

# Union flunks Engler's reform plans

BY SUB BUCK  
BRAY WATKIN

The Livonia Education Association is unwavering in its dislike of Gov. John Engler's school reform proposals.

Anti-Engler messages abound in the hallway of the association's office on Munger in Livonia.

Even lifelike cardboard models of President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton sport badges reading "Yes Schools. No Engler," and "Save Our Schools. Bump Engler."

MEA union locals in the metro-Detroit area came Monday to hear National Education Association president Keith Geiger speak. Some paid a \$1 to the "Survival Defense Fund," pinning on badges that read "Don't Trust Engler," and "Engler Hates Me."

The NEA is expected to provide monetary help next year when the school reform issue heats up in the Michigan legislature.

"It makes me happy to hear Keith say that the battle that we are fighting in Michigan regarding vouchers, etc. is not totally unusual (in the country)," said Elaine Miller, a 30-year Redford Union High school teacher and president of Wayne County MEA/NEA. "This is something that so far has been deemed unacceptable by the public across the country. I'm happy that he (Geiger) appreciates what I do."

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Elaine Miller  
teacher, president of Wayne County MEA/NEA

So far, vouchers have only passed in Milwaukee, according to Jacquie Thomas, MEA communications coordinator. That city has approved \$2,500 per pupil, but only for disadvantaged children, she said.

Julius Maddox, MEA president wants citizens to know all of the ramifications. "We will also potentially become involved in a petition campaign," Maddox said.

During an earlier news conference, Geiger took issue with a June 7 Forbes Magazine article, "Suffer the Little Children. How the National Education Association Corrupts Our Public Schools."

Forbes maintains that increased spending and high teachers' salaries have produced only deteriorating student test scores. The article also said that the

NEA now has more members than the Teamsters.

"We work from a point of view that isn't right or wrong," Geiger said. "This just happens to be a point of view that we believe in."

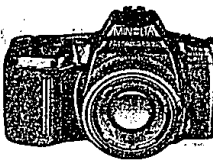
He called the article "lies and fabrication."

Forbes isn't read by many people in the United States, Geiger said, but right-wing churches have extensively reproduced and distributed the article.

"Understand that the article was about one thing — public tax dollars for private and parochial schools," Geiger said.

Added Lou Battaglini, president of Local 1 MEA/NEA, Macomb: "In California, they got thumped in the ballot box."

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