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Solidarity!



Don't Take My Planning Time!

Over the past two years, there has been a continuing and increasing abuse, by principals and District central office management, of elementary teachers' planning time. The Contract specifically provides elementary classroom teachers with 5.5 hours of planning time per week, within the student day. One hour of the 5.5 is specified to be during Monday early dismissal.

Principals have been running their monthly staff meeting into the hour of planning time which elementary teachers are guaranteed on Monday, and District central office management have scheduled instructional resource and other programs which collide with the hour.

Elvehjem Elementary teachers, in protest, signed a petition telling their principal that they would no longer tolerate the abuse of their planning time, and they walked out of the meeting, when it was necessary to protect the Contract-guaranteed hour of planning time. They simply returned to their classrooms and continued preparation for instruction.

In reaction to the teachers standing up for their Contract rights, the principal said he would write each teacher a letter of reprimand. Teachers being reprimanded for standing up for their rights is like a Scout receiving a merit badge. **How foolish of District management to issue a reprimand, when management refuses to follow the terms of the Contract to which the Board of Education agreed.**

EA-MTI Election Results

At its March 4 general membership meeting, members of MTI's educational assistants (EA-MTI) collective bargaining unit re-elected **Anne Hernandez** (Hawthorne) as President; **Judy Ferwerda** (Memorial) as Vice-President; **John Bell** (Sandburg) as Secretary; **Kathy Ziegler** (LaFollette) as LaFollette Area Chairperson; and **Jaclynn Olson** (West) as West Area Chairperson.

A vacancy still exists for the East Area Chairperson. Nominations for the East Area Chairperson may be made by contacting Eve Degen (degene@madisonteachers.org) or Jesse Reschke (reschkej@madisonteachers.org) at MTI Headquarters.

Make Sure Your Vote Counts Take Advantage of Early and Absentee Voting

To assure that MTI members have the greatest possible impact in this important election, your Union encourages members to take advantage of voting via absentee ballot. In 2004, Wisconsin made changes in the law to enable any registered voter to vote by absentee ballot. Absentee ballots are available from the City Clerk as of March 17, 2009.

Early Bird Voting enables individuals to vote "early" by going to the Madison City Clerk's office, in the City/County Building on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., or the city/town hall in the jurisdiction of your residence.

Voter registration information is available at <http://www.cityofmadison.com/clerk/>. Voter registration information for other jurisdictions is available at: <http://www.co.dane.wi.us/election/absentee.aspx>.

The Madison City Clerk's office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. However, because of the Election coinciding with the Madison Metropolitan School District spring break, the **Madison City Clerk will extend their hours for absentee voting** in the City Clerk's office as follows: Saturday, March 28, and Saturday, April 4, from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.; and Monday, March 30, through Thursday, April 2, from 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

MTI Links: Find links to websites and forms listed above on MTI's website at www.madisonteachers.org, then click on "Spring Election 2009."

Our Union Makes Us Strong!

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MTI's web page - www.madisonteachers.org

MTI's email - MTI@madisonteachers.org

Principal to Staff: “I Apologize”

A Collective Bargaining Agreement is often referred to as the “Constitution of the workplace”. It memorializes the wages, hours and conditions of employment as agreed upon between the employer and the Union of the employer’s workers. A grievance provides a process and means to bring about a peaceful resolution of a contractual dispute or misunderstanding.

Recently, however, a principal wrote staff members, *“You’ll notice on the schedule above, that I am scheduled to be out of the building quite a bit this week because of a grievance hearing (arbitration) that involves the way noon recess has been scheduled. I am not happy about this, and am frustrated that my time needs to be spent this way. Hopefully, quick resolution can be brought to this situation.”*

MTI Executive Director **John Matthews** challenged the principal, **advising that the comment violated Wisconsin Statutes**. Matthews suggested an easy solution was an apology. The principal quickly complied.

Wisconsin Statutes provide that *it is a violation for an employer (principal) to interfere with, restrain or coerce municipal employees in the exercise of their rights ... or to encourage or discourage union activity*. **MTI works hard to resolve contractual disputes, but when they cannot be resolved in discussions with District management, arbitration is the agreed upon means of achieving resolution.**

EA-MTI News

Retroactive pay, resulting from MTI’s recent negotiated settlements for educational assistants, was distributed March 12 and 13. If EAs have questions or concerns regarding their retroactive adjustments, they may call the Union office (257-0491).

MTI held its initial area-wide meeting on February 18, at LaFollette High School. Attendance from LaFollette High School was high; however, no EAs from other schools in the LaFollette area joined the meeting. Another area-wide meeting in the Memorial Attendance Area will be scheduled shortly. The purpose of area-wide meetings is to enable discussion at a venue close to where members work.

The 2008-2010 EA Collective Bargaining Agreement will soon be available on MTI’s website (www.madisonteachers.org). Pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the EA Contract is printed and distributed to all EAs at the expense of the District, within 60 days after the Contract has been signed by the parties. In the interim, MTI will be sending a copy of the 2008-2010 Agreement to each

school in the District. EAs may contact their EA-MTI Building Representative if they wish to examine the Contract before their personal copy arrives.

The MTI office receives many calls regarding personal leave time and leaves of absence. To clarify, the EA-MTI Collective Bargaining Agreement provides that EAs may receive up to two unpaid personal leave days per school year. Such absences are to be in at least one-half day increments. EAs may make requests to their school principal for personal leave days. Personal leave in excess of two days must be negotiated on behalf of the EA by MTI. Long term unpaid leaves (e.g., one semester or one year) may be granted to an EA, provided the EA has completed his/her probationary period. The request must be made via the District’s “Leave Request Form” and submitted at least 30 days in advance of the effective date of the leave. The reason for the leave is to be provided on the form. Long term leaves of absence result in the EA being gone through the balance of the semester, unless MTI and the District agree otherwise. EAs with questions regarding any type of leave may contact Eve Degen (degene@madisonteachers.org) or Jesse Reschke (reschkej@madisonteachers.org) at MTI Headquarters.

MTI Members & Facebook

Thanks to MTI’s Social Committee, **MTI now has a presence on Facebook, and with a group page that is for MTI members only**. One will need a facebook profile to join the MTI Facebook group. In Facebook, members should simply do a search for Madison Teachers Inc. Then one should ask to become a member of the MTI group. One will not be able to join the group until he/she has been confirmed as an MTI member. On Facebook, there will be announcements of MTI social events, political activities, as well as other MTI member announcements. One should only post on Facebook what he/she would yell out in a crowded theater or in front of a child.

Calendar of Events

- **Monday, March 16, 4:15 p.m., MTI**
MTI Board of Directors
- **Tuesday, March 17, 4:15 p.m., SCFL**
MTI Faculty Representative Council
- **Wednesday, April 1, 4:30 p.m., MTI**
SSA-MTI General Membership Meeting
- **April 6-13 Spring Break**
- **Tuesday, April 7, Spring Election - VOTE!**