



Solidarity!

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Making Your Voice Heard on Public Policy: MTI-Voters BOE Interviews on January 24

Good news for a healthy democracy: for the first time in many years, we have contested races for seats on the MMSD Board of Education. Board of Education seats 6 and 7, currently held by Michael Flores and Ed Hughes, are up for election this year. Flores has concluded not to run for reelection to Seat 6, leaving **Cris Carusi, Ali Muldrow and Kate Toews** to compete for that vacancy. **Ed Hughes** will be challenged for Seat 7 by **Matt Andrzejewski and Nicki Vander Meulen**. Each candidate is seeking the endorsement of MTI-Voters.

In the past month, MTI-Voters developed and distributed questionnaires to all BOE candidates to collect their views on a variety of issues important to MTI members (completed questionnaires are available for MTI members to review on MTI's website). On **January 24**, the MTI-Voters Committee will conduct interviews of all BOE candidates, as well as interviews for Circuit Court Judge and State Superintendent for Public Instruction. Following the interviews, the Committee will decide which candidates to recommend for endorsement. Under MTI Bylaws, the MTI-Voters Committee recommendations are then forwarded for a vote by all members of MTI who contribute to MTI-Voters, before endorsements can be made.

Given the number of candidates, primary elections will be held for each seat on **February 21**, with the two leading vote-getters advancing to the **April 4** general election. All MTI members are encouraged to learn more about the candidates, attend candidate forums, and work to get out the vote for these crucial positions.

Who is MTI-Voters? MTI-Voters is the political action committee of MTI that seeks to identify those candidates most likely to advance policies supported by the members of MTI, policies that support MMSD staff and students, and advance the quality of public education in the District. MTI-Voters is a representative body of MTI members, comprised of the Presidents of each MTI bargaining unit, the MTI Treasurer and nine (9) others elected by MTI's Faculty Representative Council. This member-comprised committee guides MTI's political endorsement process and advances recommended endorsements to the thousands of MTI members who contribute to MTI Voters. In this manner, your voice joins the voice of many as we decide who to collectively support.

Fight for \$15: Update on EA-MTI Living Wage Organizing Committee

As the **Fight for \$15** movement gains momentum across the country, many MTI-represented educational assistants continue to struggle with poverty level wages. According to MTI estimates, *over two hundred (200) educational assistants (EAs) and Special Education Assistants (SEAs) receive less than \$15 per hour*. Compounding the problem further, those 200 employees are seldom provided full-time hours, averaging only 26 hours per week. This results in average annual incomes of less than \$14,000 per year for hundreds of hard-working employees who serve and support our neediest students. It's time to change that. We need the Board of Education and MMSD Administration to make a commitment as part of the 2017-18 budget to address this wage gap. No hard-working District employee should receive less than \$15 per hour and all employees need paths to full-time, family sustaining employment. Over 18 EA-MTI Building Reps met at MTI Headquarters on **January 18** to jump-start an EA-MTI Living Wage Organizing Committee to advance this work. *If you are interested in assisting with this effort, contact Eve Degen at MTI (degene@madisonteachers.org).*

2017-18 School Calendar Update

Over the past few weeks, MTI conducted an MTI member poll on the 2017-18 school calendar and found a 4:1 preference for a longer (10 day) winter break. The MTI Calendar Committee met with District representatives on January 5 to share this preference. The District's stated preference has been to have a shortened winter break to accommodate ending the school year on June 8, 2018, while starting the school year after Labor Day. However, with the feedback MTI has received from MTI members, it is clear that other options need to be explored, including starting the school year earlier or possibly ending it into the second week of June rather than the first. MTI members on the joint Calendar Committee have also brought forward various concerns and ideas regarding the "staff only" days, placement of school breaks, and timing of report cards and conferences, which the parties are discussing in order to make improvements. All members of the Committee agree that the extensive work involved in figuring out school calendars, given the many outside factors that impact how they are determined, needs to begin earlier in the school year. **District representatives are meeting to consider MTI's feedback.** The Committees will work to finalize the 2017-18 calendar in the next couple of weeks, at which time the calendar will be shared with all.

