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Solidarity!

Last Issue of MTI Solidarity for 2005-06 School Year

MTI Solidarity! and its predecessor, ***The MTI Reporter***, have been keeping the members of all MTI bargaining units apprised of current Union issues, information on bargaining and member Contract rights and benefits for **40 years**. It is published for delivery each Monday of the school year. This is the last issue of ***MTI Solidarity!*** for the 2005-06 school year. ***MTI staff wish all members a safe and enjoyable summer.*** MTI remains open during the summer to serve all members. Summer hours are 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 7:30 a.m. - Noon on Fridays.

MTI Demands to Bargain: Middle School Math Master's Program and Reading Recovery Teacher Leader

The District sent literature to various teachers offering credit to those who enroll in the above-referenced courses. **As an enticement for the Reading Recovery Teacher Leader course, the District offers "salary, tuition, and book costs."** The program will run after work hours during the school year.

Regarding the **Middle School Math Master's Program**, every District teacher, who teaches math in a middle school, is **"expected" to take three (3) District inservice courses in math, unless they hold a math major or minor.** The District is advising teachers that they must complete the three (3) courses within two (2) years. The courses are 21 hours each. The program is scheduled to run during the school day, with substitute teachers provided on the days the courses will be taught.

The Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission has previously ruled that an **employer offering financial incentives, including meals and lodging, or release time, to employees in conjunction with course work or seminars is a mandatory subject of bargaining between the school district and the union.**

MTI Gains Improved Prescription Benefit from GHC

For the last two years, MTI Executive Director John Matthews has been working with GHC in attempt to improve the prescription drug benefit for MTI members who carry their health insurance with GHC. GHC has agreed, effective July 1, to enable those in MTI's group to purchase certain generic prescription drugs in 90 day lots for two co-pays. This reduces the member's cost by 33%. GHC has agreed to do so with no adjustment in the premium charged to those in MTI's group.

How to Use this Program: After a prescription has been

filled on a 30-day supply basis at a GHC approved pharmacy for at least 2 months and meet the program criteria, the member may request the 90-day supply. The member simply calls the GHC Mail Pharmacy at 608-441-3289, or places a refill order at www.ghc-hmo.com and indicates a 90-day supply is desired.

Abbreviated Program Guidelines: (1) Prescriptions must have multiple refills, indicating expected chronic use; (2) Members must have been on the medication for at least 60 days to assure the member can tolerate the medication and the dose is stable; (3) Only 2 co-payments will be charged for a 90-day supply; (4) Drugs eligible for this program will generally include generic and birth control pills; (5) A limited number of medications will be excluded from this program despite meeting the program rules because they can be especially dangerous in large quantities; (6) Selected brand name medications will continue to be available in a 90-day supply for 3 co-payments; and (7) This program is only available for prescriptions filled at the GHC Mail Pharmacy.

70 Percent of Voters Want Congress to Deliver on Education Funding Promises

A national poll by the National School Boards Association indicates that **a majority of likely voters believe that Congress is out of touch with the public's expectations when it comes to funding federal education programs and that they want Congress to fulfill its funding commitment to school children.** Voters say that they will be considering Congressional members' voting record on education funding when they go to the polls in November.

Nearly three of four likely voters think Congress is not doing a good job setting spending priorities and needs to make changes in priorities. And nearly 88 percent of those polled think that if Congress can spend billions on wasteful pork-barrel projects, then they can afford to fulfill their promises on funding federal education programs.

There is a **significant disconnect between the current federal investment in education funding and what voters think is spent and want spent.** Voters want 37 percent of the budget spent on K-12 rather than the **measly 1.5 percent actually spent on it.** The NSBA poll indicates there could be a significant political price for not restoring the promised-education funding. (Source: Public Education Network Weekly NewsBlast.)

Our Union Makes Us Strong!

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MTI's web page - www.madisonteachers.org

MTI's email - MTI@madisonteachers.org



Upcoming Meetings/Events

Monday, June 5, 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday, June 7, 4:15 p.m.
Thursday, June 8, 4:30 p.m.
Friday, June 9
Wednesday, June 14, 1:00 p.m.

