

January Paychecks

Due to the days off for the winter recess, the January paychecks will be smaller than usual.

◆ **January 7** will cover the **seven** workdays prior to the winter break

◆ **January 21** will cover the first **five** workdays in January.

Expulsion Recommendation for Serious Safety Offenses

We sent two Sharpeners focused on discipline and safety to all MTEA members, including substitute teachers, in December. Both issues included an explanation of the MPS policy and teacher contract provision which require an expulsion recommendation as the **minimum** disciplinary action for four, serious safety offenses: assault, battery, possessing a gun, and possessing a weapon (other than a gun).

This policy is in the MPS student rights and responsibilities handbook.

Clarification Needed

The December 3 Sharpener gave the correct information, but the December 14 issue contained a misleading explanation. The four serious offenses **always** require a recommendation for expulsion as the minimum action.

What Should Happen

When the school administration recommends expulsion, the student is placed on what's called a "CO" or "central office" suspension. The student remains out of school until a "CO" conference is held. As a

Please continue on back...

Contract Talks to Resume

Our union's substitute teacher bargaining team is scheduled to meet with the school board's team on January 26, February 8, and February 22. Progress has been slow - in part due to the long delays in reaching a teacher contract settlement.

Historically, the teacher unit, which is by far the largest group of MPS employees, has set the pattern on health insurance changes for the other 12 MPS employee bargaining units, including the substitute teacher unit.

MTEA Seeks "Me Too" Resolution

After the teacher contract was ratified by the school board in early December, our union offered to quickly resolve the contract for the substitute teachers (and the two other MTEA units). Our offer to the district was a "me too" on the same health insurance changes and similar salary raises bargained for teachers.

MPS Rejects Settlement Offer

Discussions with key administrators prior to winter break did not resolve the contract. On the contrary, the district indicated it has no intention of offering what was bargained in teacher talks to any other MPS unit.

Major Issues Unresolved

Our union's bargaining team is proposing changes in dispatching, to establish seniority as a priority for assignments. Our team is also seeking a higher daily rate for long-term assignments which are not teacher vacancies. For example, maternity and other illness absences.

The school board's team is proposing a number of radical changes: eliminating vacancy pay, eliminating assignment by geographic zones, establish an automated dispatching system, decreasing the number of refusals allowed before losing regular status or being dropped from the MPS active substitutes list, and numerous changes in health insurance.

Employee Health Insurance Payments at Issue

Most private and public employees pay a "premium contribution" or "premium share" for their health insurance. Payments are often a percentage of the premium for the health insurance plan the employee selects.

In teacher contract talks, our union proposed and successfully bargained a unique approach to employee contributions for health insurance. Starting next school year, teachers will pay a share of the district's health insurance costs, based on their individual salaries - 1% for single coverage and 2% for family.

Basing employee health insurance payments on salary is a progressive approach. Lower-paid employees pay less than higher-paid employees - similar to federal income taxes.

Please continue on back...



Expulsions

Continued from front...

result, the student could be reassigned to another school, instead of being expelled. Occasionally the hearing officer decides to limit the disciplinary action to a suspension.

MTEA BR Can Help

Please ask the Building Representative at the school for assistance immediately if there is a serious safety offense, but the school is not recommending expulsion.

Save Your MPS Paycheck Statements

We recommend that you retain your biweekly MPS paycheck statements. Your records may be needed to correct an error in pay, sick leave accumulation, etc.

MSTA Leadership - Candidate Declaration

Please Print

Name

Home/Cell Phone

Home E-Mail

Address

City/Zip

MSTA Position Sought

I hereby declare my candidacy for MSTA Executive Council Representative:

Your Signature

This form must be received at the MTEA Building by **5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 26, 2011.**

Contract Talks Continued from front...

Salary-Based vs. Premium-Based

Whether based on salary or premium, employees pay a share of the district's health care costs out of their own paychecks.

However, when employees pay a percentage of their premium costs, many choose the lower cost health plan, as explained below.

Example Shows Difference

Here's an example of a regular substitute teacher who works almost every school day and needs family coverage. Suppose, for this example, employees have to pay 5% of the PPO premium for the PPO plan or 2.5% of the HMO premium for HMO coverage.

If this member chooses the PPO plan, her biweekly deduction for health insurance would be \$67.12 a paycheck. If she chooses the HMO plan, her deduction would be \$22.07. With the difference of \$45 per paycheck, it's likely that she would choose the HMO plan.

No Difference With Deductions Based on Earnings

On the other hand, if employee health insurance payments were based on the individual's earnings, the same amount would be deducted whether you choose the PPO or the HMO.

The deduction amount would vary based on the number of days paid on each paycheck. For example, on a 10-day paycheck, at the regular daily rate, the deduction would be \$31.07. For a 7-day check, the deduction would be \$21.75.

What's Next in Bargaining

At the January 26 bargaining session, the district's team is scheduled to present a comprehensive offer to our union's substitute teacher team. Look for bargaining updates in [Dispatch](#) and at [mtea.org](#).

Getting Involved in Your Union

If you would like to be involved in working to improve conditions for substitute teachers, you should consider serving as an MSTA Executive Council Representative. You can play a key role because of your unique background and views.

Brief Description of MSTA Representative Duties

MSTA Executive Council members have important policy-setting responsibilities within our union. If elected, your primary duty will be to participate in monthly meetings of the Council. You will discuss and make decisions on negotiations, professional development, and other issues/concerns that directly affect substitutes in MPS.

Another key responsibility will be participating as a voting member of the monthly MTEA Representative Assembly meetings. RA meetings address issues and positions affecting all four MTEA bargaining unit members - substitutes, teachers, educational assistants, and accountants/bookkeepers.

Members Invited to Declare Candidacy by January 26

This April, there will be two MSTA Council representative positions open to election. Both are two-year terms.

To become a candidate, please submit the form *on left* to the MSTA Nominating Committee; 5130 West Vliet Street; Milwaukee, WI 53208. The deadline is **Wednesday, January 26**. You will automatically become a candidate when your form is received.