

# Please Complete the PHA!

## The deadline is Monday, December 15.

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### Supporting Public Schools - Two Key Messages

Our union recently ran radio and community newspaper ads to celebrate our city's public schools. At a time when MPS is criticized relentlessly by its many outsider critics, it is essential that we, the educators, stand up for our students, parents, and ourselves. Along with MPS administrators, our parents and students, we are the most authentic and most respected voices for public schools in Milwaukee.

### Great Public Schools

All of us can do much more to communicate the excellent work we and our peers do. Each of us has a sphere of influence - family, friends, neighbors, and peers. Instead of doing what comes way too easily - griping about difficult students or unreachable parents - we could talk about high-achieving students and supportive parents.

### Fix the Funding Laws

As we tout the good things being accomplished by our schools, we also need to explain the negative impact of the state's broken funding laws. For example, if a district does not raise local property taxes to the legal limit, it is penalized with decreased state aid the next school year. Another example, affecting MPS only, the state's voucher funding law results in less state aid for students in MPS and higher city property taxes for students in voucher schools.

*Please continue on back...*

Taking the personal health assessment (PHA) *annually* is essential to the negotiated wellness and health education program.

### Why Complete the PHA Every Year?

The PHA provides you with confidential information about your health status, including risks, and individualized, voluntary program options that contribute to healthy living. The PHA is like an annual "State of Your Health" address - reviewing "issues" and offering program choices for your future GoodHealth.

**Quick PHA Access** - To meet the deadline, you and your spouse must complete the PHA online. For quick access, go to [mtea.org](http://mtea.org) and click on the "Take the PHA" Quick Link.

**Need a Computer? Help?** A computer is available in Room 124 of the MPS central office at 5225 West Vliet Street, to take the PHA. Assistance, if needed, is available weekdays from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

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**Very Important Reminders** - Be sure to hit "Send" and to print out the **confirmation number** for your records.

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### Need to Motivate a Reluctant Spouse?

Taken the PHA yourself, but your spouse has not? We suggest that you stress the immediate, financial reason. If both you and your spouse do not complete the PHA by December 15, a **\$200** annual health care premium contribution will be deducted as follows:

- ◆ **\$100** on your February 20, 2009 paycheck.
  - ◆ **\$100** on your March 20, 2009 paycheck.
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## ESP Town Hall Meeting - A Great Solidarity Success

Over 90 MTEA educational assistant members participated in the ESP Town Hall meeting on Saturday, November 22. Our union's office building was bursting at the seams with lively discussions, important questions, and energetic socializing. And the MTEA logo ice scrapers given to all participants have been put to good use at least twice.

The three-hour session was a great time to see friends from other schools, and to meet EAs from across the district.

During the discussions, our members identified a number of common concerns. MTEA leaders and staff have already started work on addressing key issues; some need to be dealt with in bargaining.

*Please continue on back...*



### ***School Funding Reform***

*Continued from front...*

Our schools, programs, and our students' educational opportunities are dying a death of a thousand cuts. **We must speak out now!**

#### **Send Us Your Stories!**

Tell your story about how the current state funding laws are hurting your school or classroom. What could you do or provide for your students if you had the resources you need?

We also need good news - the successes of students, parents, and educators - at your school!

**Please send us both kinds of stories at [mtea.org](http://mtea.org).**

To publicize the real MPS stories, our union is working with:

◆ WEAC - which has won an NEA grant targeted for our area.

◆ MPS, ASC, and the GMC (Greater Milwaukee Committee) - partners in communications on the MPS Strategic Plan.

### ***Town Hall Meeting***

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In addition, certain questions such as the status of EA contract talks were repeatedly voiced at the Town Hall meeting. Common questions will be addressed in [Team-Mate](#). (See next article.)

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## **What Is the Status of the Contract?**

Here's a review of the recent history and present status of the MBSD/MTEA Educational Assistant Contract.

#### **2004-06 Contract**

◆ Agreement on the 2004-06 contract was reached in May of 2006. Retroactive payments were made in June of 2006.

◆ This contract (which expired on December 31, 2006) covered three calendar years.

◆ Until a new agreement is bargained, the wages and other provisions of the 2004-06 contract remain in effect.

◆ The 2004-06 contract is available online at [mtea.org](http://mtea.org) (Contracts).

◆ **MPS is having the contract book printed. Our union office will distribute the books to all EAs in the near future.**

#### **Separate Agreement on Wellness Program**

◆ In June of 2007, educational assistants ratified a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to provide EAs with the same additional health benefits as teachers and other MPS employees.

◆ The most important change was the joint wellness and health education program, which we call "GoodHealth."

◆ Along with all other MPS employees, EAs started participation in the GoodHealth program on July 1, 2007.

◆ The GoodHealth MOU will be printed in the 2007-08 contract.

#### **2007-08 Contract**

◆ The MTEA's and the School Board's teams exchanged initial bargaining proposals for the 2007-08 contract in November of 2007.

◆ Few sessions have been held. Only two meetings have taken place this fall. Progress has been slow.

◆ Unless significant progress is made in the near future, the 2007-08 contract will expire on December 31, 2008 - before an agreement on it is reached.

◆ As in the past, our team will bargain for full retroactive payment of wage raises.

#### **2009-10 Contract**

In the near future, we plan to survey all EAs on priorities for the next contract. We anticipate it will cover two years, from January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2010.

The reason for surveying for the next contract before the 2007-08 contract is finished? We don't want to fall further behind.

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