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Solidarity!

Failure of Governor and Legislature Cause Huge Financial Problems for Education

Beginning with former Governor Thompson's 1993 Revenue Controls, Wisconsin's public schools have been under severe financial pressure. *Thompson's Revenue Controls undercut local school boards' authority to provide education, of the quality desired by local populace, the foremost principle on which public education is based.* Since the imposition of the Revenue Controls, **the Madison School Board, to date, has been forced to cut \$60 million.** What State leaders fail to take into consideration is the *impact of the cuts, i.e. the public will pay now or pay later.* **If a child is not provided reading recovery when needed, she/he will never catch up.** The same is true when a child with special needs does not receive necessary services. These kids will most likely fail in life and cost taxpayers even more in disability payments or in incarceration costs. **And think of the great writings, inventions or discoveries that are lost, when TAG students are deprived of accelerated classes.**

Hope that Governor Doyle and the Democratic legislative majority would reverse the revenue controls by providing adequate State aid and restoring local school boards' funding authority was lost when Doyle failed to act during the 2008-09 legislative session, and the economy tanked. **The result, the MMSD suffered a \$9.2 million cut in State aid this year and expects another \$7.8 million cut in aid next year.** The State's failure to act has caused a huge hole in MMSD's budget, because of the cumulative loss in State aid and the Revenue Control formula.

Without adequate funding by the State, and with continued State-imposed Revenue Controls, the **Madison Board of Education now faces a financial shortfall of \$30 million, unless the Board concludes to increase property taxes.**

Superintendent Dan Nerad has made alternative recommendations to the Board for their consideration. **Cuts recommended for Board consideration are in 4 tiers or groups.** *The recommendations would have an increasingly negative impact on the District and the quality of education available to Madison students.*

Since the Legislature usurped local control, **64% of Wisconsin school districts have laid off teachers, 69% have increased class size, 61% have decreased course offerings, 58% have reduced the arts, and 59% have reduced programming for talented and gifted students.** *The Madison Metropolitan School District has done all of these things and more, including reducing programs for handicapped students, reducing accelerated classes for gifted and talented students, laying off teachers, educational assistants, clerical/technical workers, and custodial workers. The latter has caused schools to become exceedingly dirty.*

The Revenue Controls designed by former Governor Thompson are designed to control property taxes, not meet the needs of children. The "*Penny for Kids*" sales tax increase proposed by the Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools (WAES) would assist funding, but even if it is approved, funds are at least a year away. What must be done now is to encourage Madison School Board members to use the only vehicle at their disposal - raise property tax as much as they are able. That will not only help Madison's children, but send a message to the Governor and to Legislators that the time is NOW to fix Wisconsin's school funding system.

It is irresponsible for Board members to further cut services and programs designed to enable children to learn and reach their potential, especially when most of the student population now comes with great challenges inhibiting their ability to learn. **Educators, however, are expected to produce greater student achievement, albeit with fewer and fewer resources, less support, and larger classes.** It appears that Governor Doyle and the Legislature think a second grader who is deprived of educational opportunity can return to get it when they make funds available in five or ten years.

The Board has the authority to fill \$28.6 million of the \$30 million hole. Urge them to do so. Email/call Board members:

- Arlene Silveira - asilveira@madison.k12.wi.us/270-0435
- Lucy Mathiak - lmathiak@madison.k12.wi.us/255-0939
- Beth Moss - bmoss@madison.k12.wi.us/833-3166
- Johnny Winston - jwinstonjr@madison.k12.wi.us/441-0224
- Maya Cole - mpcole@madison.k12.wi.us/239-1484
- Ed Hughes - ejhughes@madison.k12.wi.us/241-4854
- Marj Passman - mpassman@madison.k12.wi.us/274-0645

Speak out. Your opinion counts. Attend one of the Board's hearings:

Monday, March 22, 6:00 p.m., UW Space Place in
The Villager Mall, 2300 S. Park St.
Sunday, April 18, 1:00 p.m., Warner Park Community
Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Drive.

See your MTI Faculty Representative or one of the MTI, SEE-MTI, EA-MTI, USO-MTI, or SSA-MTI Board members for details on the District's Budget woes. A copy is also available at www.madisonteachers.org.

- *an educational opportunity which is lost is lost forever* •

Our Union Makes Us Strong!

