

### **Briefing Planned for RA Meeting**

Building Representatives will receive detailed information on the proposed MPS budget cuts at the Representative Assembly on February 10.

The discussion will include an analysis of DPI's threat to withhold Title I funds from the district.

### **Summit on Milwaukee Graduation Project**

The dropout crisis is not just a school problem. It's a community problem that requires community solutions.

Our union - in partnership with local businesses, non-profit organizations, parents, youth, and others - is convening a summit on Friday, March 19. Stakeholders representing our whole community will come together to learn more about dropout prevention, and develop a community action plan to increase graduation rates in Milwaukee.

Educators will have a place at the table, but space is limited. If you would like to represent MTEA at the summit, please complete the interest form at [mtea.org](http://mtea.org). Our delegation will be selected by MTEA President Mike Langyel.

## **Seeking the Facts Behind the Draconian School Budget Cuts**

On February 2, MTEA President Mike Langyel wrote Milwaukee School Board President Michael Bonds. The text of his letter is below.

The MTEA is receiving reports from our members regarding the drastic school budget cuts being proposed by the administration. We have also learned that the building administrators must submit a budget for their school by February 11, 2010.

We believe many questions need to be answered. How were the budget amounts determined for each school? How did MPS spend the stimulus money? What cuts are being made at the central office to prevent services to students from being eliminated? This is just a sampling of the many questions being raised by our members.

We are writing to request that you convene a meeting with MTEA and ASC representatives where the MPS administration will explain how the budget was developed and what assumptions were used in the development of the budget, and address related questions.

We are also requesting a delay in the date by which schools must identify cuts and submit their budget to the central office

Your prompt consideration of these requests will be appreciated.

### **MPS Budget Overview on February 9**

The MPS administration plans to update the school board's Strategic Planning and Budget Committee on school allocation determinations, the MPS benefits rate, and other issues that will affect the district's budget for 2010-11.

The meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 9, at the MPS central office, 5225 West Vliet Street. The public will have an opportunity to ask questions and comment.

### **MTEA Organizing Workgroup - February 18**

On February 3, the MTEA Executive Board voted to create an MTEA Organizing Workgroup for two reasons:

- ◆ As a key step toward building an organizing culture within our union.
- ◆ To position our union to respond to current and future issues, such as the proposed MPS Budget reductions.

Participation in the MTEA Organizing Workgroup is open to all MTEA members. Its first meeting will take place at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 18, at the MTEA Building.

**No formal registration is needed. Just bring your energy and ideas!**




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## Strict Limits on the Use of Physical Force

Physical force may be used only in student discipline situations narrowly defined by the contract provision, quoted below:

"Any reasonable and appropriate means, including the use of physical force, may be used by school personnel (a) to prevent a threatened breach of discipline or (b) to stop a continuing breach of discipline. It is expected that physical force will be used **only when other means for preventing a breach of discipline or stopping its continuance have been ineffective.**"

### No Corporal Punishment

In situations where the breach of discipline has been completed, the contract clearly states: "Corporal punishment may **not** be used."

### Self-Defense Situations

"However, reasonable physical force may be used in self-defense. Self-defense is permissible where an educational assistant finds it necessary to defend himself/herself or a third person where an educational assistant reasonably believes that such action is necessary for the safety of himself/herself or a third person. Self-defense means the **use of such force as is necessary to protect oneself.** It does not mean that any additional force may be used or that force may be used after the individual is no longer in danger."

**Our Advice:** If you are in doubt as to whether physical force is appropriate in a student discipline situation, do **not** use it.

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## Claiming a Tax Deduction for Union 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." The IRS allows a deduction for miscellaneous expenses which, in the aggregate, exceed 2% of your adjusted gross income.

For example, suppose your 2009 adjusted gross income was \$11,000, and the aggregate amount you spent on items which qualify as miscellaneous deduction expenses was \$600. On Schedule A of your federal tax form, you would detail the \$600 in expenses and then subtract \$220, which is 2% of your \$11,000 income. The result would be a net "miscellaneous" deduction of \$380.

### Some Union Expenditures Are Not Deductible

Under the federal tax code, union dues spent on legislative lobbying and political action contributions are not deductible expenses for income tax purposes. To comply with the IRS notice requirement, our attorney calculated the lobbying expenses of the MTEA, WEAC, and NEA for 2009, as well as the MTEA and WEAC political action contributions. After deducting all lobbying and political expenses, 67.5% of the MTEA/WEAC/NEA dues educational assistants paid during 2009 qualified as miscellaneous deduction expenses.

### Typical Allowable Dues Amount - \$311.66

For many EA members who work more than 20 hours per week, the total amount of union dues deducted during 2009 was \$461.72. If you paid this amount, IRS allows you to claim only **\$311.66** in union dues as a miscellaneous deduction expense ( $\$461.72 \times 67.5\% = \$311.66$ ).

### Determining Your Amount for 2009

To claim the allowable portion of the union dues you paid during 2009, you should take two steps:

1. Check your December 25, 2009 paycheck to find the total amount deducted for union dues during 2009. It will be in the "After-Tax Deduction Box," noted "YTD" (Year-to-Date).
2. Multiply your amount by 67.5%.

### Extra Step Required If You Requested a Rebate

If you requested a rebate for your 2009-10 MTEA PAC contribution (\$3.20), your WEAC PAC contribution (\$10), or for WEAC/NEA fair share, you need to take an extra step. You must subtract any rebates you received in 2009 **before** multiplying your 2009 dues total by 67.5%.

### Available at [mtea.org](http://mtea.org)

Our union dues and tax deduction information is at [mtea.org](http://mtea.org). It will be there from now until April 15, for your quick reference.

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