
Spring Break Before Easter

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been bargained that moves spring break to the week **before** Easter. (Traditionally, spring break has been the week after Easter.)

For traditional calendar and IB schools, the break starts on Monday, **April 18**, and classes will resume on Tuesday, **April 26**.

For year-round schools, the spring intersession will start a week earlier, on Tuesday, **April 5**, and classes will resume on Tuesday, **April 26**.

Go to mtea.org and click on "Spring Break Changes" to access the three 2010-11 calendars - traditional, year-round, and IB. You'll find more information online, including why the break week was changed.

New Posting for Key MTEA Position

In April, the MTEA Executive Board began a nationwide search to replace Tom Morgan, who had passed away unexpectedly in mid-March. The plan to fill the vacant MTEA Executive Director position by July 1 did not work out.

On July 16, the MTEA Executive Board decided to conduct a second nationwide search. Please go to mtea.org to see the new posting.

Sam Carmen Serving on Interim Basis

Anticipating the second process may take a few months, our union's Board has appointed Sam Carmen as the Interim Executive Director. Sam was on the MTEA staff for 23 years. He served as Executive Director for 13 years, prior to retiring three years ago.

Agreement Reached to Rescind All Substitute Teacher Layoffs

On August 2, the first day of classes at the district's year-round schools, MPS was unable to dispatch enough substitute teachers to cover the teacher absences. That afternoon, Linda Gaston-Mounger of the MTEA staff met with Dr. Karen Jackson, the new director of the MPS Human Resources Department. The result: A mutually-beneficial agreement to resolve the problems which the June layoff created for substitute teachers and the school district.

Layoff Notices to 568 Substitute Teachers Rescinded
In June, MPS sent two different layoff notices based on each employee's DPI license/permit status:

◆ **329** members who have either a **substitute teacher** license or permit were sent "**termination**" letters.

◆ **239** members who have a **regular teacher** license received letters stating there would be few, if any, opportunities for work in 2010-11. These are referred to as "**no reasonable assurance**" letters.

On August 4, MPS sent letters to the 568 members rescinding the June termination and no reasonable assurance notices restoring them to the district's active list of substitutes for 2010-11.

This was the initial step in carrying out the resolution worked out by MTEA and MPS representatives.

Important: Availability/Registration Card

The next step addresses the district's immediate need for substitutes at year-round schools. The August 4 letters included a registration card for substitutes to notify MPS how soon they will be available to work.

◆ If you can work now, you should return your registration card **immediately**. You may bring it to Human Resources Office in Room 124 of the MPS central office at 5225 West Vliet Street.

◆ Regardless of when you are available, the deadline for returning your card is Friday, **August 20**.

Our advice to all members: Return your card as soon as possible.

Clarifying Insurance Coverage

On July 29, MPS sent letters to "terminated" employees who had health and dental coverage for 2009-10 and/or qualified for coverage in 2010-11.

Please continue on back...

Vacancy Pay

If you were in a teacher vacancy during the second semester, you should have received your salary differential payment on July 23. If you have questions on eligibility, please review the following.

Semester II Teacher Vacancy Eligibility

There are three ways to qualify for teacher vacancy pay during the second semester: **1)** if you were in a teacher vacancy during the first semester and continued in the vacancy during the second semester, **2)** if you worked 15 days in a teacher vacancy during the period from the start of the second semester through March 15, or **3)** if you were assigned to a vacancy after March 15.

Lengthy Assignments But Not Vacancies

A long-term teacher absence is often **not** a teacher vacancy. For example, a teacher may be out for 8 or 9 weeks, having a baby, and then return to her school assignment. Frequently, illnesses, worker compensation injuries, and family leave situations cause lengthy absences - but **not** vacancies.

The teacher contract defines when a vacancy exists. The MPS Human Resources Department makes the determination - not the school principal. If there is a question, your union will check to make sure that the contract is followed.

Questions

If you believe MPS did not pay you for a vacancy assignment, please go to mtea.org (Contracts> Substitute Teachers>Vacancy Pay). Based on the details you provide online, Linda Gaston-Mounger of the MTEA staff will investigate your situation with MPS.

Be sure to act now. There is a 30 workday deadline for filing a grievance if your contract rights were violated.

Continued from front...

MPS has agreed to send new letters during the week of August 9 that will replace the July 29 letters. The next letters will clarify that you should disregard the information about COBRA rights which MPS previously provided (**unless** you've decided to resign or retire, **or** you currently have insurance benefits but did not qualify for them for 2010-11).

For most members, rescinding the layoff simply restores the status quo. You'll have the benefits you earned prior to the June 10 MPS notices.

However, if you have any questions after you receive the new letter, please contact Joan Heithoff at heithoffj@mtea.weac.org or 259-1990.

Option for Those Coerced to Retire

Some substitute teachers retired by June 30 to maintain their health insurance/retirement benefits. MPS has agreed these individuals may rescind their resignation and retirement to continue working **if they wish**.

Your union is working with MPS to make certain these members receive information on WRS pension, health insurance, tax deferred annuities, etc. - to make an informed choice on rescinding their retirement or not.

Linda Gaston-Mounger has provided MPS with a list of 13 members, whom she knows from direct conversations, were forced to retire. Undoubtedly, there are more. If you felt compelled to retire and wish to consider your option to rescind and return to work, please notify Linda at gastonmoungerl@mtea.weac.org or 259-1990 as soon as you can.

Highly Qualified Means a DPI License

MPS is required to have a highly qualified teacher in every classroom - including the substitute teacher. This mandate is part of the district's Corrective Action Plan. DPI strictly enforces the plan because MPS is a District Identified For Improvement (DIFI) under the No Child Left Behind ESEA law.

Your union's agreement with MPS to rescind the layoffs recognizes that a highly qualified substitute teacher possesses **either a current, five-year:**

◆ **Regular teaching license.** (This includes some retired teachers who have a lifetime license.) **or**

◆ **Substitute teaching license.**

If you have a regular or substitute teacher license, you can expect few assignments at the start of the school year. As in the past, you will likely have progressively more work after the first three or four weeks.

If You Have a Substitute Teacher Permit

Substitute teachers who have only a short-term permit can teach in a daily assignment not to exceed 20 days. Furthermore, they cannot supervise paraprofessionals in a Title I classroom.

Permit substitutes simply **do not meet** the highly qualified requirement. **MPS will assign permit substitutes only as a last resort.**

If you want to continue working in MPS, you need to obtain a DPI license. The federal Dislocated Worker Program provides qualified participants with thousands of dollars for tuition, books, and other costs. The local, non-profit HIRE Center is holding information sessions for MPS employees on **August 16 & 17**. For details, go to mtea.org.