

## School Board Adopts "Kids First" Budget

Members and leaders of our union joined with parents and community members to urge the School Board to vote in support of an MPS budget for 2008-09 that makes children the priority. At the Board's October 21 public hearing, dozens of speakers stood up for a budget which was the best that could be achieved under the state's current funding laws.

### Key Budget Features

The budget adopted at the Board's October 23 meeting:

- ◆ Prevents more program cuts and layoffs this school year.
- ◆ Reflects the expenditures initially proposed by Supt. Andrekopoulos last spring.
- ◆ Provides additional funding to schools for the 1,689 new students above the projected enrollment.
- ◆ Adds nearly \$1.3 million toward early childhood education, to be allocated at the administration's discretion for measures such as providing paraprofessionals for non-SAGE kindergarten classes.

### The Final Votes

The five "yes" votes for the final budget were: Peter Blewett, Michael Bonds, Terry Falk, Jennifer Morales, and Tim Petersons. In a separate vote to certify the property tax levy required to fund the adopted budget, Charlene Hardin joined these five members.

## An Opportunity to Work for the Change We Need

For the first time in years, pro-public school political leaders will hold:

- ◆ The governorship in Wisconsin.
- ◆ The U.S. presidency.
- ◆ A majority in the state Senate and Assembly.
- ◆ A majority in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

The political work is done. The legislative work is about to begin.

The change we need will not come easily. For example, there is now an opportunity to reform how Wisconsin funds its public schools. But the state economy is profoundly impacted by the global financial crisis. Despite the economic challenges, the election results present the best chance ever to change the state's school funding laws. Sign up to join our efforts at [mtea.org](http://mtea.org).

### Thanks for the Energy

◆ Thanks to every member who helped with the not-so-glamorous tasks which are always key to voter turnout – phone calls, postcards, literature drops at doors, etc.

◆ Thanks to each member who voted in the historic election of America's first African-American president. Republican, Democrat, Independent - we all should be extremely proud!

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## Your Role in Preparing for Teacher Contract Bargaining

On June 30, 2009, the 2007-09 MBSD/MTEA Teacher Contract will expire. Negotiations on the next contract will start in mid-January, when our union's teacher bargaining team will exchange initial proposals with the School Board's team.

To develop proposals that address the issues and needs of members, our team needs to hear from **you** – and as many other members as possible. The first step in our team's listening process will be a survey to identify the membership's overall priorities.

MTEA Building Representatives will receive the Negotiations News survey at their monthly meeting on November 12, for distribution in schools by Friday, November 14. The deadline for returning the survey will be the following **Friday, November 21**.

### Calendar and Additional Online Surveys to Follow

Our bargaining team will conduct an online survey for 2009-10 school calendar negotiations in the near future.

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## Are You at Risk of Losing \$200?

We recently learned that only 50% of MPS employees have completed the annual Personal Health Assessment (PHA). If you and your spouse do not complete the PHA by December 15, 2008, MPS will deduct a \$100 premium contribution from two of your paychecks this winter - February 20 and March 20 - a **\$200 total**.

Please take the time now, before the holidays, to complete the PHA online. Go to [mtea.org](http://mtea.org) and click on the "GoodHealth" link. **Be sure to hit "Send"** and print out the confirmation number - for your records.

### Why an Annual PHA?

The purpose of the annual PHA is to learn about your health status, including risks - so that you may participate in a voluntary program(s) that contribute to healthy living. The PHA is like an annual "State of Your Health" address. It keeps you attuned to your "issues," and offers a roadmap to a variety of options for your GoodHealth.

### Calling All PDP Reviewers!

Our union is working on ways to help connect teachers who have been trained to serve on professional development plan (PDP) review teams with initial educators who are required to complete the PDP process for state licensure.

We need your help! If you have received the training to qualify as a PDP reviewer under PI-34, please e-mail Stephanie Walters at [walterss@weac.org](mailto:walterss@weac.org). We'd like to identify qualified reviewers by **November 21**.

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There will be other online surveys for bargaining, some targeted to segments of our membership. For example, if our team needs specific data on elementary planning time, that survey would be only for classroom teachers in the elementary grades.

### E-Mail Addresses Needed for Online Surveys

We will need current e-mail addresses for our online surveys. **If you like to help inform our team on calendar priorities and on specific issues, please complete the demographic data on the back of the upcoming Negotiations News survey.**

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## Joint MTEA/NAACP Efforts Help Protect Voter Rights

Our union joined with the Milwaukee branch of the NAACP to help stop a politically-motivated maneuver that would have disenfranchised thousands of new-registered voters, primarily African-American and low-income city residents.

The court accepted the joint NAACP/MTEA petition to intervene in a case prompted by Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen. He had filed a lawsuit to require a massive matching procedure for hundreds of thousands of newly registered voters.

### Joint News Conference and Release

NAACP President Jerry Ann Hamilton and MTEA President Dennis Oulahan held a news conference within a few hours after a judge rejected Van Hollen's lawsuit on October 23.

The following are excerpts from the MTEA/NAACP news release. (You can read the entire release at [mtea.org](http://mtea.org).)

"Today Judge Maryann Sumi of the Dane County Circuit Court issued an eloquent decision that dismissed partisan attempts to disenfranchise scores of thousands of Wisconsin voters. Her decision continues Wisconsin's progressive history of protecting the right to vote.

"Judge Sumi's ruling upholds the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which protects the rights of African-American citizens to vote without respect to technical errors in their registration.

"The Milwaukee Branch NAACP and the Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association (MTEA) applaud Judge Sumi for recognizing that the exercise of the right to vote is the cornerstone of democracy. Here in Wisconsin we don't let technical errors, like typos or computer mismatches, serve as a basis for disenfranchising voters."

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### King Writing Contest Deadline - November 17

The flyer we distributed to the schools in early October provided two different deadline dates for submitting student essays in the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Writing Contest. We apologize for any inconvenience.

**The correct date is Monday, November 17.**

Entries may be dropped off at the MTEA Building, 5130 West Vliet Street, or given to the children's librarian at any Milwaukee Public Library.