

Less Paper But More Information, Sooner

We are transitioning to more e-mail and Web communications - saving paper & postage costs.

Saving your union dues money isn't the main reason for the change. Communicating more information, targeting your needs and interests, and **reaching you much faster** are essential to your union's effectiveness.

Calendar Example

If you had signed up to receive bargaining updates via e-mail, you would have received the news on MPS implementing the calendars on July 15.

If you had subscribed for Sharpener via e-mail, you would have received it on July 20.

Sign Up Today

You can access a copy of the 2009-10 calendar at mtea.org. While you're on the home page, link to "Negotiations Updates" and "Newsletters" to sign up. Please subscribe to both with your home e-mail address.

Member Options Continue

As your union's communications evolve, we will continue to accommodate members without Internet access - but in less costly ways.

For example, in the past we printed and mailed a Laborfest sign-up form to over 11,000 members (including retirees) with a return envelope.

Today's Sharpener invites you to sign up for Laborfest online. But if you can't (or prefer not to), please call us at 259-1990.

School Calendars for 2009-10

The school board is implementing three calendars - traditional school year, year-round, and IB high schools - without concluding negotiations with your union. For details on each calendar, please go to mtea.org.

Why No Agreement? Banking Time Issues

The primary obstacle to resolving the calendar was the school board's insistence that all schools do banking time in 2009-10.

Teachers have a contractual right to vote on banking time for their school annually. Your union's negotiators would not agree to negate the voting rights of teachers in the 144 schools that voted for banking time for 2009-10 and the 22 schools that did not.

MPS Imposing Uniform Dates for Banking Days

A secondary obstacle to a calendar agreement was the board's position that all schools have banking days on the same dates.

In the past, traditional year schools had their first banking day between organization day and the first student day. Year-round schools had **two** banking days before students started, a full month before other schools.

MPS is imposing calendars for traditional school year **and** year-round schools with the same five dates for banking days.

◆ If you are in **traditional** year school, you start on Monday, **August 31**, organization day, and students start on Tuesday, **September 1**. Your first banking day will be **October 2**. (MPS moved the banking day usually held the day before students start to December 4.)

◆ If you are in a **year-round** school, you start with an organization day on Friday, **July 31**, and students start on Monday, **August 4**. MPS decided that your first banking day will not be held until **October 2** - the same date as schools on the traditional calendar.

◆ Teachers at two IB high schools, **King and Reagan**, will start on organization day, Friday, **August 14**, and students start on Monday, **August 17**. MPS set their first banking day for **October 5**.

No Calendar Agreement: Unprecedented

For decades, calendar bargaining has been limited to the placement of the 191 teacher days - when school started and ended, winter and spring break dates, etc. An agreement was always reached.

This year, the board's negotiators refused to resolve the calendar unless your union agreed to a change that would nullify the **contract** right of teachers in each school to vote on banking time.

MTEA Actions - Per Legal Advice

After analysis and discussion with MTEA attorneys, we are filing a group grievance and a prohibited labor practice complaint. The legal steps will unfortunately take months to process.



Sal Gonzalez In Memoriam

On June 20, 2009, Sal Gonzalez passed away at his home. His incredibly heroic battle - over 22 months of raging pancreatic cancer - ended quietly.

Sal served on your union's staff full-time since 1994. He was a rock with a compassionate heart. Sal listened and understood the needs of each member he helped. He advocated for all union members with dignity, professionalism, and a calming strength.

From two tours of duty in Vietnam (awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star), to surviving nearly two years with Stage 4 cancer, Sal showed us how to live - with courage and purpose.

Soft-spoken and thoughtful, Sal Gonzalez will be deeply missed.

MTEA Staff Vacancy

There is a vacant assistant executive director position on your union's full-time professional staff. Political action, lobbying, and organizing are three major areas of responsibility for this position.

The job description, hiring requirements, and selection criteria are posted at mtea.org. The closing date for applications is **August 21**.

Political Action Rebate

During 2009-10, the combined MTEA/WEAC/NEA membership dues amount of \$49.35 will be deducted from 20 biweekly paychecks. This deduction includes a \$0.46 contribution to the MTEA's Political Action Fund. This amount, a total of \$9.20 for next school year, is separated from your dues payment. It will be used for local political action - primarily to support candidates for the School Board.

A member who does not want to contribute to political action may request a rebate. The MTEA Constitution states: "Each year a signed, written request must be received at the MTEA Office by October 1."

PHA & Voluntary Programs = Good Health and \$\$\$ (Tax Free)

"GoodHealth" is our shorthand name for the MPS Learn Good Health, Live Good Health program that began on July 1, 2007. GoodHealth is a comprehensive wellness and health education program, which helps members and their families maintain good health, prevent serious illnesses, and manage chronic diseases.

Your union negotiators initiated this joint program as a long-term way to maintain the health care MTEA members (including retirees) need.

Exceptional Initial Success

The first 18 months of the GoodHealth program exceeded expectations. Here are a few of the numbers:

- ◆MPS saved nearly \$1 million, despite substantial start-up costs.
- ◆6,300 MTEA members shared in these savings - \$74.55 each tax free - by completing the personal health assessment (PHA).
- ◆Nearly 1,000 MTEA members received \$200 tax free, by completing the PHA and voluntary programs.
- ◆Despite a 9.6% increase in the national medical inflation rate, the MPS Aetna plan premium increased just 5.5% for 2009-10.

Avoiding a Penalty and Earning Incentives in 2009

If you and your spouse complete the PHA by December 15, 2009, you'll avoid the penalty for not completing the annual PHA - \$200 for 2008.

In addition, if you complete your choice of voluntary programs, you will earn \$250 **tax free** and a share in the district's savings, which could be a few hundred dollars or more.

Start Now to Complete Voluntary Programs

Many voluntary internet-based programs take six weeks to complete. To earn the financial incentives by completing three programs takes 18 weeks. There are only 19 weeks between August 1 and December 11. ***You cannot earn the \$250 incentive unless you start now!***

To access information on taking the PHA and the voluntary "Healthy Living" programs, go to mtea.org and click on the "Take the PHA" link.

Be sure to print and retain your confirmation number if you and your spouse take the PHA online. If you send the paper version, be certain to retain the results mailed to your home.

Join the Fun on Labor Day

The Milwaukee County Labor Council's Laborfest is an opportunity to show our union pride and solidarity, as we celebrate the day with family and friends. Labor Day is late this year, September 7.

The day kicks off with a parade of union members from downtown to the lakefront. The parade leaves Zeidler Union Square Park at 11:00 a.m. and ends at the Summerfest grounds, the site of Laborfest.

MTEA members who join our union's group for the parade receive an MTEA T-shirt and food/beverage coupons for Laborfest. To join the parade, please sign up at mtea.org (Events) by **August 21**. We'll contact you with the details on where and when to meet, parking, etc.





2nd Annual MPS/ Run Back to School

MPS invites you to join in the 2nd Annual Run Back to School on Saturday morning, August 29, (rain or shine). The event will start and end at Wick Field at 4929 West Vliet Street. There will be a 5K run (or 1.5 mile walk) through Washington Park, followed by entertainment, exhibits, healthy resources, and refreshments.

Go to mtea.org (Events) to register. The \$10 adult fee increases to \$15 starting August 15.

