



# PEI

**PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS OF IOWA**

September 27, 2018

## Extended!



The PEI Referral Rewards Program has been extended! This program allows each of our members to earn \$120 each time someone joins PEI as a Professional member and lists them as their referral source. There is no limit to how many Professional members a person can refer and how many \$120 credits they can receive.

Log in to the member portion of the website for details!

## NEW BENEFIT!



### HEARING AID DISCOUNT PLAN

Free no-obligation hearing screening

35% off Concept C series smart hearing devices

40% off Concept M series devices

45% off Concept 2 series devices

### Plus much more!

Your membership in PEI allows for children, spouse, parents and grandparents to access these benefits.

Call the PEI office for your discount card today!

## The Truth about Independence!

An important election is coming this October with a single question. Schools will give you the information about how the election will be conducted. Before voting we encourage teachers to learn about what exactly is being decided. Sometimes when a state of affairs has become routine practice it can be taken for granted without consideration of alternatives. In most school districts it has been decades since teachers stopped to consider their preferences for the contract negotiating process. There was once a time when administrations would work directly with the teachers and staff in a school district to reach an agreement that would make everyone happy. All teachers and not just ISEA/NEA members were allowed to vote on the final contract. There was no intervention from national groups or gatekeepers standing between teachers and their administrators. Recently schools have decided to cut out the middle man and go back to this simple system. They bargain directly with their administrations without interference, restrictions, or union dues. We believe people should be aware of this option.

### Did you know?

In many school districts more than half of teachers are unaffiliated, or alternatively members of organizations other than the NEA/ISEA. Essentially in certain districts a majority of the teachers are being shut out from the process and cannot vote on the contract. Teachers should not be compelled to pay money for the right to have involvement in the process. The NEA/ISEA has become the gatekeeper asking for a toll. Access to the negotiating process was once free and open to all teachers. The best way to see what will happen is to look to school districts which have already taken this step. These districts are happy and healthy. No one can promise any specific outcome for a negotiation which has not yet taken place. If anyone promises you pie in the sky you should be skeptical. However, conversely, if anyone promises Armageddon and the end of all benefits you should be even more skeptical. Reality is almost always far less exciting than campaign rhetoric. Your school must stay competitive with nearby districts to continue to attract good teachers and staff. It is not usually possible for wages or benefits to be significantly different, whether for better or for worse, than other similarly situated school districts. The information in this article is about process and not results. However, it is worth noting districts independent of the NEA/ISEA are great places for teachers to work. Their pay increases often outpace other similar districts. To learn more about these districts you can talk to any teachers and staff who work there or check their wage increases on the Iowa Department of Education website and PERB websites.

### There are three types of districts:

#### 1. Meet and Confer 2. Independently Certified or 3. ISEA Certified

##### 1. Meet and Confer:

If you vote "no" in October it will decertify the certified bargaining unit. School districts that do not have a certified bargaining unit are called "meet and confer" districts. They work directly with the administration to form their contract. There are currently seven meet and confer districts: *Murray, Glidden-Ralston, Pella, Morning Sun, North Linn, Whiting, and Sigourney.*

(1) there are no union dues needed to participate in contract formation

(2) there are no issues which teachers are prohibited by law from negotiating

When under a certified bargaining unit, as you currently are, there are restrictions and prohibited negotiating items which you can lift by switching to a meet and confer system. These items can be found in Iowa Code Chapter 20. They include but are not limited to benefits such as: insurance, supplemental pay, and procedures for staff reduction. While none of these items need necessarily be altered or renegotiated it is good to have a greater menu of options. Decertifying the current bargaining unit could put all these options on the table.

**In a meet and confer district you would not be regulated by Iowa Code Chapter 20.** There will be few restrictions on the meet and confer process. The tradeoff for this freedom is that teachers would not be able to force the negotiating process to arbitration as provided in Chapter 20. (continued)

## Paying Monthly?

Even though **PEI dues are by far the most affordable career protection you can purchase**, some people still find it difficult to come up with \$240 at one time. The alternative is to pay your dues in monthly installments.



The option of paying for dues via ACH is open to all members, even those who had not previously used Payroll Deduction.

Contact the PEI office at 515-221-2330 for more information!

### Quick Links...

#### PEI

[peiowa.org](http://peiowa.org)

[info@peiowa.org](mailto:info@peiowa.org)

#### BOEE

[boee.iowa.gov/](http://boee.iowa.gov/)

#### DOE

[educateiowa.gov](http://educateiowa.gov)

#### PERB

[iowaperb.iowa.gov/](http://iowaperb.iowa.gov/)



#### PEI

974 73rd Street, Suite 30  
West Des Moines, IA 50265  
515-221-2330

However, if you feel that you can negotiate in good faith without arbitrators ultimately determining the outcome then this consideration will be outweighed by the opportunity to have all items allowed on the bargaining table. If you ever wanted to re-implement the restrictions and protections of chapter 20 you could always become an independent certified bargaining unit at a later time.

Alternatively, if you were happy as a meet and confer district, then you could remain as such.

### 2. Independently Certified:

In addition to the seven “meet and confer” districts which have no bargaining unit there are six school districts which have “independently certified” bargaining units. This means that they are regulated by Chapter 20 but this unit is not controlled by any national or statewide groups. The unit is only controlled locally by the teachers and staff in the school district. These districts include: *Earlham, Lynnville-Sully, Moravia, Orient-Macksburg, Twin-Cedars, and Schleswig*. There is no such thing as a PEI district. PEI does not act as a certified bargaining unit because PEI is not a union. PEI will give advice and assistance to any member that has questions, but the process in independently certified districts is driven by the teachers themselves NOT any organization. The local teachers and staff are in the driver’s seat. This option will not be immediately available after the election. You will first need to be a meet and confer district.

