



Milwaukee Teachers'  
Education Association

July 15, 2011

## MTEA Survey Regarding Possible Concessions

(Please return the enclosed survey in the pre-paid envelope, postmarked by Monday, July 25, or bring to MTEA office by 4 PM, Tuesday, July 26)

The state budget cut nearly \$80 million to MPS for next year, which resulted in the elimination of nearly 1000 positions and the lay off of 519 MTEA members (teachers, social workers, paraprofessionals and general assistants). The state budget was amended to include a provision that allows teacher unions to reopen their contracts one time to make financial concessions without risking the existing contract. On June 27, Supt. Thornton sent MTEA President Bob Peterson a letter requesting that we open negotiations to do so.

We know that our wages and benefits have not caused the current budget crisis. But the governor's attacks on public sector unions, collective bargaining, and public schools are unprecedented and have changed the political and educational landscape.

The MTEA Executive Board and the Teacher Bargaining Team have discussed various ways forward, and believe it is important to have the input of members on whether we should meet with the administration to discuss making additional concessions. Please read all the background information provided before completing and returning the survey. We encourage you to discuss these matters with your colleagues.

During these difficult times, we need to become an even stronger, more democratic union. We may have differences on how best to proceed. But in the end, we need to emerge with even more solidarity for the struggles ahead – to defend and build our union, our public schools, and our communities. It is in this spirit that we ask for your input.

### Background facts:

- The new state law (Act 10) prohibits collective bargaining for anything other than lump sum salary increases when the teacher contract expires June 30, 2013. An amendment to the state budget allows for the MTEA to reopen our contract one time to make financial concessions without risking our existing contract.
- Any concessions negotiated now would be for the next two school years.
- On July 1, 2013, the teacher contract with all of its protections ceases to exist.
- Teachers will receive a 3% pay increase in 2011/12 and a 2.5% pay increase in 2012/13.
- Teachers will pay 2% of salary for family or 1% for single health insurance as of August 2011.
- One furlough day would be approximately a ½ of 1% salary cut.
- According to information supplied to us by Supt. Thornton, each 1% of pension contribution we might agree to will result in approximately 30 teacher positions saved. Applying state SAGE reimbursement would result in approximately 60 SAGE teachers reinstated.

- PLEASE TURN OVER -

## Concessions/Layoff Arguments

### *In favor of making some concessions:*

1. Union solidarity. Superintendent Thornton has publicly stated that money from concessions will be used to hire back teachers. (Two furlough days would be enough to bring back about 130 teachers in SAGE schools – the state provides matching monies.) Other public sector unions have made concessions to save their members’ jobs. Such solidarity sends a message that we care about our union’s laid-off members.
2. Smaller class sizes in K-3<sup>rd</sup> grades will improve teaching and learning conditions and will have a positive impact on thousands of children now and as they progress through school.
3. Additional concessions demonstrate that teachers are committed to quality public schools and are willing to make personal financial sacrifices to that end, improving our relations with parents, families, and the community.
4. Additional concessions demonstrate our commitment to children and our willingness to work with the administration and other supporters of public education to improve teaching and learning in the Milwaukee Public Schools.

### *Against making any concessions:*

1. We made significant concessions in our last teacher contract. They will result in an estimated \$94 million in savings over the next two years. The savings are based on changing health care providers and specific changes, including two years of pay freezes (one included a lump sum 3% payment) and a requirement to pay 2% of salary for family health coverage and 1% for single coverage.
2. Further concessions might be interpreted as our acceptance that our compensation has caused the budget deficit.
3. We need to attract and retain the best teachers. Research shows that a key component to that is offering attractive compensation packages. Further concessions make working for MPS less appealing.
4. Further concessions might remove pressure on the Legislature to address budget solutions more effectively.

### **Calculating Impact on Salary** – Using an annual salary of \$40,000

	<b>Calculation</b>	<b>Annual impact</b>	<b>In each of 20 paychecks</b>
One furlough day	$40,000 \div 191 \text{ days}$	\$209	\$10.45
1.5% pension contribution	$0.015 \times 40,000$	\$600	\$30
3% pension contribution	$0.03 \times 40,000$	\$1,200	\$60