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Solidarity!

Primary Election February 16 Remember to Vote

This **Spring's primary election** does not have a contest for the Madison Metropolitan School District School Board or other "high profile" contests on the ballot. Therefore, a very low turnout is expected. *In such low turnout elections, it is vitally important to vote, because it counts even more!*

There is ONE very important primary election, that for the Court of Appeals which serves the Madison area. MTI VOTERS recommended, and MTI members have affirmed, the endorsement of **BRIAN BLANCHARD for Court of Appeals District 4.** *BLANCHARD has previously been endorsed by MTI in his campaigns for election and reelection to Dane County District Attorney.* As District Attorney, **Blanchard** leads an office that handles 13,000 Dane County circuit court cases. He was the Assistant United States Attorney from 1990-1997. **Blanchard's** support is wide ranging and includes law enforcement, District Attorneys, elected officials, attorneys and community leaders from across the 24 county Districts.

BE SURE TO VOTE. An application for an absentee ballot can be secured on MTI's website (www.madisonteachers.org), or one can vote at the City of Madison Clerk's Office any weekday, 8:00-4:30 p.m., or at any village or town clerk's office (call for open hours).

Clerical and Technical Employees, Make your Voice Heard; Bargaining Surveys Distributed

Bargaining surveys will be distributed this week to members of MTI's clerical/technical bargaining unit, Supportive Educational Employees (SEE-MTI). The current Collective Bargaining Agreement covering these employees expires on August 7, 2010 and negotiations over a successor agreement will commence this spring. **The Union's priorities for bargaining are established based on feedback received from Union members' responses to the bargaining survey.** Therefore, **all SEE-MTI members are strongly encouraged to complete and return the survey to MTI Headquarters.** In addition to completing the bargaining surveys, members can also share their ideas and concerns with the SEE-MTI negotiation team. Elected to represent the union in this round of negotiations are the following: **SEE-MTI President Travis Grover** (Research & Evaluation); **Carol Land** (Crestwood); **Judy Arend** (Cherokee); **Sadie Larkin** (Memorial); **Jeanie Hadden** (Payroll); **Sherry Barnsley** (Expulsions Office); and **Bill Thompson** (Research & Evaluation). MTI Assistant Director Doug Keillor will be working with the SEE-MTI negotiation team.

Deadlines for Leave of Absence

Pursuant to Section VI-B (Leaves of Absences) of MTI's "Teacher" Collective Bargaining Agreement, all *non-medical leaves except academic, adoption and childrearing leaves, must be for a minimum of one full school year and must commence at the beginning of the first semester.* Academic or childrearing leaves must be for a minimum of one semester. Leaves and leave extensions are granted to teachers as follows:

Initial Request: One semester (academic or childrearing).

Extension: One extension will be allowed for the semester following the semester of the initial leave, unless the initial request is for the second semester or the school year, then the extension must be for the entire school year.

Initial Request: One full school year. **Extension:** One extension consisting of the following school year.

Other than for academic leaves of absence or extension of same, leave of absence requests for the first semester or the full school year for 2010-11, or to extend a leave of absence, must be made in writing through the principal/supervisor to Human Resources by **March 1, 2010.** A request for an academic leave or for an extension of same must be made to the Department of Human Resources by **May 1, 2010** for the first semester or the ensuing school year.

One remains a member of MTI's bargaining unit while on leave and has benefits available while on leave. Given this, partial dues while one is on leave can be paid during the leave or upon return.

Grievance Resolution Project

Given the huge backlog of grievances awaiting resolution, MTI negotiated with the District, during teacher Contract negotiations, a means to expedite resolution of cases.

MTI and the District agreed to continue the services of **Mediator Howard Bellman** and, at his suggestion, to engage the **Northwestern University Mediation Research and Evaluation Project**, of which Bellman is a part. MTI Executive Director **John Matthews** and Assistant Director **Doug Keillor** are meeting with **Bellman, Supt. Nerad** and Human Resources Director **Bob Nadler** to develop the methods to proceed. Also involved is **Stephen Goldberg** of Northwestern University's law school.

