

Freedom of Residency Committee Update

Your union's residency committee is continuing its efforts to educate legislators and other political leaders on the negative impact of the city residency requirement on MPS students and staff.

Committee chair, Debbie Karow, wishes to thank the many members who sent her information on how this requirement impacts them and their schools.

It is not too late to send your individual story. Please e-mail Debbie at dkarow@hotmail.com.

EAs Ratify Contract - Overwhelming Margin

Educational assistants have voted to ratify the 2007-08 contract by a vote of 674 to 20. Over 97% of the EAs who voted said "yes" to the two-year pact.

The school board is scheduled to vote on ratification at its May 28 meeting.

Retroactive Pay - Timeline Not Set

After the board ratifies the contract, the MPS administration will work on the retroactive payments due to EAs - going back to January 1, 2007. As soon as MPS sets a firm date for retro pay, we will let you know in Team-Mate and at mtea.org.

Pay Raise Examples

The new salary rates for the EA job classification schedules were printed in the ratification document, which you received last month.

Here are three examples to give you an idea of what your hourly rate will be when the **2%** raise for 2007 and the **2.25%** raise for 2008 are applied.

General EA

If you are a general educational assistant at the salary schedule maximum (over 4600 hours), you are currently paid **\$11.85/hour** - the 2006 rate. For 2007, your rate will be **\$12.09**; for 2008, it will be **\$12.36**.

You'll receive retro pay of **\$0.24/hour** for the hours you worked in 2007, and **\$0.51/hour** for hours worked in 2008 and in 2009.

School Safety

If you are a school safety at the salary schedule maximum (after 5 years of service), you are currently paid **\$16.47/hour** - the 2006 rate. For 2007, your rate will be **\$16.80**; for 2008, it will be **\$17.18**.

You'll receive retro pay of **\$0.33/hour** for the hours you worked in 2007, and **\$0.71/hour** for hours worked in 2008 and in 2009.

Paraprofessional

If you are a paraprofessional at the salary schedule maximum (over 4600 hours), you are currently paid **\$16.22/hour** - the 2006 rate. For 2007, your rate will be **\$16.54**; for 2008, it will be **\$16.92**.

You'll receive retro pay of **\$0.32/hour** for the hours you worked in 2007, and **\$0.70/hour** for hours worked in 2008 and in 2009.

Other Classifications

Similar amounts of pay raises and retro salary will be paid to child care assistants, deaf and hard-of-hearing interpreters, and lead assistants.

Survey on Next EA Contract

Your EA bargaining team appreciates the responses to the MTEA survey on concerns and priorities for negotiations of the next contract.

The survey was in the April 29 Negotiations News, we asked members to return it by May 9, with their contract ratification ballots.

Your team is working to exchange initial proposals with the school board's team before the end of this school year.



Excessing: Questions and Answers

- Q.** If excessing is necessary, does the contract allow you to volunteer to be excessed?
- A.** Yes. In fact, the contract requires the administration to first determine if there are any qualified volunteers for excessing. The contract defines a qualified volunteer as an assistant in the job classification (general or paraprofessional) identified for excessing, in a position that can be filled by another assistant with the same number of hours who would otherwise be excessed.
- Q.** If budget cuts necessitate excessing educational assistants from a school and there are no volunteers, how does the administration determine which assistants should be excessed?
- A.** Educational assistants with the least systemwide seniority are to be excessed first. The contract states: "In any reduction of educational assistants by excessing, those within the building with the greatest systemwide seniority shall be retained without a reduction in hours provided they have the necessary qualifications for the work available and there are positions with the appropriate number of hours available."
- Q.** Does the number of years assigned to a school affect who is excessed?
- A.** No. Excessing is done strictly by systemwide seniority - how long you have worked as an MPS educational assistant, not how long you have been at a particular school.
- Q.** Does the source of funding affect who is excessed?
- A.** No. Assistants with the least systemwide seniority are excessed - regardless of how their positions are funded. For example, suppose your school currently has just two 30-hour paraprofessional positions - one funded by Title I and the other by special education. Suppose the 30-hour paraprofessional position in special education is not being funded for next school year, and the person in that position this school year is more senior. In this example, the more senior paraprofessional would remain at the school and be assigned to the Title I position next year. The less senior paraprofessional would be excessed, even though her current position will be funded again next year.
- Q.** For excessing, what does the phrase "necessary qualifications for the work available" mean?
- A.** Based on past practice and grievances, in almost all situations, a general educational assistant after a reasonable and appropriate training period has the "necessary qualifications" for any general assistant position. Likewise, in almost all situations, a paraprofessional after a reasonable and appropriate training period has the necessary qualifications for any paraprofessional position.
- The MTEA should be notified immediately if a more senior assistant is identified for excessing because the administration believes the individual does not have the "necessary qualifications."
- Q.** If you are notified that you are being identified as excessed at this time, could your excessed status change before school starts in the fall?
- A.** If you are identified as excessed now, you **probably** will not have a position at your current school in the fall. However, your school's situation could change between now and the start of next school year. There may be changes - based on the school board's budget action, an unexpected increase in state and/or federal funding over the summer, or changes in personnel within your school due to leaves, resignations, retirements, etc. If your position is reinstated by the first student day of next school year, the contract allows you the opportunity to return to your school.
- Q.** Some school administrators have told educational assistants identified as excessed that they will be laid off. Is being excessed the same as being laid off?
- A.** **No!** Excessing means only that you will not have a position at your current school. Excessing does not mean that you are out of a job with MPS. Layoffs are handled on a systemwide basis under a contractual process that is **completely separate from excessing**.
- Q.** If there are questions about excessing at your school, what should be done?
- A.** Please call Acquisit Chesir of the MTEA staff at 259-1990 or e-mail him at acquisitchesir@mtea.weac.org.