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

Coyne Nominated for MTI President-Elect

Any member of MTI's "teacher" collective bargaining unit who is interested in nominating a colleague for any of the vacant MTI Officer or Bargaining Committee positions may contact MTI Executive Director John Matthews, or nominations can be made by an MTI Faculty Representative, from the floor, at the March 16 meeting of the Council. With the nomination of Bargaining Committee member **Peggy Coyne for MTI President-Elect**, nominations have been received for all open positions.

*****Important Reminder***** **Teacher Contracts Due April 15**

The District has issued individual teacher contracts for the 2010-11 school year. MTI strongly recommends that teachers return their signed contracts, **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**, to the District Office of Human Resources in person to assure that it is received on time. Take your copy with you and ask that it be stamped "received". **Failure to return a signed contract by April 15 will result in the District accepting such as one's resignation.**

EA-MTI Election Results

At its March 3 general membership meeting, members of MTI's educational assistants (EA-MTI) collective bargaining unit re-elected President **Anne Hernandez** (Hawthorne); Vice-President **Judy Ferwerda** (Memorial); and Secretary **John Bell** (Sandburg). **Nanci Tibbetts** (Whitehorse) was elected as La Follette Area Chairperson.

Administrative Law Judge Rules in Favor of Injured Substitute SEA

In a decision issued February 22, 2010, an Administrative Law Judge with the State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development ruled that an MTI- represented substitute SEA was entitled to receive a total of \$9,389 in temporary total disability pay for an injury she sustained at work on March 31, 2009.

On the day of injury, the SEA was in a school hallway helping a student she worked with to stand up from a sitting position on the floor. In the process of standing, the student threw himself on top of the SEA, injuring her lower back. The SEA was subsequently diagnosed with a herniated disc which her doctor opined was caused by the work incident. A few months after the injury, the SEA attempted to perform light duty work for the District but experienced difficulty standing up due to the lower back pain and was put off work again.

On July 23, 2009, the District's worker's compensation carrier, United Heartland, denied the worker's compensation

claim after having the medical records reviewed by an "independent" medical examiner (IME) hired by the insurer. United Heartland also authorized a surveillance contractor to clandestinely video tape the injured employee on June 5, June 20, and June 22, 2009 as she performed daily activities. IME's and video surveillance are becoming increasingly more common from worker's comp insurers searching for ways to deny claims.

MTI appealed United Heartland's worker's compensation denial on behalf of the injured SEA and a hearing was held on January 12, 2010. *At the hearing, United Heartland attempted to use the IME report and surveillance video tape to show that 1) the claimant's current diagnosis was due to a pre-existing condition, not related to her work injury and 2) that the claimant's injury was exaggerated. The attempt failed.*

The administrative law judge rejected the arguments by the insurer and found that: 1) the applicant credibly and persuasively testified as to how the injury occurred as well as her current symptoms; 2) the video tape did not detract from these findings, and in fact, showed the claimant walking with a limp and 3) the claimant's own doctor's opinions were more persuasive.

In arriving at this decision, **the judge granted \$9,389 in temporary total disability benefits, \$1,739.25 in medical bills and \$275.97 for mileage for medical treatment. In addition to the amount awarded by the judge, MTI's EA Collective Bargaining Agreement also required the District to supplement worker's compensation pay (typically two-thirds pay) so that injured employees receive their full pay when off of work due to a work related injury.**

The injured employee was represented by Attorney **Tamara Packard**, Paralegal **Genny Benesh** and MTI Assistant Director **Doug Keillor**.

Visitation Day

MTI's Teacher Collective Bargaining Agreement grants **each teacher one visitation day** per school year to observe instructional practices in other schools. The visitation day must be **utilized by April 23** of a given school year. The teacher's request for a visitation day is to be submitted to the principal of their school for approval. A visitation day can also be recommended by a principal. Teachers using the negotiated visitation day are reimbursed for expenses if the visitation day for the teacher is at the request of a principal.

Calendar of Events

- **Monday, March 8, 4:30 p.m. MTI**
MTI Board of Directors
- **Thursday, March 11, 4:15 p.m., MTI**
Fielding Graduate University Informational Meeting on Master's Degree in Collaborative Educational Leadership
- **Tuesday, March 16, 4:15 p.m., SCFL**
MTI Faculty Representative Council
- **March 29 - April 5 Spring Break**
- **Tuesday, April 6, Spring General Election - VOTE**