
Legislative Contacts: Crucial and Timely

For the past few weeks, we have urged you to send a message to your state senator and Assembly representative: **Support** meaningful reform for MPS, not a divisive mayoral takeover. In addition to Team-Mate articles, two flyers have stressed the urgency and value of sending your personal message to state lawmakers:

- ◆ The December 4 "Take A Stand" flyer details calls to your legislators.
- ◆ The December 9 flyer "Listen to Educators," explains how to write the postcards we sent with it.

Thank You!

If you have taken the time to call and/or write your legislators, we'd like to express our appreciation. Lawmakers listen when they hear from their constituents, especially when they receive a large number of personal messages.

It's Not Too Late...

If you haven't called or written to your legislators, please act now. There's every indication that state lawmakers will act on reforming MPS in early January, soon after a hearing is held in Milwaukee.

If you decide to write postcards, please see your school's BR for an MTEA return envelope. We'll deliver your cards - at no cost to you.

Now Is the Time

Your individual messages are very powerful. Please call and/or write as soon as you can. Make sure your voice is heard before state lawmakers return from their break.

Insurance Coverage for Adult Children: State Law Changes May Affect You

In mid-November, MPS sent all employees and retirees information on changes in state law that take effect on January 1, 2010. If you have an adult (age 19-26) child covered by your MPS group health and/or dental insurance plan, one of the changes **may** impact you.

If your adult child's situation fits criteria set by the IRS, you will pay deducted taxes on the "fair market value" of the coverage.

The law also changes the MBSD/MTEA contract provision which sets the eligibility criteria for covering adult children.

Submit Your Certification Form to MPS ASAP

MPS will treat insurance coverage for your adult child as taxable income and start deductions in January - unless you file the MPS "Adult Child Certification Form." MPS needs this form to determine if you are exempt from paying taxes on your child's coverage.

We recommend that you:

- ◆ Use the revised "(12/09 update)" form available on the MPS Web site.
- ◆ Bring it to the MPS central office (Room 124) and have a copy time-stamped for your records.

MPS Position on Amount of Taxable Income

The district's November 16, 2009 letter included a chart estimating **monthly** tax deductions, based on three different state/federal income tax rates. For example, suppose you have the Aetna plan and your tax rate is 29.15%. MPS will withhold roughly \$157 each biweekly paycheck based on its analysis of the "fair market value" of your adult child's health insurance coverage. (The MPS chart shows a \$314.16 monthly amount.)

MTEA's Actuarial Analysis: Only Half

Our union's actuary has determined that the law mandates that the amount subject to taxes is about half of the amount MPS plans to tax. For the example above, he estimates the deduction should be roughly \$78 per paycheck, half of the \$157 deduction MPS plans to make.

Taxable Amount Not Resolved

When this newsletter went to press, the issue of fair market value was in dispute. To resolve this issue, we may need to take appropriate dispute resolution steps - unfortunately a lengthy process.

Call If You Need Clarification

The changes in the law and the MPS implementation steps are complex. An individual analysis is necessary to determine if and how you may be affected. Please call Joan Heithoff of the MTEA staff at 259-1990 if the MPS materials do not answer your questions.



If Your Car Is Vandalized...

The contract provides school board coverage for malicious damage to employee cars parked at school during school hours or while on school business. Motorcycles are also covered.

File MPS Claim Form

If your car is maliciously damaged, you should file a "Report of Auto Vandalism to Employee Auto" form, available in each school. MPS sent new forms to the schools in early November, to reflect the name and phone number of the new company MPS selected to handle claims.

Do not have the auto damage repaired until **after** Cannon Cochran Management Services, Inc., the MPS auto claims administrator, inspects the damage and authorizes repairs. If your car cannot be driven, call CCMSI immediately at **1-262-696-4636** to expedite a resolution.

Problems? Questions?

If your claim is denied or for reimbursement questions, call an MTEA staff member at 259-1990.

Retirement Planning Workshop for EAs

If you are considering retirement, mark your calendar for the MTEA's EA retirement planning workshop scheduled for after school on **Tuesday, January 19**. The workshop will be held at the MTEA Building, 5130 West Vliet Street.

Look for registration/details in Team-Mate after the winter break.

A Holiday Message From Your MEAA President Tommie Lee Glenn

Many thanks to all of you for what you do for our children. Each day, you touch the lives of students. Sometimes it's a word of encouragement; often, it's a gesture or a look showing you care. Always, it's the positive role model you are. As assistants, we do many different tasks, but all for the same goal - to help our children succeed in school.

As your President, I am very proud of the important work you do.

You are not only a valuable employee of MPS, you are also a valued member of our union. Since 1969, when the first "school aides" elected the MTEA as their bargaining representative, we have been an integral part of the success of the union. We've seen a lot of changes, many ups and downs, but we've stood together - with teachers and all other MTEA members - doing our best for **all** members and the students we serve.

I am very grateful that our union held ESP Day Celebration on our national day of recognition - November 18, 2009. Every EA in the district received a "Proud Educational Support Professional" button from the MTEA. Nearly 100 EAs came to the MTEA Building to enjoy refreshments and the company of one another.

As the winter break grows near, I want to say thanks and wish you and your family a joyous holiday season and a happy new year!

In Solidarity,

Tommie Lee Glenn

Paychecks: Planning Ahead

This year's winter break will affect the number of days paid on the upcoming paychecks - depending on your pay schedule.

If You Are on the 9-Day Pay Schedule

If you work 30, 32.5, 35, or 40 hours per week, you are on the 9-day pay schedule. As in the past, you will receive a 9-day check throughout the school year - with one exception:

There will be a **7-day** paycheck on **December 25**.

If You Are Not on the 9-Day Pay Schedule

If you are not on the 9-day pay schedule, each biweekly paycheck you receive is on a two-week holdback. Your paycheck covers the days you worked during the two-week period which ended a full two weeks prior to the date of your paycheck. Your paycheck on **December 25** will cover **10 days**.

Due to the days off for the winter recess, you will receive a **7-day** paycheck on **January 8** and a **5-day** check on **January 22**.