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Solidarity!

Teacher Retirement Deadline Extended for Those in Variable Fund

Due to the uncertainties regarding the impact of recent stock market declines on the estimated retirement annuities for those teachers considering retiring at the end of the current school year, MTI and the MMSD have reached an agreement to **extend the retirement notification deadline** from February 15 to **March 15, 2009, for those teachers with a portion of their WRS funds in the Variable Fund.** *Those teachers with all of their WRS retirement funds in the Core Fund will continue to be required to give notice by February 15.*

WRS has indicated that they will be unable to project the impact of 2008 investment performance until late-February or early-March.

While 2008 stock market losses to date have resulted in significant losses to both the Variable and Core Funds, **losses in Core Funds are “smoothed” over five years, lessening the impact of any particular year’s losses, and resulting in much less uncertainty for participants with all of their WRS retirement money in the Core Fund.** Losses in the Variable Fund are not “smoothed”, but largely reflect the gains or losses of the funds in which they are invested, in any given year, increasing the risk and uncertainty for those Variable participants. It is for that reason that the retirement notification deadline is extended to only those with some portion of their WRS retirement money in the Variable Fund. **One can determine in which WRS funds they participate in by reviewing their Annual Statement of Benefits. WRS sends the Benefit Statement to each participant each year.**

MTI-represented Educational Assistants, Clerical Technical Employees, School Security Assistants and Substitute teachers are not subject to the February 15 deadline but should review their respective Collective Bargaining Agreements for retirement notice provisions (typically two to four weeks’ notice).

Under each of MTI’s Collective Bargaining Agreements, the District pays both the employer’s and the employee’s share of WRS deposits. Employees may add to that required deposit.

For a detailed explanation of the potential impact of stock market performance on WRS retirement benefits, see the MTI hand-out entitled “**Retirement Decisions and the Stock Market**” (available on the MTI website www.madisonteachers.org).

Open Hearing January 12 for 2009-11 Teacher Negotiations

Prior to commencing negotiations, MTI’s Bargaining Committee holds an open hearing at which any MTI member wishing to further communicate about MTI’s 2009 negotiations is invited to do so. **The January 12 meeting will begin at 4:15 p.m., at the Labor Temple, Room 201C (1602 S. Park St.).** There has been a huge response by MTI members to the Union’s Bargaining Survey. *Data is in the process of being analyzed by MTI Executive Director John Matthews for presentation to the members of the MTI Board of Directors and Bargaining Committee.* **The Committee will use information gathered from the surveys and the open hearing in crafting the Union’s proposal.**

Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday January 19

As a result of MTI’s successful negotiations, all District employees now have a paid holiday, a day off, in recognition of the accomplished civil rights of **Martin Luther King, Jr.** Given the terms of MTI’s various Contracts with the District, members of MTI’s teacher, educational assistant, clerical/technical, and school security assistant bargaining units will be paid for the day. MTI encourages members’ observance of this important holiday which signifies the importance of Dr. King’s legacy.

“The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress. Out of its bold struggles, economic and social reform gave birth to unemployment insurance, old age pensions, government relief to the destitute, and above all new wage levels that meant not mere survival, but a tolerable life.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Our Union Makes Us Strong!

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MTI’s web page - www.madisonteachers.org
MTI’s email - MTI@madisonteachers.org

SIMS Rollout Becomes More Realistic

The District's implementation of the **Student Information Management System (SIMS)** has been drastically modified due to the input by MTI members and Union staff. The Union's SIMS Task Force has met three times since the commencement of the school year with District administrators to discuss implementation issues raised by MTI's Faculty Representatives and other members.

Most notably, SIMS implementation has been delayed from a widespread rollout at the start of this school year to the commencement of second quarter, and now to the current model, one where training is offered to a few members at each school, and the staff at each school move forward with SIMS as they determine.

Assistant Superintendent Sue Abplanalp and Director of Research and Evaluation Kurt Kiefer have stated that SIMS is a tool that is to be used by teams, and to record interventions that have previously been recorded on paper. They acknowledge that various schools are at different points in their implementation, from organizing into the teams where SIMS would be used to record interventions to actual use of SIMS by some teams at some schools.

