
Reclaim Wisconsin, Recall Walker

Here are two steps you can take **now** to help recall Gov. Walker:

#1 – Sign Both Petitions

There are two separate petitions to sign – one to recall Gov. Walker and the other to recall Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch. If Mr. Walker is recalled, Ms. Kleefisch would automatically become governor – unless she is also recalled.

Many of our union's leaders are already circulating recall petitions. Please check with your school's Building Representative.

You can also sign the petitions at the MTEA Building, weekdays from 2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

#2 – Circulate Recall Petitions *Training* - It's very important to receive training on the legal requirements for gathering recall petition signatures. You may stop by our union office at 5130 West Vliet Street on weekdays from 2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. to receive this training and pick up petition forms the same day.

This is a Wisconsin Statute 11.29 communication for MTEA members only.

Take the PHA Now or Pay Later

The deadline for completing your annual personal health assessment (PHA) online is **December 15**. If you and your spouse do not take the PHA by the deadline, a \$100 deduction will be taken from your February 17 and March 16 paychecks - a total of \$200.

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What "Walkerworld" Looks Like

Last spring, Gov. Walker and his Republican majorities in the State Senate and Assembly enacted a new public employee bargaining law, Act 10, and adopted a two-year state budget. **Gov. Walker's agenda:**

◆ **Prohibits collective bargaining** between public employee unions and governmental employers.

Gov. Walker's law went into effect on July 1, 2011. Our union and the school board are now forbidden from bargaining anything (except base wage amounts).

◆ **Eliminates existing contracts** effective upon their expiration.

For teachers, the 2009-13 contract is gone on July 1, 2013.

◆ **Cuts state funding** for public education - an alarming, unprecedented amount for this school year and next.

MPS lost \$82 million in state funding for the 2011-12 budget year - resulting in massive cuts in positions, larger class sizes, layoffs, security/discipline problems, etc.

◆ **Substantially expands vouchers.**

The changes have already accelerated the loss of students, decreased funding to MPS, and increased city property taxes.

Extreme Use of Gov. Walker's Tools

Faced with massive funding cuts and significant losses in enrollment, the School Board has voted to start using the cost-cutting "tools" Gov. Walker claims will solve all budget problems. At its November 17 meeting, the Board approved drastic changes in health insurance and other benefits that will harm active and retired employees and their families.

For example, after the teacher contract expires on June 30, 2013, the maximum you could pay for out-of-pocket deductibles and coinsurance amounts will skyrocket to \$9,750 a year. (By contract, the annual cap is now \$825.) The 10-fold increase would apply to in-network medical services for a teacher with PPO family coverage.

Delay Needed to Develop Alternatives

Along with other MPS unions, MTEA leaders asked the administration and the Board's finance committee to postpone action on the health/benefit changes recommended by the superintendent. There will be pain, but we'd like to lessen it, if possible.

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Why a PHA Every Year?

The PHA provides confidential information about your health status including risks. The results will include suggestions for totally voluntary 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 out the **confirmation number**.

Action Research

With a \$1500 Stipend!

Are you interested in action research with peers - to develop practices that will work in your classroom? Would a \$1500 stipend help make this PD opportunity even more attractive? Would you like to step into a teacher leadership role?

If you are looking for a fulfilling, professional growth experience, apply now for an NEA Foundation Action Research Fellowship. Two letters of recommendation are required. The downloadable application form and details are at mtea.org. The deadline is Friday, **December 30**.

Runoff Election for Elementary Representative

None of the four teachers running for the Kindergarten Primary Representative position on our union's Executive Board received a majority of the votes cast prior to the Thanksgiving break. A runoff election between the top two vote getters will be held in December.

The voting results of what turned out to be a primary election were:

Monica Lopez - 319

Rozalia Harris - 263

Alaura Cook - 102

Brenda Pullen-O'Donnell - 100

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We asked the district for information our actuary needs to develop alternative changes to the group health insurance. MPS plans to give us the data on December 9.

If the School Board agrees to reconsider the health benefit changes it approved two weeks ago, we will have a reasonable opportunity to present alternatives. We are developing actuarially sound measures which will address MPS finance issues, but lessen the harm to employees, retirees, and their families.

Ask Board Members to Reconsider

Please contact the Board member in your district and ask for a delay until January. Details are at mtea.org including:

- ◆ Talking points for communicating with Board members.
- ◆ More examples of the extreme changes in health/benefits approved at the Board's November 17 meeting.
- ◆ Remarks by MTEA President Bob Peterson, explaining why partnering now is critical to the future of MPS.

Plus a Salary Freeze and Furlough Days

The Board also voted to freeze salaries and impose four unpaid furlough days for the next three budget years. These significant, far-reaching steps were taken with **no** prior notice, **no** opportunity for community input.

Focus Must Be on Health/Benefit Changes

The Board's swift action to freeze salaries and mandate unpaid furlough days was surprising and swift - with no debate. However, it's essential at this time to focus the Board's attention on considering alternatives to health insurance/benefits. Reconsidering a salary freeze does not require the technical data and complicated steps necessary to change the Board's decision on health/benefits.

"Take-One" Look at National Boards

Interested in classroom-based professional development? Looking for a chance to achieve an advanced teaching credential that uses a Standards-Based approach for improving your teaching practice and links student learning to effective instruction? Then Take-One or National Board Certification could be for you.

Please join us for one of two informal, informational sessions:

Dates: Tuesday, **December 6**, or Thursday, **December 8**

Time: 4:30 p.m.

Where: MTEA Building

The sessions are open to **all** teachers - whether NBCT is new to you or you've started the process previously.

Please email Dorothy Hancock at hancocdd@milwaukee.k12.wi.us if you'd like more details.