

Personal Calls Key

Legislators listen when their constituents call on an issue. Even if you just leave a brief message, your voice means votes - which every politician counts.

Like legislators, members are more likely to respond to a colleague's active voice than a passive printed page.

Can You Help?

Member-to-member phone calls will be made from your union's office from 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday, **November 17 & 19**. Please stop in to help, for as long as your time allows. The salad and pizza are on us.

Saving for Retirement

WEA Trust Member Benefits is offering two different educational workshops on retirement savings at the MTEA Building next week.

On Tuesday, **November 17**, the "Smart Move" workshop explains how moving the money you now have in a 403(b) program (a.k.a. tax sheltered annuity) to a low-cost program may help you reach your retirement goals sooner.

On Thursday, **November 19**, the "Retirement Savings: The Keys to Success" seminar will present the basics of investment and retirement planning, applicable to any age.

Both sessions start at 4:30 p.m. For details and registration, go to mtea.org (Events).

Let Your Legislators Know:

MTEA/WEAC Plan - Yes! Mayoral Takeover - No!

The future of public schools in our city is in the hands of the state Legislature. Three months after Governor Doyle and Mayor Barrett publicly endorsed mayoral takeover of MPS, a bill is being drafted. It will likely go to a special session of the Legislature in early December.

It's time for educators to communicate with their Assembly representative and their state senator. Before the Thanksgiving break, please call the two legislators who represent you to express your:

Support for the Milwaukee Opportunity Plan drafted by MTEA and WEAC leaders to bring the entire community - local and state - to the table for real, lasting reform in our district.

Opposition to the divisive mayoral takeover "quick fix," that would guarantee only one thing - taking away the direct, democratic influence that city voters have on their public schools.

City residents can access the names of their two state legislators at mtea.org (Resources>Legislative).

National (ESP) Day - November 18

Each year, the Wednesday during American Education Week is National Educational Support Professionals' day. It's an opportunity to applaud your school's ESPs and the invaluable service they provide.

Educational assistants are dedicated and caring members of each school staff and the MTEA. Your union's ESP/EA members include: general educational assistants, paraprofessionals, school safety assistants, child care workers, and DHH interpreters.

You Are an Educational Support Professional

As an educational support professional, **you** perform a wide range of tasks that make a difference in the lives of students. Like teachers, what you do daily is seldom recognized. You are an unsung hero in the quiet struggle to provide **all** children with a great education.

Celebrate at the MTEA Building After School

We invite you to the MTEA's first-ever "ESP Day Celebration" on **Wednesday, November 18**. This event is open to all members from 3:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. at the MTEA Building, 5130 West Vliet Street.

Stop in for some well-deserved recognition and a show of solidarity with MTEA members citywide. Food and beverages will be served.



PHA Deadline

The deadline to call to request a paper version of the annual personal health assessment (PHA), is noon this Saturday, November 14. Call 1-866-904-2615 and press (7) to have StayWell mail the PHA form to your home. (If you're married, be sure to ask for two.)

You and your spouse should both complete and return the PHA as soon as you receive the forms. When you receive your results, keep a copy to document your timely completion.

If you don't receive the results within a week after you mail it, call StayWell to find out if it received your PHA form(s).

Date Book Updates

All Members should have received their copy of the 2009-10 MTEA Date Book. If you have not, please call us at 2591-990. (If you are a retiree and have not received yours yet, it will be mailed to your home when we receive your 2009-10 membership check.)

There are a few changes in the MTEA leader listings:

MEAA President **Tommie Lee Glenn** is now at the Milwaukee Academy of Chinese Language.

MTEA Treasurer **Debbie Karow** is at Curtin Elementary, 902-7700.

Autism Now Covered by Health Plans

Effective November 1, 2009, state law requires health insurance plans to cover medical services to treat autism disorder, Asperger's Syndrome, and pervasive developmental disorders. The law applies to the MPS group plans – the Aetna PPO and the UnitedHealthcare HMO.

Overview of Mandated Benefits

The law requires plans to provide a minimum annual benefit of \$50,000 for intensive level services (a minimum of 30-35 hours of care per week) for a minimum of four years.

For non-intensive level services, the minimum coverage is \$25,000 per year. Children diagnosed between the ages of 2 and 9 are covered. Speech therapy is an example of a covered service.

The annual deductible, co-pay, and coinsurance provisions for the Aetna plan apply. The UHC co-pay and coinsurance provisions also apply. For an explanation of these out-of-pocket payments, go to mtea.org.

Implementation Advice

If your child is covered, ask your medical provider to submit treatment claims to your insurance plan. You should check your insurance plan statements to make sure the claims are properly paid. (The statements are called "EOBs" - explanation of benefits.) For questions, contact Joan Heithoff of the MTEA staff at heithoffj@mtea.weac.org or 259-1990.

Know Your Contract: **Absence Due to a Relative's Death**

There are contractual provisions for paid absences, **not** deducted from sick leave, which may be used in the event of the death of a relative.

First, you may be absent with pay for up to **three** full school days within seven consecutive days (starting with the day of death) for the death of the following relatives: spouse, parent, stepparent, parent-in-law, child, stepchild, brother, sister, or a relative residing in the same household.

Second, you may be absent with pay for **one** day within seven consecutive days (starting with the day of death) for the death of the following relatives: grandparent, grandchild, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, or first cousin.

If More Days Are Needed...

If you have earned paid personal day(s) off, you may also use this day(s) for extra time off. (See the article on the front page.)

In addition, the "miscellaneous absence" provision of the contract allows up to two additional days with pay for an absence due to travel involved with funeral attendance. Miscellaneous absences are limited to a maximum of two days per school year, and the days are deducted from your sick leave accumulation.

The contractual provision for personal absence **without pay** may also be used - depending on the circumstances.

Proper Coding and Paperwork

Absences due to the death of a relative should be explicitly reported to your school so that the proper coding is made on the payroll report.

By contract, you are required to provide "bona fide proof of death and/or attendance at a funeral or memorial service."
