



Milwaukee Teachers'
Education Association

Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association
5130 W. Vliet St., Milwaukee, WI 53208
414-259-1990 www.mtea.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, January 5, 2010

Contact: Kris Collett, 414-259-1990, 414-807-5193

MTEA Urges Legislators to Focus on Real Reform

Milwaukee – Milwaukee educators delivered a message about real life in the classroom today at the state Legislature's Senate Education Committee public hearing about the future of MPS.

In their testimony and written remarks to the committee, educators discussed the challenges their students face in the classroom, and the real reforms needed to improve teaching and learning, and help close the achievement gaps in MPS.

Kim Schroeder, a teacher at Sherman Elementary School, discussed the frustration he and his colleagues feel about the time and resources being spent on the divisive mayoral takeover debate.

“Instead of focusing on the real, underlying issues that truly would help students, the focus is on quick-fix ideas, like Race to the Top money rather than comprehensive school funding reform; smaller class sizes, so we don't have 40 students crowded into a fifth grade classroom or over 50 students in a high school science lab; more educational assistants in our buildings, so students who need extra help are able to receive it; gym, art, and music teachers, so all our students have an opportunity to have more experiences in school than just filling in the bubbles on a test answer sheet.”

Kim told the committee that these ideas and more are outlined in the educator-developed [Milwaukee Opportunity Plan](#). Other strategies included in the plan are a longer school day and year; measures to improve school safety and make discipline policies more effective; meaningful parent and community engagement; a consistent, high-quality curriculum; and stronger accountability and support for professionals at all levels in the district.

MTEA President Mike Langyel testified before the committee, noting that the new year is an opportunity to change the discussion.

-more-

“In the new year, it’s time for our elected leaders to begin talking about real reform – the strategies that educators have put forward in our Opportunity Plan. At the end of the day, it’s our members who will be in city classrooms with our students. We will be there for them, as we always have been. And we know what is necessary for meaningful change. All that our elected leaders have to do is invite us – and the community - to the table to start making it happen.”

Langyel said that the mayoral takeover discussion is a distraction that does our district and our school communities a disservice.

“We have said from the beginning of this debate that change is needed, but that change can’t happen without the educators and the community,” said Langyel. MTEA leaders hope that the Senate education committee took educators’ message to heart, and will work toward real, student-centered, meaningful change.

For more information about the Milwaukee Opportunity Plan, a framework of low-cost, systemic changes to that provide an alternative to the proposed mayoral takeover of Milwaukee Public Schools, visit www.weac.org/Milwaukee.

#