



821 Williamson St. \* Madison, Wisconsin 53703-4503 \* Phone (608) 257-0491 \* Fax (608) 257-1168

# Solidarity!

## February & March Deadlines

**Salary Advancement Credit** for passage over a salary barrier or for salary track advancement, *effective with the beginning of the second semester*, are due in the office of Human Resources by 5:00 p.m., today, **February 3**.\*

**Sabbatical Leave applications** for either the first semester of the 2014-15 school year or for the entire school year are due in the MTI Office by 5:00 p.m., today, **February 3**.\*

**Teacher Retirement and Teacher Emeritus Retirement Program (TERP)** enrollment applications are due in the office of Human Resources by 5:00 p.m., **February 15**.\*

**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 2014-15 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).*

(\**Note: Contract deadlines which occur on weekends are extended to the following Monday.*)

## MTI Endorsements for Spring General Election

MTI's Political Action Committee, MTI VOTERS, interviewed candidates on January 21 for this Spring's election for Madison School Board Seats 6 and 7. *There is no primary election.* The general election will be held on **April 1**.

*An e-mail has been sent to MTI VOTERS' members to vote on these recommendations via electronic ballot.* A link to the survey is also available on the MTI Website under "Important Information – Spring 2014 Endorsement Ballot." A password is required to access the ballot on the website. Contact MTI directly (257-0491 / [mti@madisonteachers.org](mailto:mti@madisonteachers.org)), or an MTI Faculty Representative, EA Building Representative, or member of the MTI, SEE-MTI, EA-MTI, USO-MTI or SSA-MTI Board of Directors for the password.

**Balloting closes Friday, February 7, at 5:00 p.m.**

## New Post on Diane Ravitch's Blog

In a recent post on her blog, **Diane Ravitch shared concerns about alternative routes to certification; in particular Teach for America (TFA).** *Her post centered on a parent's letter to Senator Tom Harkin after her daughter had a bad experience with TFA.* Ravitch posted two responses: Harkin's actual response to the parent; and a mock response crafted by Professor Julian Vasquez Heilig, University of Texas. Harkin serves as the Chair of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions and as Chair of the Education Appropriations Subcommittee. **While Harkin "read" his constituent's letter, it is apparent he did not incorporate Close reading strategies; his mind was made up. Harkin has supported funding for TFA and even tried to weaken the definition of "highly qualified", so as to include teachers in training (thus enabling TFA teachers to be assigned to schools).** Dr. Heilig points out several of the issues with TFA, primarily the turnover rate of the teachers in this program, which our federal government funds. He also notes that while these "teachers" don't meet the standards of highly qualified, they are the teachers being disproportionately assigned to schools serving poor and minority children. Heilig also exposes the fact that TFA has access to and direct influence over the legislative process, as they provide cost-free education staffers for legislators on the Education and Workforce Committee. TFA lobbyists working inside the Capitol? No wonder Teach for America has been able to extend its reach so efficiently into so many districts around the country.

**Save the Date: Diane Ravitch will be in Madison May 1<sup>st</sup>. Details to follow.**

## UNION, YES!

**MTI membership has continued to climb, with 324 new members since the beginning of the school year.** Some new members are also new employees to the MMSD, while others had been "fair share" contributors - that is, they paid a monthly maintenance fee to the Union for all of the rights and benefits MTI has negotiated for them and has provided services to them, even though they were not members of the Union. Welcome to all new MTI members in all of MTI's bargaining units; please make a note of when meetings and elections take place, and become an active member. **It's YOUR Union!**

MTI Faculty Representatives and EA-MTI Building Representatives regularly receive updated lists of the remaining fair share contributors. Ask your Rep for the names of any remaining fair share contributors at your work location, and take a minute to talk with these individuals about joining MTI. **A strong Union ensures a strong voice for all of us in the future.**

## Family and Medical Leave Laws: Basic Facts

MTI staff has assisted thousands of members in accessing benefits under the Wisconsin and Federal Family & Medical Leave Acts. Basics follow.

