

Teacher Contract Talks Continue

The MTEA's teacher bargaining team met with the School Board's team on August 24 - and some progress was made. At press time, the teams were scheduled to meet again on August 28.

Open House Notice

Principals are required to inform the faculty of the date(s) for your school's open house by "the fifth workday of the school year." For most schools, the deadline for this notice is **September 6**.

By contract, one open house per semester is considered part of each teacher's assignment.

Scheduling Fall Parent Conferences

Schools considering an alternative schedule for parent-teacher conferences this fall should take the following steps:

Principals should meet with parent representatives and MTEA Building Representatives to develop options for each school. The BR should then survey teachers on the options, and the principal should obtain input from parents. The BR and principal should then meet to review the parent and teacher responses.

By **September 14**, BRs should notify the MTEA in writing of the specific dates and times your faculty wants for fall conferences. Schools will be notified as soon as the MTEA and MPS reach agreement on each request.

Welcome Back!

For most schools, August 30 is the traditional organization day, the first "official" day back. (Year-round schools and International Baccalaureate high schools started earlier.) We hope you had a restful summer and wish you the best for 2007-08.

Collaborative Planning - Year Two

Last school year, schools implemented a new contract provision for 12 hours of paid collaborative planning time. Improving instruction will again be the focus for teachers working together in small discussion groups during 2007-08.

Key Dates

- ◆ **August 30** - Learning teams survey the faculty to identify the collaborative planning needs of the school.
- ◆ **October 5** - The deadline for learning teams to present a comprehensive plan to the faculty.
- ◆ **October 12** - The deadline for principals to submit their school's plan to the superintendent.

Key Points

- ◆ Each school's plan must include the schedule of dates/times for the 12 hours, along with the specific topic(s)/activities and expected outcomes for each session.
- ◆ By contract, planning sessions must be held over the course of the school year in one-hour or two-hour blocks.
- ◆ Regardless of when the 12 hours take place in your school, teachers systemwide will automatically be paid for two hours at the part-time certificated rate on six paychecks: November 2, January 11, February 8, March 7, April 4, and May 2.
- ◆ MTEA and MPS representatives have jointly updated a Q & A on collaborative planning. The MTEA Building Representative in each school has a copy, and you can access it at mtea.org (Members>>Your Contract>>Contract A to Z).

Retirement Planning Workshop Dates

If you are considering retiring in June of 2008, please note the MTEA's pre-retirement workshop will be presented twice this fall - at 7:00 p.m. on September 24 (Monday) and again October 11 (Thursday). Both sessions will be held at Serb Hall.

Details/registration will be in the next Sharpener or register on our Web site now (Members >> Member Forum >> Event Calendar).



Change Proposed in WEAC Scholarships

The Wisconsin Education Association Council sponsors a college scholarship program open to children of WEAC members. Last year, one of the scholarships was awarded to a graduate of a voucher high school in Milwaukee.

MTEA President Dennis Oulahan has proposed a change in WEAC scholarship requirements - making voucher school graduates ineligible. Dennis would like to hear your comments on the proposal prior to the WEAC Board of Directors meeting on September 14-15.

You may e-mail Dennis at oulahand@mtea.weac.org or call him at the MTEA Building, 259-1990.

MTEA Group Grievance Wins Over \$426,000 in Back Pay

Some schools employ retired teachers for vacant positions that are difficult to fill. Even though these rehired retirees are doing work covered by the teacher contract, the school district unilaterally decided they were "consultants" and did not pay them at the negotiated salary rates. Instead, MPS paid them at the salary rates they were earning at the time they retired.

The MTEA filed a group grievance early in 2005. The grievance was scheduled for an arbitration hearing on May 10, 2007. At the hearing, the district acknowledged it had violated the contract. MPS agreed to the remedy our union sought - full retroactive pay (reflecting all raises) from December of 2004 through June of 2007.

The total amount of back pay was \$426,881.60. The average amount paid to the 132 affected teachers on August 24 was **\$3,234**. One of the rehired retirees received \$23,700.

Health Insurance Open Enrollment

During September, you will have an opportunity to switch health care plans. In most situations, **our union recommends the Aetna plan**. Three points to keep in mind:

1. Aetna Is the Better Plan - The Aetna plan provides more comprehensive coverage for you and your family - with the doctors and hospitals you choose. Aetna also pays better benefits in many key areas of care. When you compare the costs of the Aetna plan and the UnitedHealthcare HMO, you need to consider the financial impact of all of your family's medical needs, currently and in the future.

2. No Premium Cost - Whichever plan you have for 2007-08, there will be no premium deductions from your paycheck. The School Board will continue to pay 100% of the premium cost.

3. GoodHealth Program Is NOT an Insurance Plan - Aetna, UnitedHealthcare, and Medco (prescriptions) will continue to administer MPS group health insurance benefits, process your medical claims, etc. The new wellness/health education program is a separate, voluntary option **in addition to** whichever health plan you have.

If You Are Considering Switching Plans...

You should carefully study what both plans offer you and your family. We will provide additional information about your group health plan options in [Sharpener](#) and on our Web site.

Labor Day Fun

In mid-August, we mailed a packet of materials to the homes of all teachers. (To save money, we sent it third-class which is sometimes slow and is not forwarded to new addresses.)

The mailing included a sign-up sheet for the annual Laborfest parade from downtown to the Summerfest grounds.

If you plan to participate in this union solidarity (and family fun) event, but have not returned a sign-up sheet, please:

- ◆ Call 259-1990 to pre-register and give use your T-shirt size.
- ◆ Come to Ziedler Park (4th and Michigan) at 10:00 a.m. on Monday to line up with other MTEA members.

Need an Aetna Network Directory?

We have sent copies of the the Aetna directory of network doctors to each school.

The most recent directory consists of two documents: **1)** a 234-page booklet from March of **2006** (the same booklet was sent to the schools last September) and **2)** a 36-page addendum from March of **2007**.

Your school's MTEA Building Representative (BR) will place both items in an accessible location such as the school office, faculty lounge, etc. for members who want to pick up a copy.