Section 2: When a Teacher retires from the School District and makes application to draw retirement under MPSERS, the District will make a payment to said retiring Teacher on or before the close of the month following the Teacher's MPSERS retirement date of that Teacher's accumulated sick leave pursuant to the following schedule:

<u>Accumulated Sick Leave</u>	<u>Payment Per Day (of BA base)</u>
90 or more days	.04% of BA base
70 days to 89.9 days	.03% of BA base
50 days to 69.9 days	.02% of BA base

**Has there been a violation of your contract?  
Contact your building rep immediately!**