

Supporting Public Schools - Two Key Messages

Our union is sponsoring radio and community newspaper ads to celebrate our city's public schools. At a time when MPS is criticized relentlessly by its many outsider critics, it is essential that we, the educators, stand up for our students, parents, and ourselves. Along with MPS administrators, our parents and students, we are the most authentic and most respected voices for public schools in Milwaukee.

Great Public Schools

All of us can do much more to communicate the excellent work we and our peers do. Each of us has a sphere of influence - family, friends, neighbors, and peers. Instead of doing what comes way too easily - griping about difficult students or unreachable parents - we could talk about high-achieving students and supportive parents.

Fix the Funding Laws

As we tout the good things being accomplished by our schools, we also need to explain the negative impact of the state's broken funding laws. For example, if a district does not raise local property taxes to the legal limit, it is penalized with decreased state aid the next school year. Another example, affecting MPS only, the state's voucher funding law results in less state aid for students in MPS and higher city property taxes for students in voucher schools.

Our schools, programs, and our students' educational opportunities are dying a death of a thousand cuts. **We must speak out now!**

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American Education Week: November 16-22

The National Education Association's Annual American Education Week spotlights the importance of providing every child in America with a quality public education. The NEA slogan, Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility, calls upon everyone to contribute to making public schools great so that students can grow, prosper, and achieve in the 21st century.

The NEA has designated a focus for each weekday during the 87th Annual American Education Week:

Monday, November 17: Open House Day. From national commemorations to local community events such as AEW house parties, millions of Americans will celebrate public education nationwide.

Tuesday, November 18: Parents Day. Schools are encouraged to invite parents into the classroom for a hands-on experience of what their child's day is like.

Wednesday, November 19: Education Support Professionals Day. Individuals who provide invaluable services to schools are recognized for their outstanding work.

Thursday, November 20: Educator for a Day. Schools are urged to invite community leaders to serve as educators to get a glimpse at a day in the life of a school employee.

Friday, November 21: Substitute Educators Day. This day honors the educators called upon to replace absent teachers.

MTEA Message in the Media

Watch and listen for a special message from the MTEA on the radio airwaves and in our community newspapers. Print ads will be in Milwaukee community newspapers this week and next. Radio spots will run on WUWM, Milwaukee Public Radio, 89.7 FM and on WMCS, AM 1290.

Recognizing You and Your Colleagues

Our union's leaders and staff would like to salute all of the dedicated educators of MPS. The great work you do - every school day - deserves to be celebrated.

As a teacher, you are urged to recognize the tremendous support that members in our union's three other bargaining units provide to you and your school.

Wednesday, November 19, is the day set aside to commend ESPs - educational assistants, including school safety assistants, and the accountant/bookkeeper at your school.

Friday, November 21, is the day designated to honor the substitute teachers at your school.

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Send Us Your Stories!

Tell your story about how the current state funding laws are hurting your school or classroom. What could you do or provide for your students if you had the resources you need?

We also need good news - the successes of students, parents, and educators - at your school!

Please send us both kinds of stories at mtea.org.

To publicize the real MPS stories, our union is working with:

◆ WEAC - which has won an NEA grant targeted for our area.

◆ MPS, ASC, and the GMC (Greater Milwaukee Committee) - partners in communications on the MPS Strategic Plan.

Thirsty Third Thursday

Our union's SpeakOut! Committee invites you to a social networking opportunity at O'Brien's, 4928 West Vliet Street - a casual pub two blocks east of the MTEA Building. Come join us for Thirsty Third Thursday on **November 20**, starting at 4:30 p.m.

WAA Testing Procedures

The Wisconsin Alternative Assessment for Students with Disabilities (WAA) is being administered during the same time period as WKCE testing, October 27 - November 28. The WAA procedures will be the same as last January, as outlined below:

◆ Special education teachers are required to **individually** administer three areas of the WAA - reading, math, and science - to each student, in an appropriate testing environment.

◆ It is expected that each area of one-on-one testing will require an hour - an estimated total of three hours per student.

◆ For language arts and social studies, teachers are required to complete a rating scale checklist. The time needed to complete both checklists is estimated to be a total of 30 minutes. (Teachers are no longer required to attach evidence to these checklists.)

3.5 Hours of Class Coverage for Each Student

Representatives of our union and the MPS administration have agreed to the following guidelines for administering the WAA:

◆ Principals should arrange for 3.5 hours of class coverage per student for teachers who must complete WAA testing.

◆ The amount of time to complete the checklists and one-on-one testing is an estimate. If there are unusual circumstances requiring more time (or less), the teacher should inform the principal so that the appropriate coverage time is arranged.

Your class coverage time should be arranged to fit your plans for administering the tests to each student. For example, students who need WAA testing may not be able to handle three continuous hours. You'll need to schedule the times based on each student's ability to complete each test.

Class Coverage Concerns

If you encounter problems working out the class coverage you need with your principal, please contact Nancy Costello of the MTEA staff at costellon@mtea.weac.org or 259-1990.

Are You Interested in Becoming an Urban UniServ Director?

The Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) is seeking applicants for its Urban Intern Program, a full-time internship for one year (approximately July 1 to June 30). The selected candidate will work at the MTEA during the internship.

The intern program is an on-the-job learning experience. Internships are paid, full-time positions with duties scheduled during the week and on weekends.

Interns are selected from applicants who are interested in becoming professional staff. **Women and minorities are strongly encouraged to apply.**

For details on qualifications, salary, and benefits, go to mtea.org or call Mark Simons, WEAC negotiations specialist, at 1-262-789-6000 or e-mail him at simonsm@weac.org.

Applications are due by Friday, January 9, 2009.