
Register Now for Winter Conference

Need a prescription to cure the February blahs? The WEAC Winter Conference in Middleton on **February 25-26** is just what the doctor ordered. It offers both professional ("Culturally Responsive Classroom," "Social Media," etc.) **and** union workshops ("Beginning Bargaining," "BR Training," etc.).

Friday night hotel reservations (\$30 single, \$60 double) must be made by **February 1**. The conference fee of \$25 includes: Friday night's meal; breakfast, lunch, and a send-off snack on Saturday; breaks and training materials. Conference-only registration (no hotel) is due by **February 11**.

WEAC is also offering a conference in Wausau on March 4-5. To access details on conference sessions and registration, go to mtea.org (Events).

Annual 4th Grade Poster Contest Underway

"The Dance of Nations Lives Today" is the theme for the 21st Annual Poster Contest sponsored by the WEAC Human Relations Committee. The contest's two-fold purpose: Promote the celebration of the Native American culture and address the issue of racism directed at Native Americans.

For contest rules and other details, go to weac.org.

Entries from MPS fourth graders should be sent to MTEA President Mike Langyel at our union's office by **February 15**.

School Board Recommendations

The MTEA PAC endorsement recommendations for Milwaukee School Board were approved by a wide margin in the online membership vote conducted during the third week of January. The endorsed candidates, along with the percentage of members voting who supported the PAC recommendations, are:

Mark Sain (98%) - For **District 1**

Michael Bonds (89%) - For **District 3**

Meagan Holman (91%) - For **District 8**

Terry Falk (78%) - For **At-Large (Citywide)**

Our union's PAC made no recommendation for District 2.

Primary Election - February 15

There will be a primary election for District 8 where three candidates are vying for the seat now held by Terry Falk. If you would like to help get out the February 15 primary vote, please contact MTEA Executive Director Stan Johnson at 259-1990 or johnsons@mtea.weac.org.

The general election will be held on April 5.

Summer Hiring Grievances Win Back Pay for Teachers

Last spring, our union's staff filed four formal grievances over violations of the contractual provisions for summer school employment. The results are summarized below:

Two Teachers Paid Nearly \$11,500

◆ A secondary math teacher was improperly released when student enrollment fell short for the summer program at Kilmer (Alternative) High School. The teacher should have kept her assignment because she was more senior than the other math teacher (who should have released).

The more senior teacher received **\$4,543** in back pay and 8.7 hours were added to her sick leave account.

◆ A district administrator refused to employ a more senior social studies teacher for a summer world studies course at Bradley Tech despite verification by DPI and the MPS social studies curriculum specialist that she was qualified to teach the course. In fact, she had taught the same course the previous summer.

This teacher received **\$6,948** in back pay plus 8.7 sick leave hours.

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Teacher Hired After Grievance Processed

In the third grievance filed in early June, a teacher who had initially been denied a ninth grade algebra position was employed for the 2010 summer school. The MTEA staff member representing him secured DPI verification that he could teach a ninth grade algebra class with a 1-9 math license. Our union's staff representative also obtained a letter from his principal confirming he had taught the course for the past 4.5 years.

One Grievance Denied

The fourth grievance, involving a teacher who was not hired for a reading/language arts position in her school's local summer program, was denied by the district. The school's principal and curriculum generalist confirmed that the teacher had not been assigned to teach reading for the past three years. Without proof of the required experience in teaching reading, the grievance was not appealed.

Resolve Hiring Questions Promptly

In making summer hiring decisions, school and district administrators must consider seniority, licensure, school year teaching assignments, and other factors.

If you believe you are being improperly denied a position, do not hesitate to present your concern to the administrator responsible for hiring. If you still have questions, please contact Don Ernest of the MTEA staff.

Applying for Summer Positions

The application period for summer school positions at **local schools**, open only to teachers on the school's staff, closed January 21.

Online applications for **citywide** summer school positions will be posted on the MPS portal from **February 11** through **March 4**.

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 2010 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 2010, 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 2010 qualify as miscellaneous deduction expenses.

Typical Allowable Dues Amount - \$700.65

For most teacher members, the total amount of union dues deducted during 2010 was \$995.24. If you paid this amount, IRS allows you to claim only **\$700.65** in union dues as a miscellaneous deduction expense ($\$995.24 \times 70.4\% = \700.65).

Determining Your Amount for 2010

To claim the allowable portion of the union dues you paid during 2010, you should take two steps:

1. Check your December 24, 2010 paycheck to find the total amount deducted for union dues during 2010. 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 2010-11 MTEA PAC contribution (\$9.40), 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 2010 **before** multiplying your 2010 dues 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.

Planning Ahead for Professional Opportunities

◆UWM's Writing Project Summer Institute will take place for five weeks (four days a week) from June 20 - July 21. Details and application are available at writingproject.uwm.edu. The deadline is **February 18**.

All-day conferences are set for the first two Saturdays in April:

◆**April 2** - The Educators' Network for Social Justice (ENSJ) Fourth Annual Conference on anti-racist, anti-bias teaching.

◆**April 9** - The Third Annual Conference of the Greater Milwaukee Action Research Consortium (GMARC), sponsored by the NEA Foundation.