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Solidarity!

Senate Approves Using Test Scores for Teacher Evaluation, Discipline & Dismissal

More bazaar legislation from the far-right has been approved by the State Senate. SB 95 sets the stage for *allowing Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) test scores to be used as a reason to fire, discipline or non-renew a teacher*. The bill passed on October 20, 2011, on a 17-16 party-line vote.

Also among the Bill's provisions are that it **allows school districts to opt out of a commitment to the SAGE class-size reduction program in grades 2 and 3**.

SB 95 now heads to the Assembly where its companion bill, Assembly Bill 130, failed to pass out of the Assembly Education Committee, but will be considered as SB 95.

State Superintendent Tony Evers' "Educator Effectiveness Design Team" is currently developing a **model evaluation system that is reportedly reliable and fair and based on input from educators**.

SB 95 was part of a package of proposals that organizations representing school boards and school administrators and right-wing special interests have advocated for many years.

Retirement Planning 101: October 31 & December 12, 5:00 p.m. WEA Trust Building, 45 Nob Hill Road

For those considering retirement, this seminar will provide members with a general understanding of the three main sources of retirement income - Wisconsin Retirement System, Social Security, and personal savings. It will also help those attending understand the most common roadblocks that prevent a secure retirement. Finally, it will help one understand the different retirement planning solutions available. This seminar is appropriate for those within 10 years of retirement and will provide you with:

- An overview of the sources of retirement income available to public school employees, including Wisconsin Retirement System, Social Security, and personal savings.
- An understanding of common roadblocks to successful retirement planning.
- A pre-retirement checklist of important things to consider.
- Tools and solutions to help you achieve your retirement goals.

There will be opportunities for questions during the presentation. Register at www.weabenefits.com/calendar or call 1-800-279-4030 ext. 1111.

Walker's Cuts to Schools Second Highest in the Nation

An updated report from the **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities**, with figures from 46 states, shows that **Wisconsin ranks number two in the nation in dollars cut per student in 2012**, trailing only New Mexico. *Wisconsin school districts will receive \$635 less per student in state support in 2012 than in 2011, a 10% cut*.

In the 2011-13 budget, **Governor Walker and Republican lawmakers cut state aid to public schools by \$792 million**.

While the nation's economic downturn affects all states, not every state cut funding for public education. In fact, nine states increased spending on education in 2012, and another ten states cut education spending by less than two percent. With the same budget predicament most other states faced, **Walker and the Republicans in the Legislature targeted school children and public employees and balanced the budget on their backs**.

Since 2008, the total cut to public education equals \$776 per student, or almost 12%. State schools Superintendent Tony Evers said in a statement that the historic cuts harm our state's future.

"High school dropouts are four times more likely to be unemployed than college graduates," Evers said. *"To prosper as a state and nation, we need a strong middle class, and public education will help get us there."*

More information about the cuts to public education in Wisconsin and other states is available on the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities website at www.cbpp.org.

Extended Opportunity: MTI Members Eligible for Historic Home Refinancing Benefits

To help offset the loss in take home pay **for members of MTI and the Middleton and Monona Grove Education Associations**, caused by Scott Walker's budget repair bill, MTI has negotiated an arrangement with WPS Community Bank for home mortgage refinancing applications received by **NOVEMBER 10, 2011**.

The arrangement will enable one to refinance home mortgages at historically low interest rates, **with no closing costs**. This is available even if you have already recently refinanced a home loan. For more information about this benefit, visit WPS Community Bank online at www.bankwps.com/mti or call 608-224-5500.

Flexible Spending Account

Now is the time to act. MTI's various Collective Bargaining Agreements enables one to set wages aside, tax free, to cover employee contributions toward health insurance premiums, policy deductibles, co-pays and uninsured medical, dental and optical expenses. Money set aside and not used during the calendar year for such expenses is lost - gone to the District.

Plan now to: ●Use the balance of your funds before December 31. These can be used for unplanned expenses such as prescription glasses, hearing devices, over-the-counter medications, or mental health therapy; and ●Adjust your deposit into your flexible spending account for next year (see Benefits Design Group, Inc. (www.bdgflex.com)). **The deadline for changing one's deduction for 2012 is November 15.**

Roll the Union On! Sign Up for an MTI Committee

With so much work to be done to reverse Governor Walker's vicious attack on public education and worker's rights, MTI asks that members join in the effort to assure a successful recall effort. Please sign up to participate in one of 6 Organizing Committees. You can obtain a description and a sign-up sheet from your MTI Faculty Representative or by visiting the MTI Website (www.madisonteachers.org). See the right-hand margin under "Important Information". **Don't mourn, organize!**

Errata - Health Benefits

Last week's *MTI Solidarity!* stated that Governor Walker's so-called Budget Repair Bill mandates that public employers pay no more than 88% of employees' health insurance premiums. That portion of Walker's Law actually **only applies to employees who are in the State Health Insurance Plan.** That said, *with the imbalance at the bargaining table caused by Walker's Law, numerous public employers were able to force their employees to pay a greater share of the premium.*

Bylaw Amendments

MTI's Bylaws enable proposed amendments to be submitted at the November meeting of the MTI Faculty Representative Council. That meeting is held on the third Tuesday in November (this year November 15). Any proposals received are referred to the Union's Constitution Committee for study and recommendation. The Committee's recommendations will be presented at the Council's February meeting, at which time the Council will act on the proposals. The Constitution Committee requests that any proposed amendments submitted to the Council be in final form and that several copies be presented for distribution at the Council meeting or delivered to the MTI Office prior to the November meeting.

Leave of Absence Deadlines

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.

Requests for an academic or childrearing leave of absence for the second semester of the 2011-12 school year are due by **DECEMBER 1, 2011.**

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 2012-13, or to extend a leave of absence, must be made in writing through the principal/supervisor to Human Resources by **March 1, 2012.** A request for an academic leave or for an extension of same must be made to the Department of Human Resources by **May 1, 2012** for the first semester or the ensuing school year.

Given that one remains represented by MTI and has benefits available while on leave, partial dues for the period one is on leave can be paid either during the leave or upon return.



Calendar of Events

- **Tuesday, November 8, 4:15 p.m.,** MTI
MTI VOTERS Political Action Committee
- **Wednesday, November 9, 4:30 p.m.,** MTI
SEE-MTI Board of Directors
- **Thursday/Friday, November 10 & 11**
Parent/Teacher Conferences
- **November 13-19** *American Education Week*
- **Monday, November 14, 4:30 p.m.,** MTI
MTI Board of Directors
- **Tuesday, November 15, 4:15 p.m.,** SCFL
MTI Faculty Representative Council
- **Thursday/Friday, November 24 & 25**
Thanksgiving Vacation

Our Union Makes Us Strong!

MTI's web page - www.madisonteachers.org

MTI's e-mail - MTI@madisonteachers.org