Grievances are designed as a method to provide a speedy resolution of workplace and Contract disputes. Over the past few years, various obstacles have been placed in the process which have slowed the process to an unsatisfactory pace.

USO-MTI Negotiations Hit a Wall

In what hopefully proves to be an anomaly and not a harbinger of what is to come for other MTI represented employees, the USO-MTI Negotiation Team *received a paltry wage proposal of .5% percent in 2009-10 and a .5% percent increase in 2010-2011 from the School Board.* Negotiations quickly broke down. Substitute teachers have been without a contract since July 1, 2009! The Union had proposed wage increases over 4% each contract year.

The USO-MTI bargaining unit was borne of labor strife in the teacher unit during the strike of 1976. Substitute teachers and teachers stood side-by-side in a united front that ultimately, amongst other important gains, secured planning time for elementary school teachers, and the first USO-MTI Collective Bargaining Agreement. Since then the USO-MTI membership and MTI staff have worked together to forge a Contract that provides solid wages and benefits for substitute teachers in the region. The School District benefits from such a Contract by being able to attract qualified substitute teachers. Substitute teachers have fought for and bargained important provisions such as: health insurance, miscall pay, retirement benefits, personal illness days, assignment language guarantees and other important employment rights.

During the initial bargaining session for the 2009-2011 contract, the School Board sought to: *significantly reduce summer school pay for substitute teachers; redefine and lengthen the amount of days that qualify as a long-term assignment from 7 to 20 days; freeze the School Board's contribution toward health insurance; end the distribution of printed contracts; and to reduce pay increments for Substitute teachers who perform SEA work.*

The Union proposed important provisions that were identified through the USO-MTI Bargaining survey. The proposals included: *a higher rate of pay for substitute teachers with Masters degrees; full day pay for miscall assignments; limiting substitute restrictions at a particular school to the end of that school year; increasing substitute teacher orientation pay; increased access to accrued personal illness; snow day pay; increased contribution to health insurance; a "no fault" provision for Substitute teachers who fall deficient of work standards for one month to maintain their health insurance; a provision to create Substitute Bilingual Resource Specialists (BRS) who are currently employed under Limited Term Employment (LTE) agreements.*

Substitute teachers provide important and valuable work filling in for teachers in a moment's notice. Substitute teachers are called into any environment, most any grade level and school, and fill in for a half day, day, or indeterminate amount of time. *Substitute teachers deserve every MTI member's support. A half-penny raise is offensive to every working person.*

Health Risk Assessment

Among the agreements reached during last year's Teacher Contract negotiations is one which provides the opportunity to participate, without cost, in a health risk assessment. **The project is designed to enable members of MTI's teacher bargaining unit to assure that they are living a healthy lifestyle and/or to improve their lifestyle, and, therefore, their health.**

The health risk assessment will include *blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol checks, body fat content and fitness profile. All information will remain confidential; i.e. information will only be provided by the screening agency to the employee.*

The District's Human Resources Department is in the process of sending an application to participate to each member of the teacher bargaining unit. **Applications must be submitted to the Human Resources Department by February 19.** The application can also be obtained from MTI's website (www.madisonteachers.org).

Contract Reduction Deadline March 1

Under the MTI negotiated Teacher Collective Bargaining Agreement provision **Temporary Reduction of Contract to Part-Time with the Right to Return to Full-Time** (see Contract Section IV-W), full-time teachers who wish to work part-time may do so for one year and have the right to return to full-time regular employment commencing with the subsequent school year. Requests for participation must be made in writing to the District's office of Human Resources on or before **March 1 for the 2010-11 school year.**

Reducing one's contract without doing so by using this contract provision has major negative implications. Members considering this are urged to contact MTI Headquarters (257-0491).

Calendar of Events

- **Monday, February 8, 4:30 p.m., MTI**
MTI Board of Directors
- **Thursday, February 11, 4:30 p.m., MTI**
SEE-MTI Board of Directors
- **Tuesday, February 16, 4:15 p.m., SCFL**
MTI Faculty Representative Council
- **Friday, February 26,**
SWEIO Convention, Monona Terrace

Our Union Makes Us Strong!

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MTI's web page - www.madisonteachers.org

MTI's email - MTI@madisonteachers.org