



# Solidarity!

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

## You Are the Union and Your Help Is Needed for MTI's Recertification Election

As previously reported, Governor Walker's Act 10 requires public sector Unions, except police & fire, to participate in an annual **recertification election** to enable Union members to retain representation by their Union. *This year's election by all MTI-represented District employees will be conducted between **October 27 and November 16**. Voting will be via telephone or on-line (details forthcoming).*



Again this year, MTI Faculty Representatives, EA Building Representatives, and Member Organizers at every school/work location have been asked to assist in building awareness of the importance of the recertification election, and to assure that staff at their school/work location **VOTE** in the recertification elections. **MTI Member Organizers are essential to successful recertification.** MTI needs Member Organizers from every bargaining unit (*MTI, SEE-MTI, EA-MTI, SSA-MTI & USO-MTI*). Retired union members are also assisting in organizing. Assuring that each and every person votes is of great importance, **because Act 10 requires that to win recertification, a Union must win 51% of all eligible voters**, whether or not the voter is a Union member.

### Health Insurance Annual Choice/Open Enrollment October 15-November 15

Between October 15 and November 15 each year, there is a choice to switch health insurance providers, among the three insurers - GHC, Unity (UW) and Dean Health Plan.

**ANNUAL CHOICE** is the period during which MTI-represented employees who are already covered under a District health insurance plan *may choose, without having to prove insurability, an alternate plan among those available.* Implementation of coverage is effective **January 1, 2017.**

**OPEN ENROLLMENT** is available as a result of gains made during MTI's 1999 negotiations. Enrollment in health insurance is available to any employee who is benefit eligible (*an assignment of 19 hours per week or a teacher contract of at least 50%*). Those with health insurance who have **an eligible dependent, who is not now covered, may enroll that dependent during this period.** The effective date of coverage is **January 1, 2017.**

### MMSD Carves Out Retirees for 30% Increase in Dental Insurance Premiums

Faced with an underfunded dental insurance plan, the District has made a decision to "carve-out" MMSD retirees from its group dental insurance plan and increase their premiums by **30%** (while active employees will see their premiums increase by 9%). According to the District's benefits manager, the MMSD has underfunded their dental plan in recent years and, since the District is self-funded, the District had to absorb \$300,000 in dental expenses not covered by premiums last year. In order to fund the dental plan sufficiently this year, the District was faced with the choice of reducing dental benefits, increasing dental insurance premiums by 14% for everyone, or "differentiating" rates based on the utilization of different sub-groups (e.g., retirees). The District concluded to differentiate the dental premium increase as follows: Active employees, 9%; Retiree (district paid), 29%; Retiree (direct billed), 32%; and COBRA, 45%.

When MTI learned about the dental insurance increases from retirees who had received a bill, we requested that the District revisit this decision given the significant impact on retirees. MTI also expressed concern that should the District pursue a similar "carve-out" for health insurance premiums, such could have a devastating impact on retiree finances. The District responded that they were not willing to reconsider modifications to the dental rates, but assured MTI that they would not be suggesting or making a similar change for differentiating health insurance premiums. MTI will be seeking modifications to the Employee Handbook to provide that assurance. MTI is working to bring together a group of MTI retirees to organize around this and other issues that impact retirees. Interested retired MTI members should contact MTI at [mti@madisonteachers.org](mailto:mti@madisonteachers.org).

### ***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)

**Volume 51, #7, October 10, 2016**

## Courage to Teach 2016-17 Professional Renewal Series

It's not too late to apply for the 2016-17 Courage to Teach retreat series. Earn up to four graduate credits for taking time to slow down and reflect on your work as an educator in a beautiful natural setting, with home-cooked meals. Apply for the **2016-17 Courage to Teach** retreat series (Nov. 11-13, 2016; Jan. 13-15, April 28-30, and June 23-25, 2017) which will be held at Bethel Horizons, near Governor Dodge State Park. This year-long series of four sessions (Friday evening through Sunday afternoon) is based on the work of noted educator, writer, and activist, **UW Professor Parker Palmer**.

