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Solidarity!

MTI Executive Director Matthews to Retire

At the December 14 meeting of the MTI Board of Directors just prior to winter break, Executive Director **John Matthews** announced his intention to retire effective **January 31**. Matthews has served as MTI Executive Director since 1968, a time when MTI was a teacher-only union with 900 members. It has been built into what many call the strongest union in Wisconsin, with five bargaining units and 4,700 members. A fact which speaks to MTI's reputation with its members and its strength is that those voting in MTI's recent recertification vote, 98.21% voted to continue MTI representation.

During Matthews' tenure, MTI has won numerous precedential victories to advance employee rights, among them the right for a pregnant employee to continue working (Board policy at the time required a teacher to resign when the "pregnancy began to show"), and the right for an employee to not be obligated to work if one's religion specified that they not.

In 2011, the world-renown **Institute for Policy Studies** honored MTI with its annual Domestic Award for "*leading the fight against Act 10 - the movement that inspired hundreds of thousands onto the streets of Wisconsin to fight for worker rights and social protections ... a movement that proved to be a spark for new movements in many states...*"

Long-time labor-neutral arbitrator **Howard Bellman** said in a Wisconsin State Journal interview about Matthews, "His longevity is vivid evidence of the way he's perceived by the people he serves. His ability to interact with members, to serve them, to be appreciated by them - I just don't think there's anyone else in the country like that."

Also interviewed by the *State Journal* were MTI Past-Presidents Mike Lipp, Steve Pike, and Barb Keresty.

Lipp said, "John's sense of social justice is beyond what I've ever seen. Just the fact he served in that position for 48 years says so much about how committed he is to his job and how much he cares for teachers and the union."

Pike commented that "John has never shied away from anything and always fought the tough battles and stood up for workers."

And **Keresty** said, "He's impeccable with his word. I don't think I've ever met someone with more integrity."

School Board President **James Howard** said, "John is going to be missed and he's been a great leader. I've always had a good relationship with him and in terms of what a union stands for, John has done an exceptional job and fought hard for teachers to be treated fairly. He has such a strong legacy here in Madison."

The *State Journal* also interviewed former Superintendent **Art Rainwater** relative to Matthews' pending retirement. Rainwater told the *Journal* that while the two had disagreements, "...we also did a lot of good things together to strengthen the district. You never doubted when you worked with him that his primary interest was in protecting his employees. That was his job, that was his role, and he was really good at it."

On his pending retirement, Matthews said, "*I never thought this day would arrive, but I provide this notice knowing we have accomplished so much for MTI members, that while I leave with a heavy heart it is one filled with great satisfaction.*" He added that he would remain available to MTI whenever his advice or assistance is needed; that he will continue to help individuals however he can; and that he will continue to be active in social justice.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday January 18

As a result of MTI's successful negotiations several years ago, all District employees now have a paid holiday, a day off, in recognition of the accomplished civil rights leader **Martin Luther King, Jr.** Given the terms of MTI's various Contracts with the District, members of MTI's teacher, educational assistant, clerical/technical and school security assistant bargaining units will be paid for the day. MTI encourages members' observance of this important holiday which signifies the importance of Dr. King's legacy.

"The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress. Out of its bold struggles, economic and social reform gave birth to unemployment insurance, old age pensions, government relief to the destitute, and above all new wage levels that meant not mere survival, but a tolerable life."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Special Education Plan for Student Services - Meeting January 20

In a joint effort, Peg Coyne (MTI Assistant Director) and John Harper (MMSD, Executive Director of Student Services) will host a **Q & A session on Wednesday, January 20, 2016**. The meeting will take place from 4:15- 5:15 p.m., at the WEA Member Benefits Building (660 John Nolen Drive, 2nd Floor). This is an opportunity to share current information and discuss the recently proposed Special Education Plan for Student Services. All interested staff are invited.

Our Union Makes Us Strong!

MTI's web page - www.madisonteachers.org

MTI's email - MTI@madisonteachers.org

Professional Development Day February 5

The days formerly designated in the MTI/MMSD Teacher Collective Bargaining Agreement as *WEAC and SWEIO Convention Days* are now *District Professional Development (PD) Days*. The District's plans for professional development on these days vary depending upon which MTI bargaining unit one is in and whether one works at the elementary or secondary level.

