

Personal Calls Key

Legislators listen when their constituents call on an issue. Even if you just leave a brief message, your voice means votes - which every politician counts.

Like legislators, members are more likely to respond to a colleague's active voice than a passive printed page.

Can You Help?

Member-to-member phone calls will be made from your union's office from 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday, **November 17 & 19**. Please stop in to help, for as long as your time allows. The salad and pizza are on us.

Saving for Retirement

WEA Trust Member Benefits is offering two different educational workshops on retirement savings at the MTEA Building next week.

On Tuesday, **November 17**, the "Smart Move" workshop explains how moving the money you now have in a 403(b) program (a.k.a. tax sheltered annuity) to a low-cost program may help you reach your retirement goals sooner.

On Thursday, **November 19**, the "Retirement Savings: The Keys to Success" seminar will present the basics of investment and retirement planning, applicable to any age.

Both sessions start at 4:30 p.m. For details and registration, go to mtea.org (Events).

Let Your Legislators Know:

MTEA/WEAC Plan - Yes! Mayoral Takeover - No!

The future of public schools in our city is in the hands of the state Legislature. Three months after Governor Doyle and Mayor Barrett publicly endorsed mayoral takeover of MPS, a bill is being drafted. It will likely go to a special session of the Legislature in early December.

It's time for educators to communicate with their Assembly representative and their state senator. Before the Thanksgiving break, please call the two legislators who represent you to express your:

Support for the Milwaukee Opportunity Plan drafted by MTEA and WEAC leaders to bring the entire community - local and state - to the table for real, lasting reform in our district.

Opposition to the divisive mayoral takeover "quick fix," that would guarantee only one thing - taking away the direct, democratic influence that city voters have on their public schools.

City residents can access the names of their two state legislators at mtea.org (Resources>Legislative).

National (ESP) Day - November 18

Each year, the Wednesday during American Education Week is National Educational Support Professionals' day. It's an opportunity to applaud your school's ESPs and the invaluable service they provide.

Educational assistants are dedicated and caring members of your school staff and your union. As educational support professionals, EAs perform a wide range of tasks that make a difference in the lives of students. Like teachers, what EAs do daily is seldom recognized. They are unsung heroes in the quiet struggle to provide **all** children with a great education.

Celebrate at Your School on Wednesday

We invite you to express your gratitude to the EAs at your school. Your union's ESP/EA members include: paraprofessionals, general educational assistants, school safety assistants, child care workers, and DHH interpreters.

Celebrate at the MTEA Building After School

We also invite you to the MTEA's first-ever "ESP Day Celebration." This event is open to all members from 3:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. at the MTEA Building, 5130 West Vliet Street. Stop in to show your appreciation for, and solidarity with, EA members citywide. Food and beverages will be served.

Autism Now Covered by Health Plans

Effective November 1, 2009, state law requires health insurance plans to cover medical services to treat autism disorder, Asperger's Syndrome, and pervasive developmental disorders. The law applies to the MPS group plans – the Aetna PPO and the UnitedHealthcare HMO.

Overview of Mandated Benefits

The law requires plans to provide a minimum annual benefit of \$50,000 for intensive level services (a minimum of 30-35 hours of care per week) for a minimum of four years.

For non-intensive level services, the minimum coverage is \$25,000 per year. Children diagnosed between the ages of 2 and 9 are covered. Speech therapy is an example of a covered service.

The annual deductible, co-pay, and coinsurance provisions for the Aetna plan apply. The UHC co-pay and coinsurance provisions also apply.

Implementation Advice

If your child is covered, ask your medical provider to submit treatment claims to your insurance plan. You should check your EOB statements to make sure the claims are properly paid. For questions, contact Joan Heithoff of the MTEA staff at heithoffj@mtea.weac.org or 259-1990.

A Celebration of Teaching!

Your union is leading a month-long campaign of telling stories about the extraordinary and ordinary steps teachers take every day to make our schools great. The kick-off event at the UWM Hefter Center on October 23 featured two MPS teachers who are great examples of why we celebrate teaching.

Lisa Sanford is a special education teacher at Northwest Secondary School. Her story was published in Teaching Hope, a collection of teaching narratives gathered by Erin Gruwell, author of The Freedom Writers' Diary. A brief description of Lisa's inspiring story is at mtea.org during week two of MTEA's celebration (Nov. 1-7).

JoAnn Lens is a 4th grade teacher at Hawley Environmental School. She was selected 2009-10 Elementary Teacher of the Year, through the DPI's annual recognition process. The third week of celebrating great teaching (Nov. 8-14) will feature JoAnn's story at mtea.org.

Join in the Story Telling

You can participate in the campaign by submitting a story of teaching success. The story can be about yourself or another staff member who has demonstrated a commitment to great teaching, but whose contribution is overlooked because "that's what teachers do."

Please take a few minutes today to share a story at mtea.org (and enter to win a special prize)!

Please Do the PHA!

Taking the personal health assessment (PHA) **annually** is essential to the negotiated wellness and health education program. The deadline is December 15.

Why Every Year?

The PHA provides you with confidential information about your health status, including risks, and individualized, voluntary program options that contribute to healthy living. The PHA is like an annual "State of Your Health" address - reviewing "issues" and offering program choices for your future GoodHealth.

Quick PHA Access

To meet the deadline, you and your spouse should complete the PHA online. For quick access, go to mtea.org and click on the "Take the PHA" Quick Link.

Very Important Reminders

Be sure to hit "Send" and to print out the **confirmation number** for your records.

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** on your February 19, 2010 paycheck.
 - ◆ **\$100** on your March 19, 2010 paycheck.
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In Special Education and Need a Bilingual License?

UWM is developing a program tailored for special education teachers working in bilingual classrooms. An information meeting on UWM's bilingual certification cohort program takes place Tuesday, **November 17**, from 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. at the MTEA Building.

Please contact Dr. Sandra Pucci in the UWM School of Education at pucci@uwm.edu if you would like detailed information but can't attend the November 17 session.