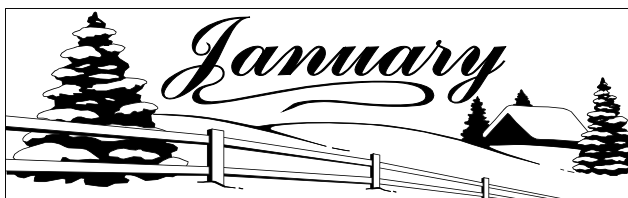
Several issues remain unresolved. Among them, the District still has unrealistic expectations of the time teachers have available to use SIMS, and the actual time consumed at the computer to enter data, time which is taken away from the teacher working with students. The role of the classroom teacher, especially with respect to classroom interventions, still needs to be clarified. While the District claims that SIMS was not designed to be used as a teacher evaluation tool, but as a "program evaluation" tool and student record keeping system, the SIMS Task Force feels that this issue has not been satisfactorily resolved. Adequate training still needs to be designed and provided, and computers need to be upgraded.

The Union's SIMS Task Force will continue to meet with District representatives to address these issues and others that develop. MTI members can provide feedback at www.madisonteachers.org; click on "SIMS Feedback."

(SIMS is a computerized intervention tracking system developed by the District, with funding from DPI. Elementary teachers and middle and high school support staff are most familiar with SIMS.)

Winter Break/MTI Office Closed

This will be the last *MTI Solidarity* for 2008. MTI wishes everyone a safe, enjoyable and relaxing winter break. *When you wonder "who cares", rest assured that your Union cares.* The MTI Office will be closed on December 25 and January 1.

**2008-10 SSA-MTI Contract Reached Ratification set for December 17**

MTI's School Security Assistants' bargaining unit (SSA-MTI) has reached a tentative agreement with the District over the terms and conditions of the 2008-10 School Security Assistants-MTI Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The tentative agreement is subject to ratification by SSA-MTI members, as well as the Board of Education. SSA-MTI members are encouraged to attend the December 17 ratification meeting. A detailed summary of the tentative agreement will be provided at the meeting.

The tentative agreement includes a wage increase of 2.75% for 2008-09 retroactive to August 10, 2008, and another 2.75% for 2009-10. This agreement is in line with internal comparables. Also, an agreement was reached to remove Step 1 of the salary schedule as a means to increase the starting wage. All members currently on Step 1 will be retroactively moved to Step 2.

In addition to the wage increase, improvements were made in contract language related to:

Snow Days - Under the new agreement, employees will be provided the additional options to use personal illness or floating holiday time to receive payment for time missed along with being able to be paid for the snow day up front provided one makes up the missed hours by attending District provided staff development/training by one week following the end of the school year. *This provision will be applied retroactively to the snow day of December 9, 2008.*

Subpoenaed Witness - Under the new agreement, employees will now be compensated at their regular rate of pay, with written approval of the supervisor, for testimony provided to an officer of the court regarding an incident arising out of their duties as a School Security Assistant.

Ratification Meeting
Wednesday, December 17
4:30 p.m.
Labor Temple, Room 201A
 (1602 S. Park Street)

Calendar of Events/Deadlines

- **December 17 - Report Card Survey Deadline**
- **December 20 - January 4**
Winter Break
- **Tuesday, January 6, 4:15 p.m., MTI**
MTI Board of Directors & Bargaining Committee
- **Wednesday, January 7, 4:00 p.m., MTI**
EA-MTI Board of Directors
- **Monday, January 12, 4:15 p.m., SCFL**
MTI Bargaining Committee Open Meeting
- **Tuesday, January 13, 4:15 p.m., MTI**
MTI VOTERS - Spring Candidate Interviews
- **Tuesday, January 13, 4:15 p.m., Harmony Bar**
MTI Special Education Sub-Committee
- **Wednesday, January 14, 4:15 p.m., MTI**
USO-MTI Board of Directors