

Join the MTEA Book Club

Join the MTEA SpeakOut! Committee for an engaging book club event! We are reading **The New Teacher Book**, a collection of essays by multiple authors, published by *Rethinking Schools*. The essays will resonate with new and veteran teachers alike, offering practical advice on how to:

- ◆ Effectively navigate the school system.
- ◆ Form rewarding professional relationships with peers
- ◆ Connect with students and families from all cultures and backgrounds.

Two discussions, facilitated by essay authors will take place at the MTEA Building. The first will be on **Monday, February 4**, and the second is on **Monday, March 3**. Both are from 4:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m.

Books Available Here

There are 25 books now available at the MTEA Building. Members who plan to join the discussions will pay \$15 for the book up front and receive a partial rebate at each discussion. Please pick up your copy by **January 18**.

For questions, contact Kris Collett of the MTEA staff at kcollett@mtea.weac.org or 259-1990.

Congrats on Your Healthy Start!

If you are one of the thousands of MTEA members who completed the personal health assessment (PHA), we would like to express our congratulations. You've taken an essential first step toward learning more about maintaining and improving your health.

Your PHA results provide you with key personal health information and guidance on which GoodHealth programs can benefit you.

Participation in any of the programs is strictly confidential and totally voluntary. It's now up to you (and your spouse) to take advantage of the programs - if you wish.

Quick Review of What's Next

- ◆ If you and your spouse both completed the PHA by December 15, you will **not** have to pay a \$200 annual health premium contribution in 2008. You will **not** see a \$100 deduction on your February 22 and March 21 paychecks.
- ◆ You can now earn the **\$200** financial incentive by completing a GoodHealth program by December 15, **2008**. (Your spouse can do the programs too, but only you can earn the \$200 incentive.)
- ◆ After the winter break, we will explain the wide range of voluntary GoodHealth programs at mtea.org and in [Team-Mate](#).

Miscue on Initial Education Module

The optional GoodHealth programs are explained in the MPS video which most educational assistants should have seen on October 5. Unfortunately, MPS did not follow through with principals on this key, first education module.

Our bargaining team carefully researched wellness/health education programs and found that successful programs include extensive education opportunities for participants. To achieve this element of an effective program, our union proposed that high-quality information modules be presented to all EAs, three to five times each school year, for a period of 15 to 45 minutes each.

Modules must be presented to EAs. The contract specifically mentions that modules may be presented during banking time days. In any event, you should be allocated time for the education modules - during your normal workday, **with pay**.

Working for Better Results

We are working to insure that MPS complies with the education modules component of the joint GoodHealth program. We expect much better results on the January 28 banking day. The topic will be managing stress.



Tax Note - 2007 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." Under the federal tax code, union dues spent on legislative lobbying, as well as political action contributions are not deductible expenses. In fact, the IRS requires unions to notify members of the deductible portion of union dues.

To comply with the IRS requirement, our attorney is reviewing union lobbying expenses to calculate the allowable portion of dues. We will have the allowable percentage for the 2007 tax year at mtea.org and in Team-Mate in early January.

To prepare for claiming a union dues deduction, please retain your December 28, 2007 paycheck. You will need the year-to-date dues amount listed on it to calculate your deductible amount.

Winter Recess

The MTEA Building will be **closed** on December 24, 25, 26 & 31, and on January 1.

We will be **open** on December 27 & 28, as well as January 2.

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.

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 28, 2007**.

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.

Due to the days off for the winter recess, you will receive only a **5-day** paycheck on **January 11, 2008**. The **January 25** paycheck will be for 7 days.

For Year-Round Schools

If you work in a year-round school, the winter break will not change your paycheck schedule. You will continue to receive a 7-day check throughout your school year. (The last two checks are bigger - **9** days on July 7, 2008 and **10** days on July 25.)