



June 11, 2007

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 EA Chairperson) or at our [event calendar](#).

Contract Bargaining Update

On June 6, MEAA Chairpersons approved our union's initial bargaining proposals for the next contract, based on the membership bargaining survey in March. The date for exchanging proposals with the School Board's team has not been set. Until a new agreement is bargained, the 2004-06 contract will remain in effect.

Layoffs Expected Due to Budget Cuts

It appears that perhaps 50 (or more) general assistants will be laid off this summer. (On the other hand, MPS will be hiring new paraprofessionals and school safety assistants.)

Leaves to Help Minimize Layoffs

To reduce the number of general assistants who may be laid off, MPS is approving any leave requests of a reasonable nature.

To request a leave, you should send a letter to Bernadine Cosey, Staffing Specialist; Department of Human Resources; Milwaukee Public Schools; P.O. Box 2181; Milwaukee, WI 53201-2181. Your letter should explain the reason for your request and specify the duration - for example, the 2007-08 school year.

Before you request a leave, you may want to discuss your situation with an MTEA staff member. For example, you should consider your insurance coverage. On unpaid leave, you would be responsible for paying the premium to maintain health insurance coverage.

Returning from a Leave of Absence

If you plan to return from a leave of absence when the school year begins in the fall, you should mail a written notice to MPS now of your intention to return to work. This will enable you to obtain an assignment when MPS holds the reassignment assembly at the start of the school year.

Your notice should be sent to the Educational Assistant Unit; Department of Human Resources; Room 128; MPS Administration Building; 5225 West Vliet Street; P.O. Box 2181; Milwaukee, WI

53201-2181.

- If you are returning from an illness leave, you should send a statement from your doctor, releasing you to return to work, along with your request.
- If you are returning from a study leave, you should send a copy of a college transcript reflecting the courses you completed during your leave.

Reminder: Return Your Ratification Ballot

The deadline for voting to add the "Good Health" education program to the contract has been extended to Monday, June 18. Details are in the special June 7 newsletters - Team-Mate and the Q & A Sharpener.

Do You Need to Pass the Praxis?

UWM's CUCD Comprehensive PRAXIS Support Program can help! This new fee-based program is designed to provide test-taking and study strategies to pass the state-required Pre-professional Skills Test (Praxis I) and Praxis II.

Passing the PPST is challenging for many applicants. You can succeed with an integrated approach, individual attention, and targeted support.

For information/registration call Camila Leffel, the CPSP coordinator, at 227-3280, or go to www.sce-urban.uwm.edu for details.

Last Paychecks - Mailed to Homes

The final two paychecks of the school year - June 15 and 29 - will be mailed to your home.

EAs on the nine-day payroll schedule - who work 30, 32.5, 35, or 40 hours per week - will receive nine-day paychecks. For EAs who are not on the nine-day pay schedule, the June 15 and June 29 checks will both cover ten days.

First Paycheck in the Fall - September 21

EAs on the nine-day paycheck schedule will receive their first check on September 21.

If you are not on the nine-day paycheck schedule, this first check will cover seven days.

MTEA Summer Hours

The MTEA Building will be open weekdays throughout the summer, except the first week of July. MTEA summer office hours, from 8:00 a.m. until 4:15 p.m., begin Friday, June 15.

Friend of Public Education Nominations

The MTEA has an annual awards program to recognize individuals or organizations who have made significant contributions to the cause of public education in Milwaukee.

The nomination period is now open for the Twelfth Annual Don Feilbach friend of Public Education in Milwaukee award. Nominations must be received at the MTEA Building by June 30.

The nomination form includes guidelines for the categories and the judging criteria. The form will

be on our Web site shortly (Members>> Community Outreach).

Congratulations Laura Vernon! Wisconsin's ESP of the Year

If you have had the opportunity to work with Laura Vernon (she started in MPS in 1974), you know what she brings to school every day: love for "her" children; respect for her peers; professionalism for her challenging work (she's a school safety assistant, assignment to Roosevelt); and an abundance of other qualities that inspire us all - enthusiasm, integrity, strength, humor, intelligence, compassion - to name a few.

Educational assistants in MPS know that Laura deeply believes in our union. She has served on the MEAA Council and the EA bargaining team for years. She has led the EA unit within the MTEA as MEAA President for four years. She continues to serve today as MEAA Immediate Past President.

The rest of the state has recognized Laura as an outstanding model of today's education support professional - by naming her ESP of the Year for 2007.

Laura was honored at WEAC's Annual Awards Banquet on April 21. The following are quotes from the presentation remarks.

Each year we honor an education support professional who shows outstanding accomplishments in enhancing the image of ESP in the community by being a participating citizen of a democratic society, by being an active member at all levels of the association, and exhibiting professional achievements.

This year's honoree is Laura Vernon.

Laura is the consummate professional in her work with and for Milwaukee's children for 32 years, the consummate unionist in her service on behalf of her fellow members at the local, state and national level. She has held numerous leadership roles and served on virtually every committee there is.

But rather than having me tell you this, it is probably best to hear from those who nominated Laura for this award.

It is not every year that the nominating committee receives letters from members of Congress, but this year Congresswoman Gwen Moore wrote to us to urge us to give this award to Laura.

Congresswoman Moore wrote, "Ms. Vernon has dedicated herself throughout her career to the service of her students and her colleagues. I urge the committee to acknowledge these years of service by naming her Wisconsin's Education Support Professional of the year."

MEAA President Tommie Lee Glenn wrote: "Ms. Vernon always becomes a good fit wherever her feet land....I have personally watched the butterfly Vernon go from job to job, building to building, and position to position, and she remains about the business of, as she would put it, "Looking out for the members and looking out for our babies, the children of Milwaukee Public Schols."

MTEA President Dennis Oulahan wrote: "Laura Vernon has been an invaluable asset to the Milwaukee community, to the Milwaukee Public Schools, to MTEA, WEAC and the NEA over the course of many years. It is an honor to consider myself her colleague and her friend. I recommend her to you as the WEAC ESP of the Year without reservation. She makes those of

us who know her proud every day. She would make all WEAC members proud as ESP of the Year."

Thanks to Chairpersons

MEAA Educational Assistant Chairpersons deserve a special note of appreciation for the support and service they have provided throughout the school year. Chairpersons are the cornerstone of our union. Their communication and representation efforts benefit the entire membership. They serve voluntarily, without pay, and their leadership is key to our union's success in meeting your needs.