### 3. ISEA Certified:

This is what you currently have and is the status quo in most school districts. It has the exact same legal restrictions and protections under Iowa Code Chapter 20 as independently certified districts but members need to pay membership dues to the ISEA to be allowed to vote on the contract.

## The October Decision

We want to explore the potential opportunities that being a meet and confer district brings. Your administrators are understandably restricted from participating in the election process. This is because they want you to pick whatever choice is best for you without any unfair suspicion they are putting their thumb on the scale in either direction. Unfortunately, a great deal of misinformation has been circulated which your school administrators are not allowed to address. Without speaking for them or putting any words in their mouth let us merely establish the obvious truth. Your superintendent has no desire to find opportunities to harm teachers nor is he or she looking for excuses to crush your pay and benefits. Happy teachers and staff make for a well-run school district and superintendents understand this. Regardless of the election outcome they will work with you in good faith to continue to make your schools a great place to work.

In meet and confer districts you can use the same teacher negotiators that you are currently using if you wish. If you are currently friends with someone who is part of the negotiating team there is no reason these teachers or staff member cannot continue to take the lead. Perhaps you will even want to be part of the meet and confer team yourself! Whether they are members of the NEA, members of a different group, or unaffiliated, anyone can have a seat at the table in a meet and confer district. Additionally, everyone will also be allowed to vote on the contract. If you like the teachers who are currently driving the process you can continue to allow them to do so without paying the NEA.

All teachers and staff can be part of the contract process without painful union dues. We ask only the teachers and staff be guided by opportunity and not fear. This October you can vote “no” to decertify the current gatekeeper and have a more open and inclusive contract process.

## Kevin Johnson, Lynnville-Sully Awarded 2018 Educator of Character!



Kevin Johnson, language arts teacher at Lynnville-Sully Middle School was recently awarded the 2018 Educator of Character Award by Drake University and The Robert D. and Billie Ray Center.

Mr. Johnson received this award based on his exceptional work with his students encouraging them to live out the traits of the Six Pillars of Character every day! His students are taught leadership and citizenship through direct exposure to those currently in leadership, those who went through 9/11, and even a Holocaust survivor.

Mr. Johnson was honored previously at the 9/11 Tribute Center in New York City for his work with his class on the [Red Bandana Project](#).

**Congratulations, Kevin!**

## Do You Have Student Loans?

Did you know that there are government programs to help those that are dealing with this increasing debt burden? Some of these programs are specifically targeted to teachers and other educators. This can be a confusing area because of the details involved and the variety of programs, but it can also be a tremendous opportunity for those who are eligible.

Mike Johnson from AO Wealth Advisory and the creator of [TeacherWealth.com](http://TeacherWealth.com) has outlined the student loan forgiveness programs in which teachers may be eligible. Check out his article [HERE](#).

Also, as a member of PEI, you are entitled to a free planning meeting with AO Wealth Advisory to get your questions answered about student loans or any other financial topics you may have. Mike is a former teacher and long-time PEI member.



Mike Johnson, CFP®

AO Wealth Advisory

(515) 224-7849

[mjohnson@awealthadvisory.com](mailto:mjohnson@awealthadvisory.com)

## YOU ARE OUR BEST ADVERTISERS!!

This fall has been very busy for the office staff due to the increased number of new members joining PEI! When a person joins, we ask the question on the application "How did you hear about PEI."

Besides recommendations from individual members, here are some of the other comments.

- A colleague in the Science department
- a friend
- another administrator
- Mom
- Co-worker
- mentor teacher
- A friend who works in a neighboring school district
- From a colleague who saw your booth at the Iowa State Fair
- Word of mouth
- Pamphlet in lunchroom
- peers.
- Booth at school nurse conference
- Iowa State Fair
- my girlfriend!
- Online Search
- Spouse
- Presentation at school
- Flyer in my mailbox.
- Members in my building
- My dad
- My wife
- a representative at the Iowa Family and Consumer Sciences Educators conference

A colleague of mine experienced a terrible situation and your organization sent in a legal team to defend her. The district decided to back off and not fire her unjustly.

The comments range from the humorous to the serious. But we still find that **OUR MEMBERS are still our best recruiting tool!** In many districts one-third to one-half of all staff do not belong to any organization. These are the individuals that need PEI.

There is not a single teacher that goes to work and says "this is the day that I am going to get in trouble at school." But more and more, trouble is "finding" educators, whether they anticipated it or not.

Our membership incentive of a [\\$120 referral award](#) is still available. Speak about the value, the service, the safety of what a PEI membership means to you!

**A VERY BIG THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS!!**

## 2018-2019 PEI E-Ticket Discounts

Shows currently on sale are:

*The Naked Magicians* 11/9-11/10

*Triple Espresso* 11/16- 01/13/2019

*Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer The Musical* 12/17

*Mannheim Steamroller Christmas by Chip Davis* 12/18-12/19

*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets Live in Concert* 01/25/26/2019

*Bat Out Of Hell The Musical* 02/26-03/03/2019

*RAIN- A Tribute to the Beatles* 04/07/2019

The discount code for this season is: **EGROUPS1819**

Contact us at:

515-221-2330

[info@peiowa.org](mailto:info@peiowa.org)

[www.peiowa.org](http://www.peiowa.org)

