

Are You Working?

The district needs an average of 275-300 substitute teachers on most school days. MPS currently employs 500+ active substitutes.

Some members are saying MPS is not calling them.

Some district administrators are saying that many substitutes are turning down assignments offered by dispatchers.

We'd need to determine if the contract dispatch procedures are being followed.

Let Us Know If...

If you're available but are not receiving any assignments, please send the details to Linda Gaston-Mounger at the MTEA Building. Be specific: Note your DPI license area(s) and the dates (period of time) you've **not** been called.

Please mail your information, fax at 259-7801, or e-mail at gastonmoungerl@mtea.weac.org by Friday, **December 10**.

Got Contract?

Our union mailed the 2007-09 MBSD-MTEA Substitute Teacher Contract booklet to all members last school year. If you don't have yours, go to mtea.org (Contracts) for a downloadable edition.

If you'd like another hard copy, please stop by the MTEA office during business hours, weekdays, from 8:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m.

Contract Talks Status Report

The 2007-09 MBSD-MTEA Substitute Teacher Contract expired nearly 15 months ago, on June 30, 2009. By law, it remains in effect until a new agreement is reached.

Progress at the bargaining table has been slow. The recent teacher contract settlement should mean that the district will now focus on reaching agreements with substitute teachers and its other employee groups.

Separate Units, Separate Contracts

The state's public employee bargaining law mandates employers to negotiate separately with each of its employee groups, a.k.a. "bargaining units." Our union represents four bargaining units - teachers, substitute teachers, educational assistants, and school accountants/bookkeepers.

While the teacher contract has often set the health insurance pattern for other MPS employees in the past, there is no legal requirement that the School Board bargain the same salary raises and health benefits for all employees. Moreover, there is no substitute teacher contract provision guaranteeing the same raises and benefits as negotiated with teachers.

Talks Resuming

When today's Dispatch went to press, your substitute teacher bargaining team had a meeting scheduled with the School Board's team. We'll have a detailed report in the next Dispatch.

Resolving Vacancy Pay Issues

On the July 23 paycheck, most eligible members received the correct amount of pay for serving in teacher vacancies during the second semester of last school year. Since then, Linda Gaston-Mounger of our union's staff has worked with the district administrators on several payment questions, and most have been resolved.

Some of the problems involved substantial payments. Seven substitute teachers recently received a total of \$39,926 in teacher vacancy payments, an average of \$5,703 per member.

One situation involved a member who served in numerous assignments. Fortunately, she saved her STF forms which were key to obtaining the payment due to her.

Reminder: Keep Your STF Copy

At the end of each assignment, you should complete the Substitute Teacher Form (STF) at every school. The school's administrator's signature and your own are required for this documentation.

Be certain you obtain your signed copy before you leave the school and **keep it!** It is your proof if assignment and pay questions arise.



Take the PHA Now, Please!

The deadline for you and your spouse to complete the **annual** personal health assessment (PHA) is **December 15**. Just three weeks away!

Why Every Year?

The PHA provides you with confidential information about your health status including risks. The results will include suggestions for voluntary and confidential health education/wellness programs, specifically for you.

Quick PHA Access - Go to mtea.org and click on the "Take the PHA" quick link.

Important Reminders - Be sure to hit "Send" and then for your records, print the **confirmation number**.

Motivating a Spouse

Taken the PHA yourself, but your spouse has not? We suggest that you stress the immediate, financial reason. If both you and your spouse do not complete the PHA by December 15, a **\$200** annual health care premium contribution will be deducted as follows:

◆ **\$100** from your February 18, 2011 paycheck.

◆ **\$100** from your March 18, 2011 paycheck.

A \$450 Difference

Taking the PHA can mean a big difference in your pocketbook in the first few months of 2011.

First, you will avoid the penalty noted above - \$200.

Second, if you complete a voluntary health education/wellness program(s) by December 15, 2010, you will also earn a \$250 incentive. The \$250 will be deposited into your **tax-free** health reimbursement account (HRA) by February 28, 2011.

Instead of a \$200 penalty, you could earn a \$250 incentive. That's a \$450 difference.

What's a Teacher Vacancy?

Under the teacher contract, a vacancy is created when a teacher:

- ◆ Retires or resigns.
- ◆ Receives a **formal** leave of absence.
- ◆ Requests an incompatibility transfer from a school.
- ◆ Is absent more than 60 days during a semester.

Vacancies also occur when a new position is added to a school or when a vacancy at a semester's end remains vacant the next semester.

Some Apparent Vacancies, Are Not

While a retirement or resignation clearly creates a teacher vacancy, other situations are complicated. For example, a teacher medically unable to work due to pregnancy/childbirth may be absent up to 12 consecutive weeks without losing her assignment.

There are several ways for teachers to keep their assignments through the teacher contract and the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). A long-term absence does not necessarily create a teacher vacancy.

Benefits If Assigned to a Vacancy

While there may be a question as to whether you are in a teacher vacancy or not, the following is important information and advice.

The substitute teacher contract provides teacher pay and benefits (except pension) to those assigned to a teacher vacancy. **If you are assigned to a vacancy and do not already have MPS group health and dental insurance coverage, you should apply ASAP.** You will **not** receive these benefits unless you apply for them.

MPS should notify eligible substitutes in teacher vacancies of their right to these negotiated, Board-paid insurance benefits, in a timely manner. However, we recommend you call to request an insurance application as soon as you are in a vacancy.

Take Action to Resolve Vacancy Questions

Call MPS Human Resources at 475-8224 to explain your situation. You may also go to Room 124 at the MPS central office.

You **may** be told that you are not in a teacher vacancy. This may be the case because of complicated situations such as the example above.

If you experience a problem, please contact Linda Gaston-Mounger of the MTEA staff at gastonmoungerl@mtea.weac.org or 259-1990.

Thanksgiving Holiday Pay

The holiday pay provision of the MTEA/MBSD Substitute Teacher Contract states: "Where regular substitute teachers are serving in a teaching assignment the last school day prior to a holiday and in an assignment the first school day following the holiday, they shall be paid for the holiday." Thanksgiving Day is a paid holiday.

You should be paid for Thanksgiving Day if you are a regular substitute teacher and work in a teaching assignment on Wednesday, November 24, and again on Monday, November 29 (**whether it is the same assignment or not**). Pay for Thanksgiving Day should be included on your December 10 paycheck.