
Record/Staff Planning

The memorandum of understanding between MTEA and the school board on the use of record/staff planning day is reprinted below. For most schools, this day occurs on **January 21**.

Guidelines for Record/ Staff Planning Day

1. Record/staff planning day as it occurs between Semester I and Semester II should be structured so that the majority of the day is available to teachers for the completion of records which are due at the end of the day.
2. Staff planning activities held during the staff planning portion of the day should relate to unique problems at the school. In structuring staff planning activities, the principals should involve the MTEA Building Committee in the decision as to the items to be included in the staff planning portion of the day.
3. Staff planning activities shall be limited to matters of local concern that would normally be a topic of faculty meetings. If a faculty requested a central office staff person to come in to answer questions of a local concern it would be considered part of the staff planning activities.

Questions?

If you have any questions/problems related to the plans for the use of this day at your school, please talk to your BR.

Banking Day Changes Begin

Starting **January 24**, the professional activities on banking days will no longer be split into a half-day for individual preparation/planning and a half-day for school-based staff planning and development. The three remaining banking days this year (and the five in the next two years) will be **full days** - for either individual preparation/planning or centrally developed, **systemwide** professional development.

The change was bargained to enable the new MPS administration to offer full days of mandatory, high-quality professional development districtwide. The new contract also guarantees teachers an equal number of **full days** for individual preparation/planning over the next two school years.

Schedule for Rest of 2010-11

January 24 - Full day for:

- Individual preparation and planning (K-8)
- Districtwide professional development (9-12)

March 14 - Full day for:

- Individual preparation and planning (9-12)
- Districtwide professional development (K-8)

May 20 - Full day for:

- Districtwide professional development - **all** grades.

Working Out Calendar Conflicts

Some schools do not have banking days on the same dates as the rest of the district. Representatives for our union and for the administration are resolving the few issues anticipated for January 24.

Potential problems for March 14 and May 20 will also be addressed.

For the Next Two School Years

The five banking days in 2011-12 will be:

- three full days of individual preparation and planning
- two full days of systemwide professional development

In 2012-13, the banking days will be:

- two full days of individual preparation and planning
 - three full days of systemwide professional development
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Endorsement Process Underway

Our union's Political Action Committee (PAC) has interviewed the candidates for the five MPS School Board seats open for election this spring. The PAC's endorsement recommendations are listed in the Action Alert! sent with today's Sharpener.

We are conducting the MTEA membership vote online. Details on how to cast your ballot are in the Action Alert!



Health Insurance During Retirement

The teacher contract provides Board payments toward health insurance premiums if you retire at age 55 or older **and** have:

- ◆ 101.5 days - 812 hours - of full-day sick leave **and**,
- ◆ 15 years of MPS employment.

The amount the Board pays is equal to the PPO premium rate in effect when you retire.

Important Advice!

If you plan to retire at the end of the 2010-11 school year, we strongly recommend that you submit your resignation form to the district on or before **March 1**. The reason is explained below.

PPO Rate to Decrease

It is likely that the board will lower the PPO premium rate when UnitedHealthcare replaces Aetna as the PPO plan administrator. Switching to UHC for claims processing and other tasks will substantially lower the board's health care costs. This could occur as early as April 1, 2011.

MOU Guarantees Higher Board Payment Rate

To guarantee that eligible teachers who retire at the end of 2010-11 will benefit from the higher board payment rate, MTEA and MPS representatives have signed a memorandum of understanding.

The MOU modifies the contract for 2010-11 only. It provides that the rate in effect for those eligible will be either the rate in effect on February 28, 2011 or the rate on July 1, 2011 - whichever is higher.

Resignation Effective Date

You should make your retirement effective at the end of your last paid day for 2010-11 - your school's emergency make-up day.

For the traditional calendar, the last paid day is **June 15**. For year-round schools, it's **June 21**, and it's **May 31** for IB schools.

Spending Changes for Health Accounts

On January 1, two changes were made in spending from a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) or Health Reimbursement Account (HRA):

- ◆ You may no longer use either account for over-the-counter drugs/medicines unless you have a prescription.
- ◆ MPS has discontinued the use of debit cards for direct reimbursement from both accounts.

IRS Changes on OTC Expenses

IRS determines which health care items are eligible for FSA or HRA reimbursement and now requires a prescription for OTC medicines and drugs except insulin. OTC medical supplies such as Ace bandages, band aids, and contact lens solution remain as eligible expenses without a prescription.

Go to mySHPS.com for an extensive list of eligible expenses. You'll also find an explanation of the new IRS rules with a reader-friendly FAQ.

Reimbursement Form Required

Because MPS ended the use of SHPS debit cards for direct reimbursement from health care FSA and HRA accounts, you need to submit a SHPS form for all eligible expenses, along with a copy of supporting documentation. Here's how:

- ◆ **First and foremost:** Retain all receipts, bills, EOBs, etc. for eligible expenses. Whether you pay by cash, check or credit card, keep all documents related to health care expenses.
- ◆ Go to mySHPS.com to print a "Health Care Reimbursement Claim Form." You'll find details on completing the form and the required documentation.
- ◆ Fax or mail a copy of your claim form and documentation to SHPS. Be certain to keep the originals for your records.
- ◆ You should receive a payment check in two or three weeks after SHPS receives your claim.

Tip: Pay Doctor Bill After SHPS Pays You

There are advantages to delaying payment of deductible, co-pay, and co-insurance amounts until after the insurance company pays its portion of the claim. First, you will know the exact amount you're responsible for when you receive the explanation of benefits (EOB). Second, if you submit a claim form to SHPS with a copy of the EOB and wait until you receive reimbursement from SHPS, you'll have the money in hand to pay what you owe.

When You've Paid an Eligible Expense

For up-front out-of-pocket expenses, such as a prescription drug co-pay, it's a good idea to submit your claim to SHPS as soon as possible. If you routinely fax your SHPS form and a copy of your receipt, you'll be reimbursed sooner and decrease the risk of forgetting to submit a claim.

Checking Your Account Amount

To find out how much money is available in either your health care FSA or HRA, go to the mySHPS.com and log in at "Participants/Member."

You may also call **1-888-842-8230**, a number dedicated to providing MPS employees with FSA and HRA account data.
