

With Sharpener

Today you should receive two additional MTEA items:

- ◆ A flier on calling your state legislators to support real reform for MPS - **not** mayoral takeover.
- ◆ A brochure on the 403(b) retirement investment program now available to MPS employees with the WEA Trust Member Benefits.

Please review both items and take action as you see fit.

Come to Our "PDP Goals Approval Night"

If you're an initial educator who needs to have your professional development plan goals approved, come to the MTEA Building after school **Thursday, December 10**.

PDP team representatives will be available from 4:30 until 6:30 p.m. to review and approve your goals.

Please bring hard copies of your goals and approval sheet, as well as electronic versions. Flash drives and laptops are encouraged!

The MTEA Teacher Education and Professional Standards (TEPS) Committee, chaired by Judith Gundry, arranged this opportunity - especially for members who don't have a PDP team.

Be sure to arrive no later than 6:15 p.m., so the reviewers have time to approve your goals.

Please pre-register at mtea.org (Events).

Would Mayoral Control Improve MPS?

Have you ever thought (or hoped) that changing the governance of MPS from an elected school board to mayoral control would improve the district? There are valid reasons for such thoughts. Past school boards have made some very bad decisions, especially when voucher proponents held the majority. The current board is problematic on certain issues - including its efforts to take away employee health benefits.

Despite the shortcomings of the present structure, there are compelling reasons why mayoral takeover would be worse. Three key reasons are described below.

Student Achievement Gains Are Not Made

The primary goal for mayoral takeover in other cities has been to improve student outcomes, usually defined as standardized test results. To date, there is no empirical evidence that mayoral control significantly improves in student achievement. There has been a lot of media spin and rhetoric, but no conclusive proof.

It's the Democratic Structure, Not the Personalities

Maintaining the democratic right of Milwaukeeans to elect their school board is **not** about the individuals - past, present, or future - who are elected to the board or the office of mayor. It's about having a voice, through elections and access after elections, with a governmental body established for the sole purpose of providing the best education possible.

On the other hand, the mayor has multiple priorities. And no mayor can be as accessible to citizens, parents, and staff as a nine-member board.

Contract Struggles: Even More Difficult

As to contract rights and benefits, an accessible school board does not guarantee fair treatment at the bargaining table. There is ample evidence to the contrary, historically and today. Our union's efforts to bargain contracts that attract and retain the best educators and learning conditions for MPS students are resisted during every round of talks. (An update on the lack of progress at the bargaining table is on the back.)

However, there is overwhelming evidence that mayoral control will be worse for employees. Details on how much worse will be presented to MTEA Building Representatives at their December 9 meeting.

Professional Concerns and Questions

Has your individual preparation time been replaced by mandatory meetings? Do you feel that learning walks are no longer collaborative group opportunities to look at best practices? Concerned they may be "backdoor" evaluations?

At their December 9 meeting, BRs will be briefed on how teacher rights have been violated in some schools recently.

Results of Special MTEA Election

Two vacant positions on the MTEA's 22-member MTEA Executive Board were filled in the election held in November - one for special education and the other for middle school. The MTEA Election Balloting Committee reported these results:

Special Education:

- ◆ Michelle Wright - 434
- ◆ Celestine Lyle Rogers - 119

Middle School:

- ◆ Shunda Allen - 170
- ◆ Darryl Thomas - 124

Runoff Election for Kindergarten-Primary

None of the candidates in the race for Kindergarten-Primary Representative received a majority of the votes cast.

The results were:

- ◆ Ray Klammer - 209
- ◆ Brenda K. Pullen-O'Donnell - 209
- ◆ Sherita Brazil-Kostuck - 186
- ◆ Myesha L. Reynolds - 152

There will be a runoff election between the top two candidates, Ray Klammer and Brenda K. Pullen-O'Donnell.

The runoff election ballots will be delivered to the elementary schools on December 10.

Contract Talks Continue - Slowly

Your teacher bargaining team has met with the school board's team a number of times since school started, but progress is very slow.

MPS negotiators presented a comprehensive package of proposals (135 pages) shortly before the Thanksgiving break. It was not good news.

Teacher Proposals - Dismissed by Board's Team

Most of your team's proposals aimed at improving teaching and learning in the district (class size, safety, prep time, etc.) were dismissed by the board's team. The board's comprehensive package:

- ◆ Offered no counterproposals on most teacher proposals.
- ◆ Outright rejected others.
- ◆ Showed minimal movement on a few issues.

Board Proposals - Many Are Regressive

Some of the school board's latest proposals are worse than it previously offered. Here are three examples:

Salary

The board's 135-page package did not include a raise. Instead, the board's team wants to set up a joint MPS/MTEA committee to study an alternative compensation system.

Health Insurance

The school board is proposing many changes in health insurance. For instance, it wants to eliminate your union's right to negotiate which insurance company will administer the MPS group health plans.

The impact on your out-of-pocket costs could be significant. For example, each insurance company determines its own usual and customary payment amounts. MPS could pick the cheapest company when it comes to paying claims - without regard to quality and the cost to employees.

Mandatory Inservice

MPS is proposing to require teachers to attend inservices outside their regular workday and work calendar.

- ◆ For inservices outside the regular day, teachers would be mandated to attend if given a 10-day notice.
- ◆ Inservices on Saturdays and during the summer would be mandatory with a 30-day notice.

What's Next

Your teacher team received a 75-page document containing revisions to the board's pre-Thanksgiving package on December 1. The MTEA team is now developing proposals to counter the board's latest package, including the revisions.

Look for our next update prior to winter break.

Sign Up for E-Mail Updates

Prior to the Thanksgiving break, nearly 1,900 members received our update on contract talks via e-mail. We recommend that you sign up for speedy updates at mtea.org. Please provide your home e-mail address when you subscribe online.