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Solidarity!

Negotiations: Late Start to Enable Greater Collaboration; Middle School Building Supervision

Negotiations are underway between MTI and the District to amend the terms and conditions of the Teacher Collective Bargaining Agreement to enable a one-hour delay in the commencement of the school day each Tuesday of the 2010-11 school year for middle and high schools (except La Follette), for the express purpose of enabling greater collaboration. The purpose of collaboration would be determined by teachers. It would replace district inservice days. Bargaining is required to modify the agreed-upon school calendar, which sets aside time on 3 days for inservice, that school can be dismissed early to enable staff development (collaboration), and establishes the hours of school.

MTI's proposals would enable the one-hour late start each Tuesday, for all middle and high schools, except La Follette. La Follette operates under the terms and conditions of an MTI/MMSD Memorandum of Understanding. The Memorandum enables time periodically for staff development, collaboration and planning.

Also proposed by MTI is building supervision for middle schools similar to that which has for many years been in effect for high schools. The presence of teachers can be very beneficial in creating a positive learning environment.

In 1990, MTI and the District agreed that before high school teachers could volunteer to supervise halls that they must, for safety reasons, complete a training program designed by the Madison Police Department and the Joint MTI/MMSD High School Supervision Committee, and when supervising be equipped with an electronic communication device to enable immediate contact with a building administrator. The Memorandum provides that *in no case will the individual be required to insert himself/herself into a potentially violent situation and that he/she is to leave the situation, if a weapon is visible or suspected.* Also provided by the agreement is that **one shall not supervise outside the building and that he/she is held harmless provided he/she acts in good faith.**

MTI has linked the building supervision proposal to its proposal to enable late start for middle schools, *because of the increasing requests by middle school principals that teachers supervise the building.* MTI Executive Director **John Matthews** emphasized that *the Union's proposal is best for both Union members and the District, because of the training and safety components, and because the accrual of compensatory time or additional days for one's Retirement Insurance Account will attract teachers to provide this valuable service which enables a safer learning and working environment.*

Health Insurance & Dental Insurance: District Erroneously Taxes at 100%

In an apparent action to dissuade an employee from accessing health insurance for his/her older children, the Madison Metropolitan School District recently advised employees that they would have to pay income tax for such coverage at 100% of the single premium. IRS has established no taxation rate.

This issue arises from the Wisconsin Legislature's recent approval of a Bill which enables one to carry on their health and dental insurance children to age 27, whether or not they are dependent. MTI's negotiated plans enable coverage through the end of the calendar year in which the child turns 27.

MTI is currently in negotiations with the District over the percentage of premium on which one must pay income taxes. Given this, MTI has asked the District to extend today's deadline; a date which the District unilaterally established for employees to tell the District whether they wish to insure children over 25.

Masters Degree in Collaborative Educational Leadership

MTI has had preliminary discussions with *Fielding Graduate University* regarding their one-year program to obtain a *Masters Degree in Collaborative Educational Leadership*. Classes are geared to the convenience of working teachers and take place in Madison. Fielding University has organized this program with working groups in the Milwaukee and Eau Claire regions and are looking to spread the word about their popular and accessible program in the Madison area. The main campus is located in Santa Barbara, CA, but the University has increased their presence in the Madison area over the last two years.

There is an application deadline of April 15th for the Summer 2010 program. MTI is organizing a meeting with *Fielding's Faculty Facilitator, Bill Jabs, at MTI Headquarters.* If one has interest in learning more about the program degree, contact MTI Assistant Director **Ken Volante** at MTI Headquarters (volantek@madisonteachers.org) or by phone (257-0491) to advise of one's availability for the informational meeting. In the interim, visit www.fielding.edu.

Our Union Makes Us Strong!

