

More Steps Coming

The collaborative planning survey is one, initial step - and more are in the works.

◆ When today's Sharpener went to press, BRs were scheduled to discuss the role of educators in education reform at their meeting on **April 9**.

◆ Our union is co-sponsoring a forum on **April 17** for educators to share concerns about deteriorating teaching and learning conditions. (See page two.)

◆ On **April 25**, we are holding a Legislative Breakfast so that educators can explain the needs of their students to Milwaukee legislators. (See page three.)

We Hear You!

- ◆ Test-score driven mandates - to the detriment of students.
- ◆ The extra burden on classroom teachers and paraprofessionals due to the lack of substitute teachers.
- ◆ The piling on of more and more pressure (and paperwork) with fewer resources.

The list goes on! This school year, MTEA leaders and staff have heard more and more frustration voiced by individual members and entire faculties. Staff morale seems to be at an all-time low.

The underlying message, from too many administrators, is that we, the educators, are not working hard enough and long enough. That what we are doing, is all wrong. That we are to blame for everything that ails MPS.

In too many schools, educators are not treated as professionals, and the good work we do every day is not respected.

Helter Skelter Is Not Effective Reform

Most educators are painfully aware that no one has a handle on which "reforms" are being implemented in each MPS school. No one is assessing the effectiveness of the many reform pieces in each school - to determine if they are improving student achievement.

In one school, a reform measure is being successfully implemented, with meaningful teacher involvement; coherent professional development; and adequate time, planning, and resources. It's working well. But, in another school, the same reform may be detrimental to students because of improper implementation.

Strong Positive Action Is Needed

As a union, we need to **collectively** work to improve our working (teaching) conditions and, at the same time, improve student achievement (**not** defined solely by test scores). During March, the MTEA Executive Board and the MTEA Collective Bargaining Team discussed a wide range of steps to reverse the harmful trends noted above.

Initial Step - Collaborative Planning Survey

By contract, every faculty is required to engage in 12 hours of paid collaborative planning annually. But more and more this school year, members report there is no meaningful involvement of teachers; the time is not used for collaborative planning.

To address these concerns and determine the future of this reform strategy, we need to hear from you. We have sent BRs in every school a survey for all teachers to complete - so that our membership's collective voice can be heard!



Initial Educators - Got PDP Questions?

- ◆ What's a PDP?
- ◆ Why do I have to do it?
- ◆ When do I have to do it?
- ◆ Who's going to help me?
- ◆ Where do I need to go?

Our union is sponsoring a workshop to answer your questions on how to develop a quality professional development plan.

Expert Facilitator

The facilitator will be Jill Matarresse, an experienced teacher who has conducted PDP workshops for educators all over Wisconsin. Jill has the answers to help you de-mystify the PDP process.

Her workshop is especially for initial educators - in their first, second, or third years. Practical information will be presented on how to write goals that make sense for you as a professional and how to create realistic objectives to help meet your goals.

The Details

The workshop will be held on Wednesday, **April 30**, at the MTEA Building. Registration/snacks at 4:00 p.m. The session is from 4:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m.

We need you to pre-register at mtea.org (Events) or call us at 259-1990.

Frustrated With...

- ◆ NCLB? State mandates? DIFI?
- ◆ Top-down "reform" dictates, "mandatory" vocabulary lists, electronic grading programs?
- ◆ Scripted curriculum programs?
- ◆ Large class sizes?
- ◆ Next to no planning time?

If so, there is an opportunity to speak out on deteriorating conditions of teaching and learning.

When: 4:15 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 17

Where: Lincoln Middle School of the Arts,
820 East Knapp St - Library, 2nd Floor

Come and share your concerns - and ideas for **future organizing** with other educators. This event is co-sponsored by the Educators' Network for Social Justice and the MTEA.