SSA-MTI Negotiations at MTI
Substitute Teacher Social at Tony Frank's
EA-MTI Negotiations at MTI
Last Day of School
Teacher Layoff Meeting at MTI

Thinking About Retiring? TERP Window Open

MTI and the District have reached an agreement which enables members of MTI's teacher bargaining unit to participate in the Teacher Emeritus Retirement Program with compensation effective September 1, 2006, if they enroll by June 9. Under the terms of the TERP Memorandum of Understanding negotiated between MTI and the District (which has been in effect since 1977), one must apply prior to February 15; however, the agreement reached last week enables those wishing to retire at the end of this school year access to the benefit if they apply by June 9. MTI's Contract enables one's accumulated sick leave at one's latest wage to be used to pay insurance premiums following retirement.

MTI was successful in negotiations for the 2005-07 Contract in negotiating a guaranteed continuance of TERP in four-year increments. Thus, MTI members can be assured that TERP runs through 2009 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, WRS and Social Security.

Insurance Changes During Summer

MTI represented District employees are advised to call the District's Benefits Department (663-1795) regarding insurance benefits which are available via MTI's various Collective Bargaining Agreements if the following events occur during the summer: *one gets married, changes address, changes name, retires, resigns, takes a leave of absence, has or adopts a child, and/or if one's dependent (including one's spouse) becomes ineligible or becomes eligible for health insurance coverage.* (See the health insurance provision in the appropriate MTI Collective Bargaining Agreement or call MTI with questions.)

For example, a child will become **ineligible** if he or she is no longer dependent or marries. **The definition varies for health and dental coverage.** A spouse will become eligible by marriage, termination of his/her employment, loss of insurance with his/her employer, or become ineligible because of divorce. If one gets married, his/her spouse is not automatically covered by health insurance. One must contact the District's Benefits Department to add the new spouse. **Notice to the District must be within 30 days of the qualifying event.** Such is also the case for newborns. Waiting until fall to act, may render one's spouse or other dependents ineligible.

Acting promptly assures your rights to MTI negotiated insurance. However, to assure those rights, the insurance carrier must be notified within 30 days of any changes. Although dental, health and life insurance terminates based upon eligibility, all of MTI's negotiated plans can be continued and/or converted for both an ineligible spouse and child.

Year-end Checklist and Paycheck Distribution

It seems that each year a couple of authoritarian principals notify staff that **PAYCHECKS WILL NOT BE DISTRIBUTED until keys are returned, grades are submitted, and other year-end tasks are completed.** MTI advises that the only requirement one must satisfy to receive a paycheck is that **you work during the pay period.** Any denial of paychecks should be promptly brought to MTI's attention. Withholding of one's check violates Wisconsin Statutes.

Sick Leave During Summer School

Section VI-A (Absence Allowance) of MTI's Teacher Collective Bargaining Agreement provides that **staff members employed to teach in the six week summer school session will earn one day of personal illness leave.** Section VI-B (Personal Illness Leave) of MTI's Substitute Teacher Collective Bargaining Agreement provides that **substitute teachers who teach at least four weeks during the summer school session will earn one day of sick leave.** This day accumulates with one's regular sick leave. Staff members who teach in the summer school session may use sick leave accumulated during the regular school term during the summer.

Substitute Teachers' Social June 7

Substitute teachers will get-together on **Wednesday, June 7, at 4:15 p.m.,** at Tony Frank's (1612 Seminole Hwy). All are welcome.

Notary Services

MTI provides a free-of-charge notary service to MTI members. Do not sign the document without it being witnessed by a notary. A picture ID is necessary. **When needing a notary, please call MTI for an appointment to assure an MTI notary will be available to assist you.**

Keep MTI Apprised of Changes

Please call, write or email MTI if you have a change in name, address, telephone number, work location, or hours of work. Having this information allows MTI to serve you better, both personally and contractually.