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# Solidarity!

## The Continued Decline of Purchasing Power for MMSD Employees

Estimates are that MTI-represented employees in the MMSD have witnessed their purchasing power decline by **9.3%** since the passage, in 2011, of Act 10 due to a combination of two factors.

First, *salary increases have not kept pace with inflation*. In order to have maintained purchasing power, salaries would have needed to increase by at least **8.33%** between 2010 and 2014 (according to CPI data provided by the WERC). However, salaries have increased only **5.75%** during this period, assuming a 1% annual step increase in addition to negotiated base increases, which about 700 per year in the teacher bargaining unit do not receive.

Second, Act 10 required payment by the employee of 50% of the WRS contributions have caused a *decrease in take-home pay* during the same period. The combination of these two factors, salary increases below inflation and decreases in take-home pay resulting from increasing WRS contributions, results in a *loss in purchasing power of approximately 9.3%*.

For example, an employee who received a **\$40,000** salary in 2010 would have needed to have their salary increase to **\$43,434** in 2014 just to maintain his/her 2010 purchasing power. Negotiated base and step increases however, only increased gross salary to **\$42,348** by 2014. During this same period, the increase required WRS contribution **reduced** their take-home pay to only **\$39,384**, or **\$616 less** than that received in 2010, and well below the **\$43,434** needed to maintain the purchasing power of the employee in 2010.

**Most disturbing is that the loss of purchasing power is even greater today than it was in 2011**, when the Act 10 changes mandated that the employee pay 50% of the WRS contribution. At that time, between 2010 and 2011, the employee in the example above *would have felt their purchasing power decline by 6.4% (or \$2,600) due mostly to the WRS contribution*. However, after four years of salary increases below the rate of inflation, combined with continued increases in WRS contributions, *the loss of purchasing power has escalated to over 9% (or \$4,050) in this example*.

Unions accepted less in pay increases over the years to have the employer pay the full WRS and health insurance premiums, as these monies were not taxed. **Act 10 took away these contributions, with no offset to wages.**

As art teacher **Kati Walsh** said to the Board last Monday, *"... budgets represent our values. In Madison, our community values are public education and giving our teachers and staff a voice in our working conditions because our working conditions are our students' learning conditions."*

## School Board Decisions on Employee Health Insurance Contributions Could Further Reduce Wages

Under MTI's various Collective Bargaining Agreements, the District currently pays 100% of the health insurance premiums for both single and family coverage, but retains the ability to require employees to contribute **up to 10%** of the monthly premium for both single and family coverage.

**District management has recommended to the Board of Education that they adopt a Budget which would allow for up to a 5% increase in health insurance premiums to be paid by the District.** If the Board agrees, this would require employees to pay any increase above 5%, and insurance carriers of District plans currently propose premium increases greater than 5%. The Board is currently discussing whether to require the employee to pay the increase. If the Board does, that would further decrease employees' take-home pay. Even a **2%** employee premium contribution would cost employees over **\$120 per year for the least expensive single coverage**, and over **\$300 per year for the least expensive family coverage**, i.e. *any increase would compound the loss of purchasing power described above.*

## MTI Partners with MMSD to Combat Summer Hunger

The MTI Cares Committee is organizing an end of the school year food drive to help stock food pantries for the summer. MMSD has agreed to partner with MTI on this initiative, with help from Second Harvest Food Bank of Southern Wisconsin. MTI Cares is in the process of securing the permission of building administrators to have a food donation barrel placed in each work location. **These donation barrels will be in place from June 2 through June 12.**

MTI Cares is also seeking an MTI Member to coordinate this effort with administration in each school or work location. If you can help, please visit the MTI Website at [www.madisonteachers.org/summer\\_food\\_drive](http://www.madisonteachers.org/summer_food_drive) to sign up. You will also find additional information on this exciting initiative, flyers to post, and a list of priority food and personal hygiene items needed by Second Harvest. Please join in to help stock the pantry for the summer, which is a traditionally slower time for donations and struggling families may have additional needs without the assistance available from school programs. Contact MTI with any questions about this upcoming effort.