Tailgate Party and Brewers Game

All MPS employees and retirees, as well as guests, are invited to the Twelfth Annual Tailgate Party/Brewer Game on Friday, **May 9**, at Miller Park. The tailgate party starts at 4:00 p.m. The Milwaukee Brewers will play the St. Louis Cardinals at 7:05 p.m.

The \$11 cost of the tailgate party includes: beer, wine, and soda; hamburgers, brats, hot dogs; potato salad; chips/snacks; and cookies.

The package cost for the tailgate party and Brewers game (half-price tickets) is \$20 for loge bleacher seats (with contoured backs) and \$20.50 for terrace box seats.

Form Due April 25

To join in the fun, please return the form below with your check to Sue Dean at Marshall High School (4141 North 64th St. 53216) by **April 25**. You will receive confirmation, via e-mail if possible.

Game tickets will be distributed at the tailgate party. If this is not convenient, please call Sue Dean at 393-2370 or e-mail her at sdean3@wi.rr.com to arrange to pick up your tickets. Seats are limited, so sign up now!

Twelfth Annual MPS Employee/Retiree Tailgate Party and Brewer Game

Name _____ School _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____

Please attach your check, **made payable to Sue Dean**, and note how many packages (or tailgates-only) you are purchasing:

____ Tailgate/Loge Bleachers (\$20)

(No game tickets are available without tailgate participation.)

____ Tailgate/Terrace Box (\$20.50)

____ Tailgate ONLY (\$11) **Send form and check to Sue Dean at Marshall High by April 25.**





Legislative Breakfast - April 26

Milwaukee legislators have been invited to meet with educators at the MTEA's Legislative Breakfast on Saturday, April 26. We plan to have roundtable discussions that will enable members to explain what should be done to improve the lives of educators and the students and families we serve. It's a great opportunity to hear from legislators.

Sign Up to Speak Up

The breakfast buffet/registration will start at 8:00 a.m. The program begins at 9:00 a.m. and ends by 11:30 a.m. The event is being held at the Radisson Hotel, 2303 North Mayfair Road.

To pre-register, please go to mtea.org (Events) or call us at 259-1990. The sign-up deadline is Wednesday, April 23.

MTEA Legislative Priorities*

Noted below are a number of MTEA-specific priorities. While each item falls neatly under the umbrella of the WEAC Legislative Agenda, these issues have particular significance for Milwaukee, and therefore are stated explicitly.

In brief, MTEA priorities for the 2009-2010 legislative session are:

1. Comprehensive school finance reform will address the following topics, focusing on the extra cost to provide services to children living in poverty and those needing bilingual and special education services:
 - a. Repeal of revenue caps
 - b. SAGE funding
 - c. Special education aid
 - d. Bilingual/Bicultural aid
 - e. Certified specialists in every school
2. Prohibition of residency requirements for education employees
3. Mandatory K5
4. Collective bargaining rights, with an emphasis on:
 - a. Repeal of the QEO
 - b. Preparation time as a mandatory subject of bargaining
5. Voucher accountability
6. Recognition and support for the professionalism of teachers and education employees
 - a. Categorical aid funding for implementation of PI 34, the new system for teacher preparation and licensure. Funding for mentoring programs should be devoted to effective mentoring models.
 - b. Strengthen the charter license law to require that teachers are licensed in the subject they teach.
 - c. Create a loan forgiveness program for teaching certain subjects in high-poverty districts

***The MTEA's legislative priorities, as adopted by the BRs at their April 9 meeting, will be at mteazorg on April 10.**



Superintendent's Position on Snow Day Make-Up

MPS has never required teachers to work on the emergency make-up day in the negotiated calendar.

But Superintendent Andrekopoulos unilaterally took the position detailed in the letter reprinted below and sent it to DPI - without even the courtesy of prior notice to our union.

The Superintendent did provide us with a copy of his April 1 letter late in the day on Friday, April 4.

When questioned, he stated he really doesn't want a student attendance day on Monday, June 16. He actually wants that Monday to be the record day - with students in class on Friday, June 13.

We will inform you of developments on the make-up issue as soon as we can.