### Wisconsin Family and Medical Leave Act (Wisconsin FMLA)

- One must have been employed by the District for at least 52 weeks and have worked at least 1000 hours in that period to be eligible for the benefits under Wisconsin FMLA.
- One shall be allowed up to six weeks (30 workdays) of unpaid leave in a twelve-month period (the calendar year) for the birth or adoption of a child with the leave to begin within 16 weeks (before or after) of the birth or placement of that child.
- One shall be allowed up to two weeks (10 days) of unpaid leave in a twelve-month period (the calendar year) for the care of a child (including those over 18 years of age), spouse or parent (including in-laws) with a serious health condition. The same length of leave is available for one's own serious health condition. *The District may require certification from a health care provider. The time off can be taken intermittently.*
- The leave can be with pay if one asks to substitute accumulated paid leave such as personal illness leave or vacation leave; otherwise the leave is without pay.
- The District must continue the same level of group insurance payments (health and dental) during all such leave, paid or unpaid, that which was paid by the District prior to the leave.
- One wishing to take Wisconsin FMLA leave should give the District reasonable notice. A family/medical leave request can be requested on the District's "Leave Request" form. One must indicate the type and date(s) of leave requested, the reason for the leave (who it is to care for?), the probable length of the leave (if known), and if one wants to substitute paid leave for otherwise unpaid leave.

### Federal Family and Medical Leave Law (Federal FMLA)

- Eligibility is the same as under Wisconsin law except that one must have worked at least 1,250 hours immediately preceding the date the FMLA leave commences.
- All eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a rolling 12-month period for any combination of the following:
  - Birth/adoption or the placement of a child with the employee for foster care.
  - To care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition.
  - For a serious health condition of the employee (which makes the employee unable to perform his/her job).
- The Federal law requires the District to continue group insurance payments (health and dental) at the same level as it did prior to the leave (same as Wisconsin law).
- Federal FMLA unpaid leave may also be with pay; one can ask to substitute other paid leave (same as Wisconsin law); however, the District may also require the employee to

substitute paid leave (e.g., accrued personal illness leave) for otherwise unpaid leave.

- One should provide the District with reasonable notice of one's leave, and the reason(s) for the leave (same as Wisconsin FMLA).

An **advantage of the Federal law** is that there is a potential total of 12 weeks of leave. Under Wisconsin law there is a two-week per year limit for medical leave for family members, and a six-week per year limit for leave in connection with the birth or adoption of a child. The **Federal** 12-week total can be used in any combination for any or all of the events (birth/adoption, family medical, or employee medical). Leave may also be taken on an intermittent basis, in some cases, under the Federal law (same as Wisconsin FMLA).

The **Federal law is written so as to not replace or reduce any leave benefits under Wisconsin law.** However, the two laws do not combine to allow 18 weeks of leave for birth/adoption; rather, the two run concurrently for six weeks, and then the Federal law allows up to six more weeks (unless already used earlier in the year), if the employee is eligible.

MTI members who have specific questions or wish more information, should contact MTI Assistant Directors **Eve Degen** ([degene@madisonteachers.org](mailto:degene@madisonteachers.org)) or **Doug Keillor** ([keillord@madisonteachers.org](mailto:keillord@madisonteachers.org)) at MTI headquarters.

## Calendar & Events



- **Monday, February 3, 5:00 p.m., Doyle, Room 103**  
BOE Instruction Work Group
- **Tuesday, February 4, 4:15 p.m., MTI**  
MTI Special Education Sub-Committee
- **Wednesday, February 5, 4:15 p.m., MTI**  
EA-MTI Board of Directors
- **Monday, February 10, 4:30 p.m., MTI**  
MTI Board of Directors
- **Monday, February 10, 5:00 p.m., Doyle, Room 103**  
BOE Operations Work Group
- **Wednesday, February 12, 4:15 p.m., MTI**  
EA-MTI Building Representatives
- **Wednesday, February 12, 4:30 p.m., MTI**  
SEE-MTI Board of Directors
- **Friday, February 14**  
Wisconsin Labor History Essay Contest Deadline



Show **SOLIDARITY**  
with your MTI  
Sisters & Brothers.  
Wear **MTI RED** on  
**MONDAYS!**

## Our Union Makes Us Strong!

MTI's web page - [www.madisonteachers.org](http://www.madisonteachers.org)  
MTI's email - [MTI@madisonteachers.org](mailto:MTI@madisonteachers.org)