Temporary Reduction of Contract with Right to Return to Full-Time

Addendum A, Section 3.09 of the Employee Handbook provides that full-time teachers who wish to work part-time may request to do so for a period of one (1) year, and shall have the right to full-time regular contracts at the end of such period. Requests for part-time contracts must be made in writing to the Department of Human Resources on or before **March 1** of the preceding school year. To be eligible to apply for contract reduction under this Section, a teacher must have completed five (5) years of service with the District as a teacher by the time the contract reduction will become effective.

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 office of Human Resources by 5:00 p.m., **February 1.**
- **Sabbatical Leave applications** for either the first semester of the 2017-18 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 office of Human Resources by 5:00 p.m., **February 15.**

(Note: If a deadline occurs on a weekend, it is extended to the following Monday.)

MTI Delegates to SCFL

Nominations are being sought for members interested in serving as an MTI Delegate to the South Central Federation of Labor. Terms expire in March for **Michele Ritt** (Leopold) and **David Fawcett** (Allis). Ritt is seeking re-election. Terms are for two years. Nominations can be emailed to MTI Executive Director Doug Keillor (keillord@madisonteachers.org), or made at the February 21 meeting of the MTI Faculty Representative Council. The election will be held at the March 21 meeting of the Council.

MTI Cares Bowl-A-Thon April 30, 2017!

After three years of raising over \$30,000 for the Briarpatch Homeless Shelter that opened last October, MTI Cares is partnering with Safe Harbor for its fourth annual MTI Cares **Bowl-A-Thon** on **April 30**. *April is Child Abuse Prevention Month*, and Safe Harbor serves as Dane County's **only** fully accredited child advocacy center. Mark your calendar, watch for more information and start prepping your team of 4-6 bowlers to have some fun and raise some money for a worthy cause, our children! See www.madisonteachers.org/bowl-a-thon2017/ for more information.



MTI Membership Corner

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

MTI & WEA Member Benefits: More Opportunities for Financial Services for MTI Members

MTI and WEA Member Benefits have scheduled more opportunities to enhance the financial well-being of MTI members. See MTI's website (www.madisonteachers.org) to sign-up for these seminars or financial consultations:

February 2 - Understanding WRS 101: Your State Pension Plan

WRS, the state pension plan, will be a source of retirement income for most Wisconsin public school employees. How much do you know about this important benefit? Whether you just started your career or are nearing the end of it, there is something in this seminar for you.

March 15 - Saving for Your Future: Why Saving Early and Often is Important

Most Wisconsin public school employees can expect their retirement income to come from three sources: WRS (the Wisconsin Retirement System pension), Social Security, and personal savings. Even though your pension benefit provides an excellent head start, today's employees need to consider personal savings to fill their retirement savings gap. Whether you are just beginning your career or are nearing the end of it, there is something for you. Join us for this crash course and get a better idea of how your pension and personal savings work to fill your retirement savings gap.

30-Minute Free Financial Consultations

WEA Member Benefits Consultant **Steve Pike** is available to provide individual MTI member financial guidance. See MTI's website: www.madisonteachers.org to sign up for a free 30-minute financial consultation. Consultations are held at MTI headquarters.

Calendar of Events

- Monday, January 23, 5:00 p.m., Doyle (Rm. 103)
BOE Operations Work Group
- Tuesday, January 24, 4:15 p.m., MTI
MTI VOTERS Spring Candidate Interviews
- Thursday, January 26, 4:15 p.m., MTI
USO-MTI General Membership
- Monday, January 30, 4:15 p.m., Doyle
MTI/MMSD Joint Safety & Discipline Committee
- Monday, January 30, 6:00 p.m., Doyle
BOE Regular Meeting
- Tuesday, January 31, 4:30 p.m., MTI
MTI Handbook/Bargaining Teams
- Wednesday, February 1, 4:15 p.m., MTI
Special Education Sub-Committee
- Friday, February 3, Staff Only Day

Our Union Makes Us Strong!

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MTI's web page - www.madisonteachers.org

MTI's email - MTI@madisonteachers.org