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Solidarity!

MTI's Successful Recertification Speaks Volumes

The Act 10-mandated recertification results **speak loudly about how highly MTI members value their Union**. While totals are still being gathered and analyzed, preliminary results reveal 6 work sites where 100% of those assigned voted, 17 over 90%, and another 37 work sites where over 80% voted. It would be great if elections for public officials had such committed voters.

Tremendous Union support was illustrated not only by the high number of votes cast, but the **almost NON-EXISTENT** negative showing. Votes against recertification of MTI, among those voting, were only .015 in the teacher bargaining unit; .009 in the educational assistant (EA-MTI) unit; .063 in the clerical/technical (SEE-MTI) unit; and .016 in the substitute teacher (USO-MTI) unit. There were **ZERO** negative votes in the security assistant (SSA-MTI) bargaining unit.

The high turnout is not only a credit to MTI's credibility among its members, but also of the hard work of MTI Faculty Representatives and Member Organizers in carrying the message to members of the importance of voting.

Teacher Retirement and TERP Deadline February 15

In order for one to be eligible for the *MTI-negotiated Teacher Emeritus Retirement Program (TERP)*, he/she must be a full-time teacher, at least 55 years old, with a combined age (as of August 30 in one's retirement year) and years of service in the District totaling at least 75. (For example, a teacher who is 57 and has eighteen (18) years of service to the MMSD would be eligible: $57 + 18 = 75$.) Teachers who are younger than age 55 are eligible if they have worked for the MMSD at least 30 years. Up to ten (10) part-time teachers may participate in TERP each year provided they have worked full-time within the last ten (10) years and meet the eligibility criteria described above.

Retirement notifications, including completed TERP agreements, are due in the District's Department of Human Resources no later than February 15. Appointments can be made to complete the TERP agreement and discuss insurance options at retirement by calling the District's Benefits Manager, Sharon Hennessy, at 663-1795.

MTI was successful in discussions for the 2016-17 MMSD Employee Handbook in gaining the continuance of TERP. **Thus, MTI members can be assured that TERP runs through the 2016-17 school year and not feel pressured into retirement before they are ready.**

MTI Assistant Director **Doug Keillor** is available to provide guidance and/or to provide estimated benefits for TERP, insurance continuation, application of one's Retirement Insurance Account, WRS and Social Security. Call MTI Headquarters (257-0491) to schedule an appointment.

MTI Files Suit Against WERC

Given the unique and retaliatory provisions of Act 10 that:

- Any person eligible to vote in the recertification election who does not vote is counted as a **NO vote**;
- To prevail in the election, a union must receive **affirmative votes from 51% of those eligible to vote**; and
- For a Union to not receive at least **51% of the votes of those eligible to vote, it would not be recertified** as the employees' bargaining agent.

Thus, with so much at stake, assuring that all who are eligible to vote are aware of the importance of their vote is a high priority for the Union, and to all whom it represents. MTI had numerous volunteers, retirees and current members to assist with the important task of gaining the largest number voting as possible in the recently concluded recertification election. To be sure these individuals were not wasting their time calling and disturbing those who had already voted, MTI asked the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission (WERC) for the names of those who had voted. The information should have been supplied under Wisconsin's Open Records Law. **MTI specified it did not want information as to how a person voted, only that they had voted.** However, the WERC refused to comply with MTI's request, claiming that providing the information would violate "the secrecy of the ballot." That is not a valid claim. Who votes in any Wisconsin election is a public record. In its request, MTI specifically asked the WERC to redact any reference as to how one voted. Ironically, at the conclusion of last year's and this year's election, the WERC gave MTI the names of all who voted. Doing it during the election as MTI requested would be no different.

Of those eligible to vote, **82.78%** voted and **98.36%** of those voted for recertification.

Sick Leave Bank

The Sick Leave Bank (see Section VII-G of MTI’s Teacher Collective Bargaining Agreement) is an innovative and progressive Contract provision and it is unique to teachers represented by MTI. Because of its value to those in need, unions across the country have tried to emulate it. A sign of Union solidarity, the Sick Leave Bank (SLB) has provided income to many teachers who otherwise would go without income.

The SLB was achieved in MTI's 1980 negotiations. Days to fund the SLB are assessed in February, when the number of days required in the Bank falls below six per member of MTI’s teacher bargaining unit. **BECAUSE THE BANK IS CURRENTLY ADEQUATELY FUNDED, NO ASSESSMENT WILL BE REQUIRED IN FEBRUARY, 2016.** It was originally funded by each member of MTI’s teacher collective bargaining unit donating three sick days to the "Bank". The Sick Leave Bank acts as a short-term disability policy for teachers forced to be off of work for medical reasons, and who have consumed their earned sick leave. SLB benefits begin after a teacher has been absent eleven (11) consecutive work days and has exhausted his/her Personal Sick Leave Account. SLB benefits are payable for a maximum of forty-four (44) days, or until the Contract-provided long term disability benefit begins, whichever occurs first. **The SLB Contract provision enables pay at 100% of the individual's daily rate of pay for each work day from the SLB.** Without the SLB, teachers without sufficient sick leave to cover an extended illness would be forced to go without pay until long term disability benefits begin when one is absent for 55 work days; i.e. until one qualifies for long-term disability coverage.

Teacher recipients are not required to "repay" the Bank for days withdrawn; rather all teachers are assessed an additional day from their Personal Sick Leave Account, when the balance of days in the SLB drops below the contractually-defined threshold of six (6) days per teacher. *To help offset the need for assessment, MTI negotiated that 80% of the unused sick leave of the Retirement Insurance Account of one who resigns or dies is transferred to the SLB.* This has minimized the need for members of the bargaining unit to be assessed days to fund the Bank. **The SLB is yet another way that, through our collective efforts, MTI members are able to assist each other.**

MTI/MMSD Employee Handbook Meeting December 9

MTI members interested in learning more about the **Employee Handbook** - what from the Collective Bargaining Agreements continues, what has changed, and what this process means for the Union and its members going forward - are invited to a **Joint MTI-MMSD Handbook Q & A session.** The session will be held at **LaFollette High School** (4:30-6:00 pm).

Ballots Sent for SEE-MTI Board Elections

Ballots have been sent out for the SEE-MTI Board of Directors’ positions which expire on December 31, 2015. Nominated are the following: 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 **Kris Schiltz** for Central Administration Representatives. All positions are uncontested. Ballots must be returned to MTI by **December 15, 2015**, with the newly elected leaders being seated at the February 3 SEE-MTI Board Meeting.

Nominations are also being solicited for a Middle School Representative on SEE-MTI Board. If you are a SEE-MTI member assigned to a middle school and interested in representing your co-workers on your Union’s Board of Directors, nominations are due by the February 3 SEE-MTI Board meeting. Much important work needs to be done this next year. You continue to have a voice, make it heard.

Show **SOLIDARITY** with your **MTI Sisters & Brothers.** Wear **MTI RED** on **Mondays and MTI lanyards & buttons everyday!**



Calendar

- Monday, December 7, WEA Member Benefits Student Loan Debt Presentation (4:30 p.m.)
- Monday, December 7, Doyle Room 103 BOE Operations Work Group (5:00 p.m.)
- Monday, December 14, 4:30 p.m., MTI MTI Board of Directors
- Monday, December 14, Doyle Auditorium BOE Regular Meeting (6:00 p.m.)
- Tuesday, December 15, 4:15 p.m., MTI MTI Ad Hoc Committee on Course Alignment
- December 21-January 1 Winter Break

Our Union Makes Us Strong!

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