
Administration Fails to Avoid EA Layoff

Arrogance? Insensitivity? Both?

The district's central administration is once again - "doing its own thing." It has delayed the most important elements of the School Board's August 27 directives. As a result, 89 general assistants were laid off as the school year began.

School Board Actions

The six-point directive approved by the School Board is reprinted below:

1. Restore the 89 educational assistants as follows:
 - a. thirty-three to underfill as paraprofessionals; and
 - b. \$1.5 million is to be taken from the excess surplus to restore the remaining 56 positions
2. Direct the Administration to develop a plan to look at long-term staffing and report back to the Board by November 2009.
3. Set aside \$80,000 for training as HCAs (handicapped-children assistants) for any educational assistants wishing to be trained.
4. Direct the Administration to prepare a plan to offer the training necessary to qualify the laid-off general education assistants for other hard-to-fill positions, with the plan to be presented for possible action at the September meeting of the Committee on Finance/Personnel.
5. Direct the Administration to explore with the MTEA the feasibility of modification of DPI

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September Enrollment for Insurances

September 30 is the deadline to:

- Switch to a different health or dental plan if you wish.
- Add dependents to your insurance plans and change any other information that is not up-to-date.
- Re-enroll for coverage if you're returning from leave, or enroll for the first time.

Important: MPS Packet Mailed to Your Home

Since mid-August, the district has been mailing packets to the homes of employees and retirees. (If you have not received your packet, it should arrive by September 8.) The packet includes:

- ◆ An application form listing your individual data currently on file with MPS, such as your covered dependents.
- ◆ A 2009 MPS Open Enrollment booklet for health and dental insurance.
- ◆ A 2009 Flexible Spending Account booklet.

We strongly recommend that you carefully review your data and update it if necessary, by the September 30 deadline.

Getting Involved in Your Union

You should have received the August 24 Team-Mate at your home - with three sign-up sheets enclosed:

- ◆ **MTEA Member Data** - update your contact information and sign up for Team-Mate via e-mail (in addition to the paper edition).
- ◆ **2009-10 MEAA Committees** - join other members in addressing a wide range of member issues and interests.
- ◆ **Political Action Sign-up** - select from seven different ways to help elect candidates who advocate for public schools.

You can complete all three items at mtea.org or return them in the envelope sent with the mailing. Please sign up today!

Union Leadership Opportunity

There are four vacancies on your union's MEAA Executive Council - two elementary representatives, one high school, and one bilingual (K-12). The Council would like to appoint members to these leadership positions for the 2009-10 school year.

If you are interested, please call MEAA President Tommie Lee Glenn at 259-1990 for more information.

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rules that discourage schools from hiring general education assistants and to report its findings at the September meeting of the Committee on Finance/Personnel; and

6. Direct the Administration to bring back a status report, no later than November 2009, to the Committee on Finance/Personnel.

Thanks to Five Board Members

The following Board members voted to approve the six directives, which recognize the value of general EAs to our students and schools:

- * **Peter Blewett**
- * **Michael Bonds**
- * **Terry Falk**
- * **Larry Miller**
- * **Annie Woodward**

Misleading MPS Letter

The central administration did not stop the layoff of 89 general EAs after the Board voted to do so. Instead, on August 31, MPS sent a letter to **all general EAs**. The letter urged them to take some handicapped children assistants (HCA) training. This will commit them to taking steps to become HCAs - and permanently leave their EA jobs.

The letter is deliberately misleading to the 89 EAs on layoff because it does not inform them that they are being recalled by Board action.

The letter is part of a pattern which shows the MPS administration is determined to eliminate general EAs.

Union Determined to Fight

Your union continues to fight for the best interest of the membership - and the priority is long-term job security for all EAs.

We continue to update the 89 members who should have not been laid off. Your union's representatives were set to meet with MPS negotiators about underfilling and the recall on September 4.

Mayoral Control: Initial Q & A

On August 13, Governor Doyle, Mayor Barrett, and Superintendent Evers publicly proposed mayoral control of MPS. A few initial questions are addressed below. We will keep you informed of any developments.

Q. What would happen to our union contract with the Milwaukee School Board if the mayor appointed the board members?

A. We asked our attorneys for a legal opinion, summarized below:

"Changes in state law that eliminate the elected Milwaukee school board and replace it with a board appointed by the mayor of Milwaukee will not create a new employing entity for MPS employees and thereby abrogate existing labor contracts.

"It is possible that legislation which creates an appointed board could carve out certain subjects of bargaining as prohibited issues. While such changes in the bargaining laws likely cannot abrogate existing contractual rights, they could foreclose bargaining rights in subsequent agreements, and significantly strengthen the Mayoral-appointed board's negotiating position.

"Finally, we have to further examine the bargaining experiences of employees and their unions in other urban school districts who have dealt with Mayoral-appointed boards."

Q. Are there any details available?

A. No. In fact, at the August 31 news conference affirming support for a change in governance, Mayor Barrett said different appointed board models were still being investigated.

Q. When will the specifics become public?

A. When the state Legislature convenes on September 15, Governor Doyle is expected to introduce an education reform package that will include a change in the state law to transfer the governance of MPS to some form of mayoral control.

Q. Why does my union oppose a mayoral takeover?

A. The primary reason is that mayoral control would take away the right of citizens to elect their school board representatives. The democratic election process gives the community a direct voice and engagement with its schools - a connection that can't be achieved with mayoral control.

A secondary reason is that changing the governance structure does not provide city schools with adequate funding needed for the basic elements of a quality education such as smaller class sizes, a safe learning environment, highly qualified teachers and support staff, etc.

Q. How can members get involved?

A. Join the membership work group which is being formed to oppose a mayoral takeover. If you're interested, please sign up at mtea.org or call MTEA President Mike Langyel at 259-1990.

Date Book Delivery

The 2009-10 MTEA Date Book is being prepared for distribution to EA Chairpersons at the September 9 MTEA Leadership Convocation.