Local educators pay \$890 (in three installments) for the four weekends, *which represents about 50% of the total cost of eight night's lodging, 24 meals, facilitation, and materials*. The remainder comes from a community match provided by local organizations and individuals. Participants can apply for a maximum of four hours of graduate credit from Edgewood College, at an additional cost of \$175 per credit.

Further information and an application form are available at <http://www.couragerenewal.org/events/couragetoteach-series-2016-17-wi/>. Contact Barb ([bhummel@chorus.net](mailto:bhummel@chorus.net)) or Bonnie ([bktrudell@juno.com](mailto:bktrudell@juno.com)) with questions.

## Fragrances Can Cause or Trigger Asthma

Recent articles from Occupational Health Watch and Reuters Health advise that perfumes and fragrances used in personal care products, cleaning products, and air fresheners in the workplace can cause or trigger asthma. Such manufactured products are made up of many different chemicals, including those known to cause asthma or other breathing difficulties, even in people who have not previously had these health conditions. Glass cleaner and air fresheners have been shown to exacerbate asthma and asthma-related symptoms in some people who have repeated exposures, reducing lung function for hours after an exposure, and in some cases, worsening over time. Test results support the importance of developing workplace health and safety practices designed to limit exposures.

They also suggest that employees should take care to avoid using perfumes, sprays, air fresheners and the like in classrooms and other common areas in schools and work sites. With cooler weather coming, there will be less fresh air coming in through open windows, so be aware that people around you may have not just an aversion to various chemicals and chemical scents; they may have health-related concerns.

## 2016 MMSD-MTI Combined Campaign

The **2016 Combined Campaign will begin on October 17 and run through November 18**. This is the annual workplace fundraising campaign for which one can make donations to local, national and international umbrella organizations. Working together, these organizations represent more than 200 worthy non-profit agencies. Donors can choose which agencies will receive their donations. One can make a contribution, at any level, through payroll deduction. Donations can also be made online. Everyone is encouraged to give to a cause of their choice. *All of us, working together, can make our local, national, and global community a better place in which to live.*

## MTI Membership Corner

The following meetings, seminars, and workshops are available to MTI members *only*:

**MTI/WEA Member Benefits Individual Financial Consultations in October & November.** See MTI's webpage ([www.madisonteachers.org](http://www.madisonteachers.org)) to sign-up for a free 30-minute financial consultation. Consultations are held at MTI Headquarters.

**EA-MTI (Educational Assistants) General Membership Meeting and Employee Handbook Update**, Wednesday, October 19, 4:15 p.m., MTI Headquarters.

**MTI/WEA Member Benefits New Professionals Night.** Information on Employee Handbook highlights, how to read your paycheck, benefits and salary schedule overview, 403(b) and Wisconsin Retirement System info. Thursday, October 27, 4:00 p.m. (invitation emailed to MTI members in their first five years with the MMSD).

**USO-MTI (Substitute Teachers) General Membership Meeting and Employee Handbook Update**, Thursday, October 27, 4:15 p.m., MTI Headquarters.

### Attention EA-MTI Members: General Membership Meeting October 19

Members of MTI's Educational Assistants bargaining unit (EA-MTI) are invited to a general membership meeting on **Wednesday, October 19, at 4:15 p.m., at MTI Headquarters** (821 Williamson Street). Socialize with your fellow EAs. Topics for discussion: Employee Handbook update, recertification election, & Union involvement.

## MTI Wear on Sale

Members are encouraged to wear MTI wear in the community to make a positive statement about education and educators. The following prices apply: t-shirt (\$10); polo-shirt (\$12); oxford button-down shirt (\$15); and sweatshirt (\$35).

## Calendar of Events

- Monday, October 10, 5:00 p.m., Doyle Room 103  
BOE Instruction Work Group
- Tuesday, October 11, 4:30 p.m., MTI  
MTI Board of Directors
- Monday, October 17, 5:00 p.m., Doyle Room 103  
BOE Operations Work Group
- Tuesday, October 18, 4:15 p.m., SCFL  
MTI Faculty Representative Council
- Wednesday, October 19, 4:15 p.m., MTI  
EA-MTI General Membership Meeting
- Monday, October 24, 6:00 p.m., Doyle McDaniels  
BOE Regular Meeting