



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

# Solidarity!

## **Governor's Budget Proposal: More Micromanaging of MMSD Compensation Policies**

Last week, Governor Walker announced his 2017 budget proposal which includes a proposed \$650 million increase in funding for public schools. However, also included in the proposal was a provision that in order to receive the additional funds, school districts would need to “certify compliance” with Act 10. What does that mean?

Among other things, Act 10 required all public employees (except police and fire) to pay the employee's share of the WRS retirement contribution and also required employers who participated in the State health insurance plan to pay no more than 88% of the health insurance premiums of their employees. After Act 10 was passed, MMSD employees immediately began paying the employee share of the WRS contribution (in compliance with Act 10). Since the MMSD does not participate in the State health insurance plan, Act 10 did not require that the MMSD force employees to pay more for health insurance, but gave the employer the option to do so. The District, in full compliance with Act 10, opted not to shift the health costs onto the backs of their employees. Instead, the District took a different approach by working with their employee groups to reduce health care costs by: changing plans (WPS was replaced by three lower cost HMO options); controlling health care costs (via implementation of a wellness plan); and, last year, implemented a progressive employee premium contribution ranging from 10% for highly compensated administrators to 1.5% for low-paid educational assistants and food service workers. Teachers pay an 8% premium contribution, unless they participate in the Wellness Program incentive which then reduces their contribution to 3%.

While the actual details of the Governor's proposal have yet to be provided, comments from his spokesperson suggest that rather than “compliance with Act 10” the budget proposal may actually include a new requirement that mandates the MMSD implement a 12% employee health insurance contribution in order to receive the additional school funding.

In response to inquiries from the media, MTI Executive Director Doug Keillor released the following statement:

*“We still need to see the details of the proposal and discuss the potential impact with the School District. That said, we would appreciate it if the Governor would focus his attention on State government and not micromanaging the compensation policies of the Madison Metropolitan School District. We have a locally-elected school board better equipped to handle that. We are engaged in serious work with the School District to attract, support, and retain the best teachers and support staff we can, in order to provide Madison's students the best education possible. The Governor appears to be focused on settling old political scores.”*

MTI will continue to monitor developments in the State budget and will provide additional information as it becomes available.

## **The Next Step in the Fight for Public Education: Work and Vote for Tony Evers and BOE Candidates**

Last Tuesday, Vice President Mike Pence cast the deciding vote to confirm Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education. **DeVos is a longtime opponent of public schools and an ardent supporter of efforts to privatize education.** Advocates for public schools engaged in a massive national effort to highlight DeVos' lack of qualifications and to convince enough Senators to oppose the DeVos nomination. In Wisconsin alone, Senator Ron Johnson received over 10,000 e-mails and 1,300 phone calls from constituents demanding (unsuccessfully) that he oppose DeVos. As a result of these organizing efforts, enough Republican Senators were swayed to oppose the nominee that Vice President Pence needed to cast the tie-breaking vote. *So what should supporters of public education do now?*

(continued on reverse)



## Vote for Tony Evers and BOE Candidates (cont.)

One of the most critical, timely, and urgent actions we can engage in is to actively work to support **Tony Evers** for State Superintendent of Public Instruction on **February 21**. Like the Education Secretary at the federal level, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction is a key player in shaping education policy at the state level. Unlike DeVos, Tony Evers is immensely qualified for this position, having served as a public educator his entire adult life and serving as a leading state-wide advocate for public schools. **Evers' opponents are much closer to DeVos, supporting efforts that undermine public schools, such as directing public funds to private vouchers and charters.**

The Governor has made numerous attempts to usurp power from the State Superintendent, and MTI has been in the forefront of battles to successfully defended this constitutionally-elected position. Re-electing Tony Evers as State Superintendent will be critical to our continued defense of high quality, publicly accountable, democracy-building public schools for all Wisconsin students, regardless of ZIP code. See the MTI webpage ([www.madisonteachers.org](http://www.madisonteachers.org)) under "Elections Spring 2017" for ways to get involved.

The second most critical, timely, and urgent action we can engage in is to **actively support candidates for local Boards of Education who can have the greatest impact on local educational decisions.** Learn about the six (6) candidates competing for the two (2) vacant seats on the MMSD Board of Education. If you live outside of Madison, learn about the candidates running in your district and make an effort to support those who support public schools.

More work to do: On **February 14**, MTI members in various schools will be engaging in "*Walk-Ins*" before school, *as a way of thanking the Madison community for its strong support of our public schools*, including the successful referendum last fall, which provides much needed funding. "*We Love our Public Schools*" is the message of that event, and is part of state-wide organizing events to celebrate our public schools.

In the days ahead, we will need to remain vigilant to the political and policy attacks on our public schools, our students, and our families. We will need to be prepared to rise to their defense. Strengthening our common bonds with our students, families, co-workers, and local communities will help prepare us for the collective work ahead, thinking globally and acting locally.

## Teacher Retirement and TERP Deadline February 15

### *Our Union Makes Us Strong!*

Volume 51, #24, February 13, 2017

MTI's web page - [www.madisonteachers.org](http://www.madisonteachers.org)

MTI's email - [MTI@madisonteachers.org](mailto:MTI@madisonteachers.org)

## 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](http://www.madisonteachers.org)) to sign-up for these seminars or financial consultations:

#### 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](http://www.madisonteachers.org) to sign up for a free 30-minute financial consultation. Consultations are held at MTI headquarters.

### MTI Members: National Board Certification Support Workshops Continuing

MTI members currently working on National Board Certification are invited to attend monthly NBC Support Workshops provided at no cost by MTI and WEAC Region 6. Sessions are currently scheduled March 8, April 12, and May 10. Please contact MTI if you are interested in attending or would like additional information at 608-257-0491 or at [mti@madisonteachers.org](mailto:mti@madisonteachers.org).

## Calendar of Events

- Monday, February 13, 5:00 p.m., Doyle Room 103  
BOE Operations Work Group
- Tuesday, February 14, 4:30 p.m., MTI  
MTI Board of Directors
- Wednesday, February 15, 4:00 p.m., Doyle  
Joint MTI/MMSD Benefits Sub-Committee

#### Tuesday, February 21, Primary Election - VOTE

- Tuesday, February 21, 4:15 p.m., SCFL  
MTI Faculty Representative Council
- Thursday, February 23, 4:15 p.m., MTI  
MTI Voters Political Action Committee
- Thursday, February 23, 4:15 p.m., Labor Temple  
USO-MTI General Membership
- Monday, February 27, 6:00 p.m., Doyle Auditorium  
BOE Regular Meeting