There is **no school** for District students on Professional Development Days. **All teachers are required to attend PD during the morning** on these days, *unless approved by District management to attend license-related conferences*. Such requests are to be sent to District Director of PD, Marggie Banker. **Elementary teachers** will then have the remainder of each of those days for individual planning time. **High school and middle school teachers** participate in whatever PD activities are planned for their respective schools during the afternoon. **Secondary teachers** who want to attend conferences in their area of licensure may gain approval to do so by submitting a request to their principal.

Educational Assistants are required to attend PD only if the District provides notice at least three (3) weeks prior to the date of the PD. If the PD is not mandatory, the EA-MTI Contract provides that an Educational Assistant may: 1) with the approval of his/her principal, work; 2) with the approval of his/her principal, attend staff training; or 3) take the day off without pay. (*Note: the District has advised that the professional development on February 5 will be mandatory for EAs.*)

School Security Assistants are required to attend PD days only if the Security Coordinator provides notice at least five (5) weeks prior to the PD day. If the PD is not mandatory, each SSA must notify the Security Coordinator no later than four (4) weeks prior to the PD whether she/he will be attending. (*Note: the District has advised that the professional development on February 5 will be voluntary for SSAs.*)

Cold Weather Update

With colder temps coming our way this winter, MTI reminds all members that the District has made some changes to its winter weather guidelines. Previously, the Superintendent made the decision to close schools when the wind chill warning was -35 degrees or colder; now she will consider making that determination using the wind chill advisory (-25 to -34 degrees). Members can access the District's weather page at www.mmsd.org/weather.

MTI talks with many members during the winter months regarding issues of cold classrooms and heating malfunctions in schools and work sites. MTI advises members to initially contact their school principal/supervisor and head custodian when there is a heating issue in a building; in many cases, the principal is already working with the building services department and custodian to rectify the problem. Members should also feel free to call or email MTI (degene@madisonteachers.org) regarding any ongoing heating or other building issues. Your union is always happy to intercede and advocate for its members regarding cold classrooms and other building conditions.

Although there is no District-wide policy regarding cold weather and recess, the practice is to keep students indoors if the wind chill is lower than -10 degrees. Decisions are usually made at each school site. Allowing recess or keeping children indoors

can be a surprisingly contentious issue, with parents often disagreeing with either decision. MTI advises members to work with their school principal, and contact MTI if there are any concerns. The National Weather Service's wind chill chart can be found at:

www.nws.noaa.gov/om/windchill/images/windchillchart3.pdf.

Important February 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 District's office of Human Resources by 5:00 p.m., **February 1**.

Sabbatical Leave applications for either the first semester of the 2016-17 school year or for the entire school year are due in the MTI office by 5:00 p.m., **February 1**.

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

SEE-MTI Election Results

Election results for MTI's Supportive Educational Employees bargaining unit (SEE-MTI) have been tabulated. Elected to the SEE-MTI Board of Directors are incumbent **Travis Grover** for President; incumbent **Larry Palm** for Vice-President; incumbent **Jane Ninmann** for Secretary; **Elizabeth Contrucci** for High School Representative; and incumbent **Ann Wersal** and Past President **Kris Schiltz** for Central Administration Representatives. All will be seated at the February 3 SEE-MTI Board Meeting.

Nominations are being solicited for a Middle School Representative on SEE-MTI Board. Interested SEE-MTI members who are assigned to a middle school and interested in representing your co-workers on your Union's Board of Directors are asked to email/call MTI Headquarters.

January Calendar

- Monday, January 4, Doyle Room 103
BOE Instruction Work Group (5:15 p.m.)
- Monday, January 11, 4:30 p.m., MTI
MTI Board of Directors
- Monday, January 11, 5:00 p.m., Doyle Room 103
BOE Operations Work Group
- Tuesday, January 12, 4:15 p.m., MTI
MTI VOTERS Political Action Committee
- Monday, January 18, *Martin Luther King Jr. Day*
 - Tuesday, January 19, 4:15 p.m., SCFL
MTI Faculty Representative Council
 - Wednesday, January 20, 4:15 p.m., MTI
USO-MTI Board of Directors
 - Wednesday, January 20, 4:15 p.m., WEA
Q&A with Peg Coyne/John Harper