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June 11, 2007

Sharpener is published an average of three times monthly during the school year.

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## **Final Reminder - June 19 Lobby Day**

Educators across the state are going to Madison on Tuesday, June 19 - Great Schools Lobby Day. Members of the MTEA will meet with Milwaukee area legislators to discuss why state support and funding are critical to reaching the students of MPS.

Please sign up today at your school (see your building representative) or online at our [event calendar](#).

## **Collaborative Planning Survey On Our Web Site - June 14**

The new contract section for 12 hours of collaborative planning time provides for an assessment survey at the end of each semester. The survey for the second semester should be completed online by teachers on June 14, 2007 - record day in most schools.

MPS and MTEA representatives have jointly developed the survey. BRs and principals have been asked to work together to maximize teacher participation - specifically to set aside time during the day on June 14 to complete the survey.

### **Survey Access and Other Key Points**

- Go to [Member Forum](#).
- The survey will be on our site on June 14. We strongly encourage you to complete it that day.
- Because some schools do not have their record/staff planning day on June 14, the survey will be available through June 25.
- The survey is designed to assess how collaborative planning time is being implemented systemwide. (Schools are not identified.)
- By contract, MPS and MTEA representatives will receive all of the survey data to jointly review and analyze the results.

## **Contract Bargaining Update**

Our union's teacher bargaining team met with the School Board's team three days each week during May and for two days during the first week of June. Progress was made on a new two-year pact for 2007-09. However, as the school year ends, no further talks are scheduled.

The school district has filed a petition with the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission,

formally asking the WERC to assign a state mediator to assist the parties in reaching a voluntary settlement.

## First Paycheck - September 7

Most teachers will return to work on organization day, Thursday, August 30. Friday, August 31, will be a banking day. Students start Tuesday, September 4. Most teachers will receive their first paycheck on September 7.

In 2007-08, there will be a slight change in the traditional pattern of 22 paychecks. For those on the 191-day regular teacher schedule, the first paycheck will cover five days (not the usual six). The next 20 paychecks will be the "normal" nine-day checks. The last paycheck next school year – on June 27, 2008 – will cover six days (instead of the usual five.)

### For 200-Day Employees:

#### **2007-08 Calendar Notes...**

For school social workers and other 200-day employees in the MTEA teacher unit:

- The first workday will be Thursday, August 23, 2007.
- The last workday will be Thursday, June 19, 2008.

#### **...and Paycheck Notes**

The number of days paid on the first and last paychecks of 200-day employees will be slightly different next school year.

- The first paycheck, September 7 will cover nine days, (not the usual 11). The next 20 will be nine-day checks.
- The last paycheck, on June 27, 2008, will be for 11 days (instead of the usual nine).

## Contract Steps Prior to a Layoff

If MPS determines that a layoff is necessary, the contract requires MPS to first attempt to minimize the number of layoffs by soliciting volunteers within the certification areas affected and by granting unpaid leaves for any reason. MPS must then prepare a list of the least senior teachers in the areas identified for layoff and provide it to the MTEA five days prior to sending layoff notices. The written notice to those affected should be sent at least 30 days prior to the layoff.

In past layoffs, MPS has waited until the start of the school year. We expect similar timing if MPS decides a layoff is necessary for the coming school year.

### Expand Your Areas of DPI Certification Now

As a precaution in the event of a layoff, we recommend expanding your areas of DPI licensure to maximize your seniority rights.

In the event of a layoff, the teacher contract provides that you must hold a full DPI certification/license on May 15 to exercise seniority rights within that area.

To exercise seniority rights in an area for which you did not hold a full license on May 15, there are two deadlines to meet - if you have a temporary license or permit, if your license has expired, or if you are eligible for an additional license. First, by July 1, 2007, you must present MPS with written verification from your certifying institution or from DPI that you can obtain a full DPI

license by organization day of the 2007-08 school year. Second, if you meet the July 1 verification deadline, you must obtain the license before the next school year.

If you have a layoff question, please call an MTEA staff member at 259-1990.

## **WRS Service Break Required**

If you are retiring at the end of this school year, you need to be aware that the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) requires a 30 calendar day break in service - before you may work for MPS or another WRS employer. The pension benefits you receive from WRS, as well as from MPS under the negotiated supplemental retirement plan, will be adversely affected if you do not complete the 30 calendar day break in service.

If you retire effective at the end of the day on June 15, you should make certain that you are not employed by MPS or any other WRS employer in any paid capacity. You are also prohibited from entering into any paid employment arrangement (written or verbal) with MPS or any other WRS employer, in any capacity, for 30 days. You will complete the mandatory 30-day break in service on July 16.

## **Retiring at Age 65 or Older?**

If you are age 65 or older and plan to retire at the end of this school year, you need to apply for Medicare coverage now if you have not already done so. You need to enroll so that Medicare coverage takes effect on the first day of the month following your retirement date, which would be July 1 if you retire in June.

For those who retire at age 65 or older, Medicare becomes the primary insurance coverage and Aetna (or your HMO plan) provides secondary coverage starting on the first day of the month following retirement. At that point, your MPS health plan will pay only for the portion of costs beyond the Medicare coverage limit.

If you do not enroll in Medicare in time to start coverage on that date, Medicare will not pay its portion for hospital, doctor, and other medical services. Instead, you must pay the Medicare portion of your medical expenses out-of-pocket until Medicare coverage takes effect.

## **Record Day Use**

MTEA and MPS have the following agreement on the use of the negotiated record day, June 14 at most schools this year.

"Elementary teachers will turn in records as they complete them at various times on record day. Records will be completed and checked for accuracy and completeness previous to the teachers being excused for the day. The teacher will continue to be responsible for the closing of the assigned classroom. If it becomes obvious to the local administrator after the beginning of the afternoon session that records may not be completed previous to the end of the normal teacher workday, the principal may establish a schedule for said completion.

"Staff members without classroom responsibilities may be assigned such duties so as to assist in the regular closing of schools following the completion of their own responsibilities. It is understood that staff members without classroom responsibilities will not be required to check the accuracy and completeness of other teachers' records."

## Communications This Summer

The new wellness/health education program, "Learn Good Health, Live Good Health" (GoodHealth) starts July 1. This summer, we plan to provide more information on the new program on our Web site and through mailings. If you have changed your residence or home E-mail address, please e-mail us at [lscherli@mtea.weac.org](mailto:lscherli@mtea.weac.org) or call 414-259-1990.