
A Tax Deduction for Union Dues

If you itemize deductions on your federal income tax return, you can include a portion of your union dues along with other expenses that IRS defines as "miscellaneous deductions."

To comply with IRS requirements, our union's attorney has calculated MTEA lobbying and political action expenses for 2010. After deducting these expenses, the attorney found that 97% of the dues which substitute teachers paid in 2010 qualified as miscellaneous deduction expenses.

Typical Amount - \$305.16

For many substitute teachers, the total amount of MTEA union dues deducted during 2010 was \$314.60. If you paid this amount, IRS allows you to claim **\$305.16** in union dues as a miscellaneous deduction expense ($\$314.60 \times 97\% = \305.16).

Your Amount?

To claim the allowable portion of the union dues you paid during 2010, you should take two steps:

1. Check your December 24, 2010 paycheck to find the total amount deducted for union dues during 2010. It will be in the "After-Tax Deduction Box," noted "YTD" (Year-to-Date).
2. Multiply your amount by 97%.

More at mtea.org

More detailed information on union dues and tax deductions is at mtea.org. It will be there until April 15, for your quick reference.

School Board Recommendations

The MTEA PAC endorsement recommendations for Milwaukee School Board were approved by a wide margin in the online membership vote conducted during the third week of January. The endorsed candidates, along with the percentage of members voting who supported the PAC recommendations, are:

Mark Sain (98%) - For **District 1**

Michael Bonds (89%) - For **District 3**

Meagan Holman (91%) - For **District 8**

Terry Falk (78%) - For **At-Large (Citywide)**

Our union's PAC made no recommendation for District 2.

Primary Election - February 15

There will be a primary election for District 8 where three candidates are vying for the seat now held by Terry Falk. If you would like to help get out the February 15 primary vote, please contact MTEA Executive Director Stan Johnson at 259-1990 or johnsons@mtea.weac.org.

The general election will be held on April 5.

This is a Wisconsin Statute 11.29 communication for MTEA members only.

Radical Changes in Contract Proposed by School Board

The proposals which the school board's team presented to our union's substitute teacher bargaining team on January 26 are an extreme departure from long-standing contract provisions on health benefits, status/classifications, salary rates, and how dispatching assignments are made. Here's a summary.

Elimination of the Classification and Pay System

The board is proposing to completely eliminate:

- ◆ Day-to-day and regular classifications and salary rates.
- ◆ Teacher vacancy pay.

Instead, the district is proposing two daily rates for 2011-12: \$150 for short-term assignments and \$175 for long-term (20 or more consecutive days is the same assignment).

Dispatching: Two Major Changes Now

MPS is proposing to:

- ◆ Eliminate the north/south zones in making assignments.
- ◆ Make assignments solely on the basis of certification.

Please continue on back...



Retiring in June - Important Advice!

◆ Make your retirement effective date at the end of the day on the emergency make-up day. The date is based on your work calendar:

- Traditional - June 15
- Year-round - June 21
- IB schools - May 31

◆ Do not submit your retirement/resignation notice to MPS until you are absolutely certain you are retiring. The district does not allow employees to rescind once their retirement notice is submitted.

◆ It may be to your advantage to give MPS formal written notice by **April 1**, as explained below.

Qualifying for Board Premium Payments

To qualify for board-paid health care coverage during retirement, you must be at least age 55, have at least 15 years of MPS employment, and have:

◆ 336 hours (or more) of full day sick leave accumulation, and

◆ Averaged 764 or more hours per year for the last 15 consecutive years of MPS employment, including five years as a substitute teacher.

The board's share of insurance payments will be at the rate in effect for the PPO plan on the day you retire.

Incentive for April 1 Notice

If you qualify for board-paid health insurance and plan to retire at the end of this school year, the contract provides an incentive for submitting your written notice of resignation to MPS on or before April 1.

MPS health insurance premium rates usually increase each year, on July 1. If you submit your retirement notice by April 1, the board will pay the rate in effect before July 1 **or** the new rate in effect on July 1 - **whichever is higher**.

Continued from front...

In addition, the district is in the process of selecting a vendor to provide an automated (electronic) system for making assignments. Despite plans to initiate a new dispatching system next fall, MPS has made no proposals on the impact the system would have on substitutes.

District Health Insurance Proposals

The board's team is planning to make numerous changes to the PPO and HMO health care plans effective April 1, 2011. Many of the changes would mean more out-of-pocket costs for employees through higher deductibles, coinsurance payments, a new three-tiered drug plan, and other modifications. The district is also proposing to:

◆ Eliminate the PPO option for substitutes at the start of the 2011-12 school year. The HMO would be the only plan offered to those who work 90 or more days during 2010-11.

◆ Establish new criteria to qualify for health (HMO) and dental benefits, starting with the 2011-12 school year:

- 50 days of work from September 1 through January 15 for coverage for six months (March 1 - August 31).
- 50 days of work from January 16 through June 30 for coverage for six months (September 1 - February 28).

◆ Eliminate teacher vacancy service as a way of qualifying for benefits.

◆ Effective September 1, provide board payment only for single coverage. For family coverage, employees would have to pay the difference between the family and single premium.

◆ Effective September 1, require employees in the HMO plan to pay 2.5% of the premium.

◆ Eliminate sick leave and retiree health benefits for substitutes hired after January 1, 2011, and require new employees to pay the employee share of the WRS pension contribution. (Current substitutes would be grandfathered, but those who retire on or after September 1, 2011 would be eligible only for HMO coverage.)

Evaluation Changes

The board's team is proposing an electronic system for unsatisfactory evaluations. After four unsatisfactory evaluations, the MPS human resources office would conduct a hearing that could result in termination.

Union Proposals - Sharp Contrast

At the January 26 bargaining session, our union's substitute teacher team presented proposals which were relatively few and rather modest, compared with the numerous, extreme proposals from the district. Our team proposed only one change in dispatching - using seniority to make assignments within certification. The only change our team proposed in the present system of classification and pay rates was an extra \$30/day for serving in a long-term assignment of five or more days, which is **not** a teacher vacancy.

To Be Continued

The parties are miles apart on several key issues, and neither team has presented a salary raise proposal. Bargaining sessions are scheduled for February 8 and 22. We'll continue updates in Dispatch.