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

State Aid Cuts Force Decision for Board of Education

Dramatic cuts in State Aid will force the MMSD Board of Education to either dramatically increase local property taxes or make drastic cuts to public education. Changes made as part of the 2009-11 state budget in response to the state budget deficit resulted in state aid to the MMSD *decreasing* from \$60.7 million in 2008-09 to \$51.5 million in 2009-10. The state aid is estimated to further decline to only \$43.7 million in 2010-11. **This \$27 million loss in state aid may be dealt with in a number of ways.**

First, the Board of Education could increase local property taxes by a proportionate amount which, according to the District, would result in an annual property tax increase of \$312.50 for the owner of a \$250,000 house. *This increase in the property tax would allow the District to increase its 2010-11 budget by approximately 2% but would still necessitate the need to cut \$1.2 million.* Such would allow the District to continue to spend to the authority allowed under the revenue limits.

Second, the Board of Education could decide *not* to increase the local property tax and, instead, **cut up to an additional \$27 million** worth of student services in 2010-11. **District administration is currently compiling a list of possible cuts under such a scenario, but there is no doubt that such cuts would have a devastating impact on education offered by the MMSD.** Such would result in the District spending significantly less than the amount allowed under the revenue limit.

Third, the Board of Education could decide on some combination of local property tax increase and cuts to programs and staff. This also would result in the District spending less than the amount allowed under the revenue limit.

The Board of Education will hold public hearings this spring to receive feedback on the proposals to cut expenditures. More information will be provided in ***MTI Solidarity!*** as it becomes available.

Educational Assistant Posting of Summer Job Vacancies

The initial posting of EA, SEA, and NA position vacancies for 2010 summer school employment occurred on February 12. Applications for positions are due by February 24. The February 12 postings includes SEA, EA and NA positions for the Extended Learning Summer School program (ELSS). Postings for the Extended School Year program (ESY) will be posted at a later date. **Important:** Anyone in the EA collective bargaining unit who is interested in being considered for both ELSS and ESY employment needs to apply for both programs. Each program requires a separate Transfer Request form.

Summer school positions are posted in each school's office and in each staff lounge. They can also be accessed on the District's website. MTI's Contract governing educational assistants provides that one's regular wage is paid for work during the summer. EAs who have questions regarding summer school employment should call Jesse Reschke at MTI Headquarters.

MTI Outing to Wollersheim Winery



MTI's Social Events Committee has scheduled its first outing of the year, a day trip to the Prairie du Sac **Wollersheim Winery** on **Sunday, March 21.** The cost per person of \$20.18 (*payable to MTI*) will cover transportation, admission and refreshments during the tour. Van Galder/Coach USA will supply the transportation. The bus will depart from the Madison Labor Temple (1602 S. Park Street) at 12:45 p.m. and return about 4:00 p.m. Friends and family are welcome, but space is limited to the first 50 people who reserve space by emailing/calling MTI (MTI@madisonteachers.org/257-0491).

Note: *No one under the age of 21 can participate in the wine tasting.*

EA-MTI General Membership Meeting March 3

Members of MTI's educational assistants' bargaining unit (**EA-MTI**) will meet on **Wednesday, March 3, at MTI Headquarters,** commencing at 4:00 p.m. The purpose of the meeting is to receive nominations for a number of positions which expire on the EA-MTI Board of Directors, and to conduct general business for the organization. Although nomination forms have been mailed to members of the bargaining unit, nominations can also be made at the meeting on March 3. Nominations will close at the meeting.

Calendar of Events

- **Friday, February 26**
SWEIO Convention, Monona Terrace
- **Monday, March 1, 4:15 p.m., Harmony Grill**
Special Education Sub-Committee
- **Tuesday, March 2, 4:15 p.m., MTI**
USO-MTI Negotiations
- **Wednesday, March 3, 4:00 p.m., MTI**
EA-MTI General Membership Meeting
- **Monday, March 8, 4:30 p.m. MTI**
MTI Board of Directors
- **Tuesday, March 9, 4:15 p.m., MTI**
MTI VOTERS Political Action Committee