

## Join the MTEA Book Club

Join the MTEA SpeakOut! Committee for an engaging book club event! We are reading **The New Teacher Book**, a collection of essays by multiple authors, published by *Rethinking Schools*. The essays will resonate with new and veteran teachers alike, offering practical advice on how to:

- ◆ Effectively navigate the school system.
- ◆ Form rewarding professional relationships with peers
- ◆ Connect with students and families from all cultures and backgrounds.

Two discussions, facilitated by essay authors will take place at the MTEA Building. The first will be on **Monday, February 4**, and the second is on **Monday, March 3**. Both are from 4:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m.

### Books Available Here

There are 25 books now available at the MTEA Building. Members who plan to join the discussions will pay \$15 for the book up front and receive a partial rebate at each discussion. Please pick up your copy by **January 18**.

For questions, contact Kris Collett of the MTEA staff at [kcollett@mtea.weac.org](mailto:kcollett@mtea.weac.org) or 259-1990.

## Congrats on Your Healthy Start!

If you are one of the thousands of MTEA members who completed the personal health assessment (PHA), we would like to express our congratulations. You've taken an essential first step toward learning more about maintaining and improving your health.

Your PHA results provide you with key personal health information and guidance on which GoodHealth programs can benefit you.

Participation in any of the programs is strictly confidential and totally voluntary. It's now up to you (and your spouse) to take advantage of the programs - if you wish.

### Quick Review of What's Next

- ◆ If you and your spouse both completed the PHA by December 15, you will **not** have to pay a \$200 annual health premium contribution in 2008. You will **not** see a \$100 deduction on your February 22 and March 21 paychecks.
- ◆ You can now earn the **\$200** financial incentive by completing a GoodHealth program by December 15, **2008**. (Your spouse can do the programs too, but only you can earn the \$200 incentive.)
- ◆ After the winter break, we will explain the wide range of voluntary GoodHealth programs at [mtea.org](http://mtea.org) and in Dispatch.

### Miscue on Initial Education Module

The optional GoodHealth programs are explained in the MPS video which most MTEA members should have seen on October 5. Unfortunately, MPS did not follow through with principals on this key, first education module.

Our bargaining team carefully researched wellness/health education programs and found that successful programs include extensive education opportunities for participants. To achieve this element of an effective program, our union proposed that high-quality information modules be presented to all substitute teachers, three to five times each school year, for a period of 15 to 45 minutes each.

The contract states: "The modules may be presented to substitute teachers when they attend faculty meetings or are present during banking time days as determined by the principal or immediate supervisor or on mutually agreed upon inservice days." You should be allocated workday time for all of the education modules **with pay**.

### Working for Better Results

We are working to insure that MPS complies with the education modules component of the joint GoodHealth program. We expect much better results on the January 28 banking day. The topic will be managing stress.

## Unique Master's Opportunity

UWM offers a 27-credit Masters of Liberal Studies (MLS) which emphasizes breadth of learning across disciplines; critical thinking, effective communication; and genuine integration of knowledge.

Each student's course of study is individually designed and built around small, evening-only seminars specifically created for the MLS program by leading members of the faculty. Credits may also be earned through independent study, study-abroad, and a final project that entails original research, creative work, and professional development.

For details, contact Professor Jeffrey Hayes at 229-5963 or at [jhayes@uwm.edu](mailto:jhayes@uwm.edu), or go to [uwm.edu/Dept/MLS](http://uwm.edu/Dept/MLS).

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## Winter Recess

The MTEA Building will be **closed** on December 24, 25, 26 & 31, and on January 1.

We will be **open** on December 27 & 28, as well as January 2.

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*We wish you and  
your family a joyous  
holiday season and a  
happy new year!*

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## Snow Day Pay

Substitute teachers will be paid for December 11 when schools were closed if they were in:

- ◆ A teacher vacancy.
- ◆ A long-term assignment.
- ◆ An assignment to which they had been dispatched prior to the storm.

The December 28 paycheck will cover 10 workdays including the snow day on December 11. (If you did not have a school assignment for that day, you will not be paid.)

## Paychecks: Planning Ahead

This year's winter break will affect the number of days paid on the upcoming paychecks. The **January 11, 2008** will cover up to 5 days. The **January 25** check will cover up to 7 days.

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## Contract Proposals Being Prepared

On October 17, our union mailed a survey to all substitute teachers - asking for bargaining suggestions for the next contract. Our union's substitute teacher bargaining team is reviewing the responses, the first step in preparing an initial package of contract proposals.

After the initial proposals are approved by the MTEA Executive Board and MSTA Executive Council, our team will meet with the School Board's team to exchange proposals. By law, this first meeting will be held in public.

In the weeks ahead, updates on contract talks will be in [Dispatch](#) and on our union's Web site at [mtea.org](http://mtea.org).

## Pattern of Delays Continues

The substitute teacher contract expired on December 31, 2006. Bargaining has been delayed in recent years - primarily over health insurance issues.

All of the benefits, salary rates, and rights of your contract remain in effect until a new agreement is reached. As in the past, our union will bargain for full retroactivity on salary raises.

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## Tax Note on 2007 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 are defined by the IRS as "miscellaneous deductions." Under the federal tax code, union dues spent on legislative lobbying, as well as political action contributions are not deductible expenses. In fact, the IRS requires unions to notify members of the deductible portion of union dues.

To comply with the IRS requirement, our attorney is reviewing union lobbying expenses to calculate the allowable portion of dues. We will have the allowable percentage for the 2007 tax year at [mtea.org](http://mtea.org) and in [Dispatch](#) in early January.

To prepare for claiming a union dues deduction, please retain your December 28, 2007 paycheck. You will need the year-to-date dues amount listed on it to calculate your deductible amount.