



# PEI

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS OF IOWA

## *There Have Been Some Questions*

This time of year, we usually receive a great number of questions about the details of PEI. Many times they are because erroneous rumors are started about the quality of our services, insurance, and so forth. Many times those "seeds of doubt" create anxiety about how we could possibly offer so much at such a reasonable dues fee. We explain that we are state only and a subsidiary of no other organization, as well as being formed by Iowans exclusively for Iowans. Upon thinking through this, it dawns on people how much they can or have been spending on a system that requires membership in local, area, state, and national organizations. The old saying that you "get what you pay for", is truly a fact with PEI. Otherwise, we believe you are paying for more than you get.

This correspondence is devoted to Frequently Asked Questions. Please contact us directly with any other questions you may have.

### **Professional Educators of Iowa Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Who can join PEI?**

Memberships are available for teachers, coaches, administrators, nurses, paraprofessionals, drivers, support staff, and office personnel.

#### **What are the annual dues?**

Professional Memberships are \$198.00 per year (teachers, coaches, administrators, nurses). Supporting Memberships are \$84.00 per year (paraprofessionals, drivers, office and support staff). Student Memberships are \$20.00 per year (education majors, especially those who will be doing student teaching).

Other membership categories are available. See the chart on the membership page of the PEI brochure or website for more information.

#### **How long has PEI been around?**

PEI was formed in 1981 "by Iowans, for Iowans" and is not a subsidiary of any national organization.

#### **How do you differ from a union?**

Classification - PEI is a 501(c)(6) professional association. ISEA/NEA is a 501(c)(5) labor union.

Politics - PEI is nonpartisan. We do not endorse candidates, have PACs or contribute to political parties or political organizations. Our objectives are to promote professionalism in education and to do what is best for students. PEI works on educational issues and shields your dues against use for unrelated social agendas or other extraneous issues.

#### **Are there any similarities with a union?**

Functionally there are some overlaps, (providing member representation, attorney assistance, liability coverage, additional insurance benefits, etc).

#### **Will I be represented and given assistance?**

Chapter 20 of the Iowa Code guarantees your right to representation. We represent our members with personalized advice, assistance and intervention. We work to positively resolve all member issues keeping in mind that the law dictates what will be winnable from a legal standpoint. A great number of teachers are in their classrooms today because of our effective representation.

#### **If I am a PEI member, who do I call if I have a problem?**

Immediate assistance begins by contacting our office.

#### **Do PEI members have to pay for their own lawyers?**

Members never pay out-of-pocket costs for covered legal services up to the stated coverage limits for each feature of the policy. The PEI policy comparison is a comparative analysis of the types and amounts of coverage. These are guaranteed in writing, eliminating the uncertainty found in other policies (compare PEI's coverage against ISEA's). In most cases, PEI members enjoy the freedom to choose between an attorney recommended by PEI or a qualified attorney selected by the member.

#### **What liability protection does PEI provide?**

PEI provides unparalleled liability insurance security of up to \$2 million dollars of protection per member, with a \$3 million dollar aggregate per incident.

#### **Does PEI bargain?**

Collective bargaining is legal (and optional) for school districts in Iowa. It is one of the methods through which educators in Iowa reach agreement on the terms for their employment contracts. There is only one recognized bargaining unit in each school district that elects to use collective bargaining. Factors that influence educator pay and benefits include legislation, economic growth and competition along with the effectiveness of the negotiators.

PEI believes in professional negotiations that allow educators and boards of education to reach consensus through free and open discussion. We do not bargain directly, but upon request we will provide training for local leaders on procedures and techniques for successful bargaining.

#### **Does PEI lobby?**

Each year, we gather information from our legislators concerning the issues which may arise during the session. We survey our members, and when 75% of membership is in agreement, we lobby those issues before our legislators. As bills or controversial legislation arise in the session, we poll our members to do their will instead of selling them on our decisions after the fact. We also lobby on legislation that is in clear agreement with our core values and beliefs, such as protecting our members in labor laws.

#### **What is PEI's position on Right-to-Work legislation?**

PEI believes in the privileges of right-to-work. Every educator in Iowa should have the freedom to choose to associate or not to associate with the organization of their choice. This freedom is presently afforded to only 23 states. In non-right-to-work states, educators do not have a choice - they must join the union.

#### **What is PEI's position on local control?**

PEI recognizes that each district has unique circumstances, opportunities and challenges. PEI is committed to local control and reaching consensus through open and respectful dialogue. PEI has a policy of sticking with state issues unless a local issue could affect the entire state.

#### **Does PEI support public school education?**

PEI supports all schools that provide quality education. The majority of our members serve students through public school districts.

#### **Does PEI support private schools or home schools?**

PEI believes in putting students first. We believe in the right of every student to an educational program that meets his or her needs. We believe in student and parental freedom to access a learning environment most appropriate for each individual.

Tell others with confidence how valuable PEI is as a security measure to protect your career as well as how we represent our members' views in legislative initiatives. Combining all of that with the other great benefits truly makes ISEA the right choice for Iowans.

Sincerely,

Jim Hawkins, Director