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## First Paycheck

Teachers on the traditional school calendar will receive a **four-day** paycheck September 4.

For school social workers and other teacher unit members who work 200 days, this first paycheck will be for nine days.

## Deduction Notes

◆ If you have a loan, savings club, or other deposits to an Educators Credit Union account, a deduction will be made on the September 4 paycheck (unless your net pay does not cover the amount).

◆ MTEA dues will **not** be taken on the first paycheck. Dues deductions will start on September 18, the first 9-day paycheck.

◆ TDA deductions will also start on September 18.

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## Banking Day Reminder

The calendars MPS imposed for traditional and year-round schools moved the banking day usually held the day before students start to December 4. This year's first banking day will be October 2.

## New Teachers Need Our Help

While the start of the school year is demanding for all of us, colleagues who are new to the profession face a challenge that seems overwhelming at times. We ask experienced teachers to reach out to the new teachers at your school - offering support and encouragement.

## Informed and Involved in 2009-10

Your union's collective strength starts with the commitment of each member. The enclosures provide ways for you to be better informed and more engaged in your union this school year.

### You Are the MTEA

MTEA committees and political activities are great ways to join with other educators in working for improvements in teaching and learning. There are many choices, 25 different committees and 7 political action options.

You are invited to sign up for committees and political activities at [mtea.org](http://mtea.org) or return the enclosed sign-up sheets.

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## Contract Talks "Un-Stalled"

In May, your teacher bargaining team requested information needed to respond to the school board's health insurance proposals, including cost and usage data.

The talks were stalled for weeks because MPS did not provide the information until late July. An insurance consultant retained by the MTEA is now analyzing the data.

### Change in MPS Chief Negotiator

When talks resume, Ms. Deborah Ford will no longer serve as the school board's chief negotiator, but will remain on the team. The district is contracting with the Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) for one of its staff to assume this role.

Whether the change improves progress at the table remains to be seen.

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## Sharpener Via E-Mail? Why Not!

Did you know that you can receive an e-mail version of Sharpener. In addition to rapid delivery, every issue will give you immediate access to timely, related information through links to the MTEA's and other Web sites.

You have two options for subscribing: Go to [mtea.org](http://mtea.org) (Newsletters) or send us your home e-mail address on the enclosed "MTEA Member Data" sheet.

### Try It - in Addition to the Paper Version

As we take steps to strengthen membership communication, you can determine what information is sent to you electronically. If you subscribe to receive Sharpener via e-mail, you will continue to receive the paper version. You'll be able to compare the editions and see which works better for you.

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## Retirement Investment Options Vastly Improved

Seven years ago, your union investigated the tax-sheltered retirement investment products of the WEA Trust. We found the Trust offered high performing investment options, and as a non-profit vendor, its fees were extremely low, especially compared with for-profit companies. It was clear members could earn significantly more money for their retirement with Trust investments.

## Long Time Coming

For years, MPS rejected MTEA proposals to add the WEA Trust as an authorized vendor. Finally, the district conducted a vendor RFP process last school year. The MTEA and other MPS unions participated in the process, which confirmed our previous findings.

On May 20, an agreement was reached to include the WEA Trust (and TIAA-CREF) as authorized vendors - in addition to ING and MetLife.

## Information Flood

You will receive information galore this fall. MPS is mailing a 32-page booklet to all eligible employees and will hold a vendor fair. The four competing vendors will also take their own promotion steps - school visits, mailings, and more!

## TDA = TSA = 403(b)

When you receive your 2009-10 MTEA DateBook, you'll find the four vendors listed as tax deferred annuities, TDAs. The district now uses the term, **MPS 403(b) Plan**, which is more appropriate, but both terms (and tax sheltered annuities, TSAs) are commonly used.

## Correction in DateBook

Our DateBook lists Web sites for the four vendors, but the WEA Trust site has been changed to [www.weabenefits.com](http://www.weabenefits.com).

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## Celebrate Solidarity!

It's not too late to sign up to join in the Labor Day parade plus fun and food at Laborfest. Go to [mtea.org](http://mtea.org) (Events Calendar) or call us at 259-1990.

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## Clarification on MTEA E-Mail Lists

◆ If you previously signed up for e-mail contract bargaining updates, we will **not** automatically add you to our Sharpener e-mail list. The lists are separate by design. We'll add you only if you subscribe.

◆ Your home e-mail is our strong preference. It is not advisable for any union to rely on the employer's e-mail system to communicate with its members. Moreover, e-mails on the MPS system are public records.

However, it is legal for a member to receive Sharpener via MPS e-mail. We know some members don't have access to home e-mail, and we'll use whatever e-mail address you provide.

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## Perspective on Mayoral Takeover

In 1998, Governor Tommy Thompson called a special session of the Legislature to enact a bill that would have replaced the Milwaukee School Board with an appointed three-member commission. The proposed legislation was defeated.

The May 22, 1998 Sharpener presented "A Few Observations to Keep in Mind for the Future." Excerpts are reprinted below:

◆ MTEA and WEAC - staff lobbyists, elected leaders, and members - spent countless hours to defeat the takeover bills. These efforts were well-coordinated and absolutely essential. Those who question what they get from WEAC dues would be totally satisfied if they could have observed the MTEA/WEAC lobbying efforts during the past few weeks.

◆ Milwaukee legislators were outstanding in their defense of city educators. In response to relentless attacks on MPS, the Milwaukee delegation was articulate and impassioned in its support for the dedicated employees of MPS.

◆ While several negative measures were defeated, the Legislature did nothing to provide additional resources for MPS students. An effort was made to increase funding for summer school and after-school programs, but the focus of the debate was on blaming the school board, the system, the educators, etc. Underlying problems - such as poverty and inequity in funding - were not addressed.

## MTEA Opposition to the 2009 Takeover Concept

Your union issued a press release when the news broke that the Mayor, the Governor, and the State Superintendent publicly endorsed mayoral control of MPS. The release outlined several reasons why the MTEA has consistently opposed any legislation that would eliminate the right of Milwaukeans to elect their school board representatives.

A copy of the release is at [mtea.org](http://mtea.org). We also e-mailed it to over 2,000 MTEA members and leaders on August 14.

## How Would Mayoral Control Impact You?

At this time, there are no definitive answers to how a mayoral takeover might impact you, your working conditions, your contract, etc. Our attorneys have reviewed prior bills to change the state law, but cannot complete a legal analysis until specific legislation is drafted.

This is a very serious matter, and we will keep you up-to-date.

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