

## **Date Book Delivery**

The 2008-09 MTEA Date Book is at the printer. It is scheduled for delivery to the schools on Monday, **September 8**.

## **Your Mailbox Rights**

The contract provides that a mailbox be designated for each EA in every building for the distribution of MTEA materials.

The purpose of this provision is to give you a set place to receive Team-Mate and other items. A mailbox may range from an independent structure to file folders.

If your school does not already provide mailboxes to assistants, your MEAA Educational Assistant Chairperson should bring this contract provision to the principal's attention.

## **Do Not Transport Students in Your Car**

You should not transport students in your car because of the risks. If an accident occurs, the primary coverage will be the responsibility of your personal auto insurance carrier.

The school board's liability insurance provides strictly "excess" coverage. As such, the board will not pay for any claims unless your auto insurance coverage limits are exhausted. The fact that you are on authorized school business - such as taking home students who missed their bus - does not relieve you of responsibility if an accident occurs.

# **Welcome Back!**

For most schools, August 28 is the traditional organization day, the first "official" day back. (Year-round schools and International Baccalaureate high schools started earlier.) We hope you had a restful summer and wish you the best for 2008-09.

## **Testimony of EA Members Moves MPS School Board Committee**

Passionate presentations by members of our union - mainly educational assistants led by MEAA President Tommie Lee Glenn - made a difference at the August 19 meeting of the Milwaukee School Board's Finance/Personnel Committee.

Member after member voiced the fact that general educational assistants are very valuable to the schools throughout MPS - and most importantly, to the students.

### **MEAA Executive Council Leaders Speak Out**

**Tommie Lee Glenn** started the testimony by explaining what EAs do to touch the lives of children. He spoke of the one-to-one relationships that EAs have with students. He noted that EAs are parents of MPS students, that they live in the neighborhoods of students they serve, and the EAs are role models - in and out of school.

**Cecelia Collins**, an at-large representative on the MEAA Executive Council, observed that earlier in the meeting, the committee quickly approved hiring six supervisors at salaries averaging over \$70,000 a year. She stated EAs work directly with children for a fraction of what the Board pays folks who walk around with clipboards.

**Phyllis Deal**, the MEAA Treasurer, reminded the Board that general EAs are highly qualified to work in classrooms and should be grandfathered to continue their effective work with children. She stressed that general EAs completed 40 hours of classes on how to support instruction just a few years ago, in order to keep their jobs under the federal No Child Left Behind law.

### **EAs Facing Layoff Give Powerful Testimony**

Several general EAs identified for layoff this fall also went to the microphone and proudly described how they assist children in the classroom everyday. They talked about tutoring students, working in computer labs, covering classes for absent teachers - doing the same work as paraprofessionals. One member explained that although she knew such duties were not in her job description, she felt obligated to help the children.

*Please continue on back...*

---

---

## Important Updates on MTEA Staff

Last school year, two members of our union's full-time professional staff – Cheryl Barczak and Sal Gonzalez – planned to job share one position.

### Sal Gonzalez on Leave

Unfortunately, Sal Gonzalez was stricken with pancreatic cancer and had to take a medical leave. Sal remains on leave, continuing an incredibly heroic battle.

If you would like to send Sal a card or note of support and encouragement as he battles cancer, his home address is: 6551 N 94th St; Milwaukee WI 53224.

This is a critical time for Sal, and your personal messages will be deeply appreciated.

### Cheryl Barczak Retires

Cheryl Barczak worked full-time for most of last school year. This summer, Cheryl decided to retire after 28 years of dedicated service to the membership. Her last day of work was July 31. (She has agreed to complete bargaining both the educational assistant and substitute teacher contracts.)

If you would like to send Cheryl a note of thanks and congratulate her on her retirement, her home address is: 7920 W Norwich St; Milwaukee WI 53202.

### Temporary Replacement

Sandra Wilant, a paraprofessional assistant at Whitman, is now working full-time on a temporary basis, filling in for Sal. She has served as a temporary staff replacement twice in the past. Sandra's duties are primarily with substitute teacher and EA members.

---

---

*Continued from front...*

### Teachers Also Testify on the Importance of EAs

Our EA members were supported by the testimony of teachers as well. For example, **Kelly McMahon**, an MTEA Executive Board early childhood representative, explained how much she relied on EAs in working with small children who need lots of individual attention.

### Three Board Members -Very Supportive

After the testimony of our members, three School Board directors on the committee voted to restore the EA positions - Peter Blewett, Michael Bonds, and Charlene Hardin. Their vote affirmed what the Board had approved in June - to keep 40 full-time equivalent general EA positions. (Director Tim Petersons voted no and Director Jennifer Morales was not present when the vote took place.)

### Final Vote at August 28 Meeting

Under School Board rules, when a committee (five members) takes a vote, it is a recommendation to the full Board (nine members). The committee's August 19 recommendation will be considered by the full Board at its August 28 meeting.

Unlike the committee meeting where EAs and other members of the public had the opportunity to testify, the public is not allowed to speak at meetings of the full School Board. (The Board rarely suspends its rules to allow public testimony.)

### Show Your Support by Attending!

We urge you to attend the August 28 Board meeting - even though you will not be able to speak. **Your presence is very important.** It will demonstrate support for keeping general EAs in the classroom to the full School Board.

The meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. and will be held in the auditorium of the MPS central office at 5225 West Vliet Street.

---

---

## Using Your Negotiated Paid Personal Days Off

The MBSD/MTEA Educational Assistant Contract provides for a paid personal day off for eligible assistants each school year. The provision is summarized below:

- ◆ If you have 10 to 19 school years of service within the educational assistant unit and satisfactory attendance, you are entitled to **one** personal day off with pay each school year.
- ◆ With 20 or more years of service and satisfactory attendance, you receive **two** personal days each school year.
- ◆ For the purpose of determining eligibility, satisfactory attendance means that you are not required to provide a doctor's excuse for every day you are absent.
- ◆ Personal days off can be taken for any reason, but scheduling must be approved by your immediate supervisor in advance unless an unexpected emergency arises. In such cases, you should promptly notify your supervisor.
- ◆ If you do not take your personal days off, you may choose to be paid for the day(s) at your normal daily rate on the last paycheck of the school year or have the day(s) added to your sick leave accumulation.