



# Solidarity!

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

## ESEA-MTI: Voluntary Short-term Disability Enrollment Due December 31

A Benefits Committee comprised of MTI, Local 60, and District representatives met during the 2016-17 school year to discuss a number of benefit improvements for District employees. One of the recommendations of the joint Committee was the offering of a voluntary short-term disability insurance plan to district employees other than teachers (*employees in the teacher unit are already provided short-term disability protection via the Sick Leave Bank*). The District communicated this new benefit offering during the recently ended open enrollment period. Interested employees still have time to sign-up for coverage provided they do so by **December 31, 2017**. The District Benefits department will be mailing a letter to eligible employees' homes in the next week to provide additional information (*including premiums and the enrollment application*).

Regular hourly employees represented by MTI's ESEA bargaining unit working 50% or more are eligible for coverage under the District's new short-term disability plan provided they enroll by **December 31**. The short-term disability (STD) plan provides 66.67% of salary continuation for covered employees who become disabled and unable to work. The plan begins paying after a fourteen (14) day waiting period. During the waiting period, ESEA members may use accumulated time off benefits (*such as accrued personal illness time*) to supplement lost income; or they can take the time off unpaid. The STD plan provides payments for up to 75 days, or until long-term disability commences, whichever is sooner.

The plan is voluntary and employees who choose to enroll in the plan pay 100% of the premium. Employees interested in enrolling should contact the MMSD Benefits Department staff and need to complete and return the necessary application by the **December 31, 2017** deadline.

## MTI School Year Employees, Enjoy Your Break

MTI wishes all school-year employees (and those 12-month employees taking time off) a safe, relaxing, and enjoyable winter break. **Thank you for all of your hard work in 2017 for our students and for your continued commitment to your Union.** The strong support for MTI in the recent recertification election (99% voting in favor) is a testament to your belief in our collective efforts, our Union, to advocate for your needs and for those of our students. 2018 will bring its share of challenges, which we will need to meet together in solidarity. The MTI office will be closed on December 25, 26, 29 and January 1.



### How Do I Join MTI?

Click on the "RENEW" icon/link on the MTI webpage ([www.madisonteachers.org](http://www.madisonteachers.org)) for step-by-step directions. When you join your colleagues as an MTI member, you are making a decision to **stand together in solidarity on important issues that impact your profession, our schools, and our students.** MTI provides you with a voice in the workplace, with the School Board, and at the State Capitol. Our opponents are highly organized. We need to be as well.

## MTI/MMSD Handbook Update; Some Progress, Still a Long Way to Go

Representatives from MTI and the MMSD met last week to review consensus recommendations from the joint **Benefits Committee** and **Substitute Teacher** work group relative to a number of benefit-related issues, including a new method for calculation substitute teacher health insurance eligibility. The parties continue to meet to review and discuss potential changes to employment policies covered by the MMSD Employee Handbook.

Various Handbook work groups also met last week on issues related to **Teacher Work Day** (including planning time and staff only days); the **2018-19 School Calendar**; and **EA/SEA Wage Schedules**. Progress has been made on the school calendar, but has been slow on the important issue of teacher planning time. Additional work group meetings will be scheduled in January. In addition, work related to **Teacher Compensation** considerations is continuing.

All MTI members received an Employee Handbook Update e-mail last week with additional information on these discussions. All MTI members will continue to receive updates as the Handbook review process continues.



## No Sick Leave Bank Assessment in 2017-18

The Sick Leave Bank (SLB) is an innovative and progressive benefit negotiated by MTI in the teacher Collective Bargaining Agreement, and now continued for teachers in the Employee Handbook. The SLB was created decades ago with each member of MTI's teacher bargaining unit donating three sick days to fund the "Bank." The Bank acts as "short-term disability" for teachers needing to be off of work for medical reasons or maternity leave and who have an insufficient number of personal sick leave days available. SLB benefits begin after a teacher has been absent eleven (11) consecutive work days and has exhausted his/her personal sick leave account. Without the SLB, teachers without sufficient sick leave to cover an extended illness or maternity leave would be forced to go without pay for an extended period of time.

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 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 those teachers who resign are transferred to the SLB.** This has minimized the need for members of the bargaining unit to be assessed days to fund the Bank. BECAUSE THE BANK IS CURRENTLY ADEQUATELY FUNDED, NO ASSESSMENT WILL BE REQUIRED FOR THE 2017-18 SCHOOL YEAR.

## Cold Weather Update

With colder temps already 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](http://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 e-mail MTI ([mti@madisonteachers.org](mailto:mti@madisonteachers.org)) regarding any on-going 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 standing 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](http://www.nws.noaa.gov).

## Our Union Makes Us Strong!

Volume 52, #16, December 18, 2017  
MTI's web page - [www.madisonteachers.org](http://www.madisonteachers.org)  
MTI's email - [MTI@madisonteachers.org](mailto:MTI@madisonteachers.org)

## MTI Membership Opportunities

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

### MTI & WEA Member Benefits: Financial Services for MTI Members

MTI and WEA Member Benefits will be providing more opportunities to enhance the financial well-being of MTI members. Sign-up links and information for the seminars will be posted on the MTI website ([www.madisonteachers.org](http://www.madisonteachers.org)).

In addition, **Steve Pike** (retired teacher and current WEA Member Benefits Consultant) is available for a **free 30-minute financial consultation**. This is ideal if you are just getting started, have specific questions, or would like a quick check-in. It's a convenient way to meet with someone face-to-face to get some general help or guidance. Consultations are held at MTI Headquarters. Sign-up is also available on MTI's website ([www.madisonteachers.org](http://www.madisonteachers.org)).

\* \* \* \* \*

**MTI National Board Certification Training Workshops for 2017-18.** MTI members pursuing National Board Certification are invited to participate in monthly NBC support workshops. The next session is January 17. Contact MTI to register.

**MTI members in need of assistance:** See your MTI Faculty Rep or contact MTI staff (257-0491 or [mti@madisonteachers.org](mailto:mti@madisonteachers.org)) should you have a question or need *assistance with any work-related matter*.

## Keep MTI Updated on Changes

Please call, write, or e-mail MTI if you have a change in name, home address, home e-mail address, telephone number, work location, certification, percent of contract, or hours of work. Having this information allows MTI to serve you better.

*Show **SOLIDARITY** with your **MTI sisters & brothers**. Wear **MTI RED** on Mondays and **MTI lanyards** every day!*

## Calendar of Events

- Monday, December 18, 6:00 p.m., Doyle Auditorium  
BOE Regular Meeting

### ❄ Dec 22—Jan 2, Winter Break ❄

- Monday, January 8, 5:00 p.m., Doyle (Rm. 103)  
BOE Instruction Work Group
- Tuesday, January 9, 4:30 p.m., MTI  
MTI Board of Directors

### January 15—Martin Luther King Jr. Day

- Monday, January 22, 5:00 p.m., Doyle (Rm. 103)  
BOE Operations Work Group
- Wednesday, January 24, 4:15 p.m., MTI  
MTI VOTERS Political Action Committee
- Thursday, January 25, 4:15 p.m., MTI  
USO-MTI General Membership