

Your Teacher Bargaining Team

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Your Contract Proposals

Your teacher bargaining team (see list to the left) worked several months to prepare a package of proposals that educators want bargained into the next contract. You helped shape the proposals and priorities by participating in the all-member survey (November 12, 2008 Negotiations News), member subgroup meetings with the team, area forums, e-mails to team members, etc.

Overview of Initial Proposals

On February 17, your team presented an initial package of proposals to the School Board that address issues such as:

- ◆ Class sizes that allow you to teach more effectively, and reach students who need individual attention.
- ◆ Student ratios (caseloads) that allow guidance counselors, school social workers, speech pathologists, nurses, librarians and other non-classroom professionals to serve students more effectively.
- ◆ Administrative support with discipline, especially for students who constantly disrupt the whole class.
- ◆ Time for individual preparation and planning.
- ◆ Eliminating the *requirement* for city residency.
- ◆ Increasing salaries to meet your financial needs.
- ◆ Maintaining high-quality health insurance and other benefits you and your family depend on.

Both Sets of Proposals at mtea.org

After your team exchanged initial contract proposals with the School Board's team on February 17, we posted a brief announcement on the MTEA Web site with links to:

- ◆ The summary of proposals your team presented, along with "A Message from MPS Teachers" for the School Board.
- ◆ The proposals the Board's team presented, along with the Board's goals for 2009-11 teacher contract negotiations.

We recommend that you review *both* sets of initial proposals.

Your team is committed to doing everything it can at the bargaining table to successfully negotiate your proposals. Your support will be critical to reaching an agreement that meets your needs.



Future of Job Sharing - Unresolved

The job sharing provision "sun-sets" when the current teacher contract expires on June 30, 2009. This means job sharing will be eliminated automatically - unless a new agreement on it is reached.

Your team proposed to make the job sharing a permanent contract provision. On February 17, it pointed out that teachers who would like to job share next school year need this issue resolved soon.

The Board's team said teachers should go ahead and apply. However, it will not agree to extend the present job sharing provision unless changes are bargained to address concerns the Board's team did not explain yet. The Board's team did not indicate when it planned to present a job sharing proposal.

Advice for Teachers Considering Retirement

Still undecided on whether or not to retire at the end of this school year? Our advice is:

If you want to guarantee that you will have the health insurance, severance pay, and Supplemental Retirement Plan (SERP) provisions currently in the contract, you should retire before the June 30, 2009 expiration date.

Furthermore, to obtain the best of what the contract provides, you should submit your retirement notice to MPS by March 1. The effective date should be the end of the business day on June 17, if you're on the traditional school year calendar.

Next Sessions?

When this publication went to press, dates for future contract talks were not set. We will keep you informed through Sharpener, at mtea.org and encourage you to sign up for our e-mail updates.

Your Initial Contract Proposals - Clearly Aim to Attract and Retain

As you review the summary of the proposals introduced by your team, you'll find a balanced package that addresses professional working conditions and personal financial needs. Some items, such as salary raises, affect all educators. Others are specific to a subgroup within your union - such as a daily consulting period for special education teachers.

Your proposals address key issues related to attracting and retaining highly-qualified educators - working condition improvements needed for successful teaching and learning, and a compensation package (salary and benefits) competitive in the Milwaukee area.

School Board's Initial Proposals - Clearly Aim for a Longer Workday

As you review the package presented by the School Board's team, you'll find clarity on one proposal: a longer teacher day - with more student instructional time and more staff collaboration time. When specifically asked, the Board's negotiators were clear and emphatic: the added time would be for student instruction and staff/group activities, not for individual planning and preparation.

Compensation for a Longer Workday? "Resource Allocation" From Fringe Benefits...

When specifically asked, the Board's team explained it is proposing to pay teachers for a longer workday and staff development with changes in their fringe benefits and other "resource allocation" changes. A few specifics were mentioned, such as employee contributions for health insurance premiums and savings from the GoodHealth H&PM program.

The verbal explanation of the Board's team reflected its written proposal, which included vague statements such as:

- ◆ "Resource Allocation" - "Fringe Benefits" - "Modification of the health and dental plan designs while maintaining quality benefits so as to reallocate monies to support increased expenditure on supports for students."
- ◆ "... focus on increasing instructional time, increasing time for staff to collaborate on improved instruction, effective staff development and increasing the availability of resources to support these efforts; ..."

To Be Continued

Many of the Board's initial proposals are vague and subject to more than one interpretation. Based on explanations your team heard on February 17, there will be no clarity until the Board's team presents detailed, written proposals during the bargaining process.

Sign Up for E-Mail Updates

If you had signed up for MTEA e-mail updates on contract talks, you received the first one the afternoon of February 17 - with links to both proposal documents.

Please sign up for e-mail updates at mtea.org if you're not already on our list. We greatly prefer **your home e-mail address**.