## 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)

**Renew Your License**

Teachers are reminded that having a current license is required. You will be receiving a notice from the District’s HR department reminding you of your timeline for license renewal. If you were certified before 2004, you may renew your license by successfully completing 6 university credits during the 5-year license period. But, if you received your license after 2004, you must develop and complete a Professional Development Plan over at least a 3-year period. (Teachers who were licensed before 2004 can also complete a PDP rather than taking university credits – and it’s a free alternative!) It’s important to stay on top of this process. By investing as few as 2 hours each year, you can do just that. The District is offering two free 2-hour workshops this summer, July 2<sup>nd</sup> and August 6<sup>th</sup> from 2:00-4:00 p.m., to support you in developing and updating your PDP. Check it out online at [www.mmsd.org/pdp](http://www.mmsd.org/pdp).

**Student Behavior Concerns**

MTI’s Teacher Collective Bargaining Agreement, Section V-C-4-b, contains provisions for dealing with *students whose behavior or learning is of significant concern* to their teacher. Under V-C-4-b, *if a teacher is of the opinion that the inclusion of a student with disabilities in the teacher’s classroom results in a significant concern regarding said student’s behavior or learning, the teacher can request, in writing, assistance from the principal.* Said request should be in the form of a letter laying out the nature of the concern as it relates to the student’s IEP. The principal is required, if feasible, to respond to the request by the following day.

**This Contract section was bargained in the early 90’s, and was reaffirmed in negotiations for the 2011-13 Contract.** During the subsequent years since it was bargained, numerous MTI members have taken advantage of the protections and have been able to help correct behavior and/or learning concerns. **Unfortunately, however, many MTI members are persuaded by their administrator to not use these protections.** Administrators have told teachers that, should they request assistance in writing, they would be admitting fault or admitting that they are incapable of dealing with these students. ***Such claims by the administrators are unfounded.***

Instead, **requesting assistance in writing is an effort to put the District on notice that IT is failing to provide federally mandated services to the students in question.** The request is *a notice that the District is failing to meet the goals and provide the protections mandated by the student’s IEP and thereby making it more difficult for all students in the classroom to achieve learning.* This is not a failure on the part of the teachers, but a failure on the part of the District. The protections provided by V-C-4-b were hard-won and must be utilized.

Anyone with questions regarding this Contract section or its usage should contact **Sara Bringman** at [bringmans@madisonteachers.org](mailto:bringmans@madisonteachers.org).

**\*\*\*Important Reminder\*\*\*  
Teacher Contracts Deadline June 16**

The individual contracts for the 2014-15 school year contained an error and have been re-issued by the District. The error stated that teachers must sign and return their contracts to the District by April 15. That date was amended to June 15 by State Statute. ***Given that June 15 is a Sunday, the revised contracts are due June 16.*** MTI strongly ***recommends*** that teachers return their signed contracts to Human Resources ***AS SOON AS POSSIBLE***, in person, to assure timely delivery. Take a copy with you, ask that it be stamped “received” and keep the copy for your personal records. **The District advises that failure to return a signed contract by June 16 will result in the District accepting such as one’s resignation.**

**NOTE:** If you already signed the incorrect contract, you must also sign the corrected contract.



**Wear MTI Red for Solidarity!**

It’s great to see how many MTI members are now wearing their new MTI lanyards. MTI has various styles and sizes of ***Solidarity!*** shirts: a long-sleeved cotton/poly blend button-down shirt (\$40); a short-sleeved soft/poly polo shirt (\$25); the traditional MTI t-shirt with logo front and back (\$10); and the MTI sweatshirt (\$35). Members can stop by the MTI office any time to purchase MTI gear, order through an MTI Faculty Representative or call/email MTI.

**Keep MTI Updated on Changes**

Please call, write or email MTI if you have a change in name, home address, home email address, telephone number, work location, certification, or hours of work. Having this information allows MTI to serve you better, both personally and contractually.

**Calendar & Events**

- **Monday, May 19, 4:30 p.m., MTI**  
MTI Board of Directors
- **Monday, May 19, Doyle Auditorium**  
BOE Regular Meeting (6:00 p.m.)
- **Tuesday, May 20, 4:15 p.m., SCFL**  
MTI Faculty Representative Council
- **Wednesday, May 21, 4:00 p.m., MTI**  
USO-MTI Organizing Workshop
- **Monday, May 26, MEMORIAL DAY**
- **Thursday, June 12, SEMESTER ENDS**

