

Briefing Planned for RA Meeting

Building Representatives will receive detailed information on the proposed MPS budget cuts at the Representative Assembly on February 10.

The discussion will include an analysis of DPI's threat to withhold Title I funds from the district.

Pre-Registration Required for February 24 Workshop

The annual "Make-It, Take-It" workshop, sponsored by the MTEA's Early Childhood Committee and the Milwaukee Kindergarten Association, will take place on **Wednesday, February 24**. This year's hands-on event will be held at the district's Curriculum Materials Development Center (CMDC), housed at Gwen T. Jackson Elementary School, 2121 West Hadley Street.

- ◆ Registration begins at 4:00 p.m.
- ◆ Sessions will start at 4:30 p.m. and end by 6:00 p.m.
- ◆ Refreshments will be served.

Free Materials Voucher

Participants will receive a voucher to purchase materials to make their choice of items for classroom use.

If you plan to attend, you need to pre-register at mtea.org (Events).

If you would like more details, please contact Stephanie Walters at walterss@weac.org or 259-1990.

Seeking the Facts Behind the Draconian School Budget Cuts

On February 2, MTEA President Mike Langyel wrote Milwaukee School Board President Michael Bonds. The text of his letter is below.

The MTEA is receiving reports from our members regarding the drastic school budget cuts being proposed by the administration. We have also learned that the building administrators must submit a budget for their school by February 11, 2010.

We believe many questions need to be answered. How were the budget amounts determined for each school? How did MPS spend the stimulus money? What cuts are being made at the central office to prevent services to students from being eliminated? This is just a sampling of the many questions being raised by our members.

We are writing to request that you convene a meeting with MTEA and ASC representatives where the MPS administration will explain how the budget was developed and what assumptions were used in the development of the budget, and address related questions.

We are also requesting a delay in the date by which schools must identify cuts and submit their budget to the central office

Your prompt consideration of these requests will be appreciated.

MPS Budget Overview on February 9

The MPS administration plans to update the school board's Strategic Planning and Budget Committee on school allocation determinations, the MPS benefits rate, and other issues that will affect the district's budget for 2010-11.

The meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 9, at the MPS central office, 5225 West Vliet Street. The public will have an opportunity to ask questions and comment.

MTEA Organizing Workgroup - February 18

On February 3, the MTEA Executive Board voted to create an MTEA Organizing Workgroup for two reasons:

- ◆ As a key step toward building an organizing culture within our union.
- ◆ To position our union to respond to current and future issues, such as the proposed MPS Budget reductions.

Participation in the MTEA Organizing Workgroup is open to all MTEA members. Its first meeting will take place at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 18, at the MTEA Building.

No formal registration is needed. Just bring your energy and ideas!

Summit on Milwaukee Graduation Project

The dropout crisis is not just a school problem. It's a community problem that requires community solutions.

Our union - in partnership with local businesses, non-profit organizations, parents, youth, and others - is convening a summit on Friday, March 19. Stakeholders representing our whole community will come together to learn more about dropout prevention, and develop a community action plan to increase graduation rates in Milwaukee.

Educators will have a place at the table, but space is limited. If you would like to represent MTEA at the summit, please complete the interest form at mtea.org. Our delegation will be selected by MTEA President Mike Langyel.

MPS Teachers Earn National Certification

Eight district educators earned National Board Certification in 2008-09. We're proud of the members listed below. Their hard work and dedication brings positive recognition to our profession and to our schools/district.

Anita Bensman
95th Street

Jessica Deibel
Garland

Sharonda Harris
Math Specialist

Jennifer Huckleby
Milwaukee Sign Language

Karen Rehorst Porras
Morgandale

Angela Rich
Mitchell

Laura Vargo
Allen Field

Cynthia Zielinski
Allen Field

Claiming a Tax Deduction for Union Dues

If you itemize deductions on your federal income tax return, you can include a portion of your union dues along with other expenses that are defined by the IRS as "miscellaneous deductions." The IRS allows a deduction for miscellaneous expenses which, in the aggregate, exceed 2% of your adjusted gross income.

For example, suppose your 2009 adjusted gross income was \$38,000, and the aggregate amount you spent on items which qualify as miscellaneous deduction expenses was \$1,000. On Schedule A of your federal tax form, you would detail the \$1,000 in expenses and then subtract \$760, which is 2% of your \$38,000 income. The result would be a net "miscellaneous" deduction of \$240.

Some Union Expenditures Are Not Deductible

Under the federal tax code, union dues spent on legislative lobbying and political action contributions are **not** deductible expenses for income tax purposes. To comply with the IRS requirements, our attorney has calculated the lobbying expenses of the MTEA, WEAC, and NEA for 2009, as well as the MTEA and WEAC political action contributions. After deducting these expenses, our attorney has determined that 70.4% of the MTEA/WEAC/NEA dues teachers paid during 2009 qualify as miscellaneous deduction expenses.

Typical Allowable Dues Amount - \$689.44

For most teacher members, the total amount of union dues deducted during 2009 was \$979.32. If you paid this amount, IRS allows you to claim only **\$689.44** in union dues as a miscellaneous deduction expense ($\$979.32 \times 70.4\% = \689.44).

Determining Your Amount for 2009

To claim the allowable portion of the union dues you paid during 2009, you should take two steps:

1. Check your December 25, 2009 paycheck to find the total amount deducted for union dues during 2009. It will be in the "After-Tax Deduction Box," noted "YTD" (Year-to-Date).
2. Multiply your amount by 70.4%.

Extra Step Required If You Requested a Rebate

If you requested a rebate for your 2009-10 MTEA PAC contribution (\$9.20), your WEAC PAC contribution (\$19.99), or for WEAC/NEA fair share, you need to take an extra step. You must subtract any rebates you received in 2009 **before** you multiply your 2009 dues deduction total by 70.4%.

Available at mtea.org

Our union dues and tax deduction information is at mtea.org. It will be there from now until April 15, for your quick reference.

Teachscape's Teacher as Hero Event

Experience a different kind of professional development that acknowledges what it takes to be a teacher hero. This session is not about how to make you better at your job, but how to make your job better for you.

This unique and invigorating conversation will be held at Maggiano's Restaurant in Mayfair from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 3. Register at mtea.org (Events) or call 1-877-987-8748.