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# Solidarity!

## All MTI Bargaining Units Ratify Contracts Through June 30, 2014

**Act 10, which Governor Walker designed to kill unions of public sector workers, caused massive protests in early 2011 because of it quashing peoples' rights.** And, that is the way Judge Colas saw it in ruling on MTI's challenge to Act 10. **Colas ruled that Act 10 violates the Constitutional rights of freedom of speech, freedom of association and equal protection of public sector union members (ruling did not address state employees).** Enabled by Colas' decision, MTI petitioned the Madison Metropolitan School District to commence negotiations over a Contract to succeed that which ends June 30, 2013.

Following Judge Colas' order, both the City of Madison and Dane County negotiated new Contracts with their largest union, AFSCME Local 60. MTI, along with hundreds of supporters, pressed the MMSD to follow suit. After 37 hours of bargaining last Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, negotiators for MTI, SEE-MTI (clerical/technical employees), EA-MTI (educational assistants and nurse assistants), SSA-MTI (security assistants) and USO-MTI (substitute teachers) were successful in reaching terms for a new Contract through June 30, 2014.

**The Union achieved the #1 priority expressed by members of MTI's five bargaining units in the recent survey, protecting their Contract rights and benefits, and keeping their Union Contract.** *The "just cause" standard for any kind of discipline or dismissal is in tact, as is arbitration by a neutral third party of any such action by the District, and of all claims that District administration violated the terms of an MTI Contract.* The Union was also successful in **preserving salary and wage schedules (except for substitutes), as well as fringe benefits**, another priority of members responding to MTI's recent survey.

Solidarity was evident from the outset as, for the first time ever, representatives from all five (5) of MTI's bargaining units worked together to bargain simultaneously. Representatives from the Custodial and Food Service units, represented by AFSCME Local 60, also lent support throughout the negotiations, even as they were rushing to bargain new contracts for their members. And, in a powerful display of solidarity, MTI's Teacher Bargaining Team repeatedly put forth proposals enabling the District to increase health insurance contributions for teachers, if the District would agree NOT to increase contributions from their lower paid brothers and sisters in MTI's EA, SEE and SSA bargaining units. Unfortunately, the District rebuffed the offers, insisting that all employees work under the cloud of uncertainty that employee health insurance contributions may be increased up to 10% of the premium after June 30, 2013.

The District entered the negotiations espousing "principles that put student learning in the forefront, with a respect for the fact that our employees are the people who directly or indirectly

impact that learning". MTI heard these concerns and made major accommodations in many contractual areas to address these needs. *Areas where MTI accommodated the District's stated need to attract staff who can close the achievement gap:* 1) enable the District to place new hires anywhere on the salary schedule; 2) give new hires a signing bonus of any amount; 3) appoint new hires and non-District employees to any coaching or other extra duty position (annual District discretion of continuing extra duty position); 4) current staff to have no right to apply for vacancies occurring after June 15, to enable District to offer employment to outsiders; 5) enable the District to assign new hires to evening/weekend teaching positions; and 6) enable the District to hold two evening parent-teacher conferences per school year.

Yet, other District proposals appeared to have nothing to do with either student achievement or respecting the employees who make that happen. The District insisted on eliminating sick leave benefits for all substitute teachers hired after July 1, 2013. The District insisted on language which would non-renew the contracts of teachers on medical leave for more than two years. And the District's numerous other "take backs", unrelated to either of their stated principles, but just to take advantage of the leverage enabled by the uncertainty of Act 10. These concessions were received bitterly by the thousand who gathered at Wednesday's MTI meeting, hoping for positive signs that the District's messages of respect would be reflected in the settlement.

**On the downside was the District's attack on other Contract provisions.** *In violation of the principles they espoused to Walker's then-proposed Act 10, in February 2011, Board members enabled District management to demand concessions from AFSCME and MTI in exchange for a new Contract. All seven Board members said of Act 10, "The Governor's proposals are a damaging blow to all our public services and dedicated public employees. The legislation's radical and punitive approach to the collective bargaining process seems likely to undermine our productive working relationship with our teachers and damage the work environment, to the ultimate detriment of student achievement."*

Interim Superintendent **Jane Belmore** *espoused similar feelings just last month.* In referring to Act 10, she wrote District employees "... **we still need to determine together how to go forward in the best interest of our employees and our district.**"

**The pledges of Board members and Supt. Belmore were not worth the paper they were written on.** Demanding significant changes and deletion of terms which they had agreed - some since the 1960's - **the District negotiators were relentless.**

(Continued on the reverse)

**All Units Ratify Contracts (continued)**

Even after MTI agreed to six changes Belmore claimed were needed to address the achievement gap, she pushed for the unfettered right to exempt enforcement of a 1974 agreed upon Contract provision which assured that "... recognizing the value of a qualified teaching staff...." the District agreed would only be performed by DPI licensed members of the bargaining unit.

Belmore claimed in a press release that "*there are individual students whose needs can be met by valuable programming offered in our community.*" She said "*we would plan for very limited use of this change.*" Yet, in last Thursday's Wisconsin State Journal, Board President James Howard said the change would enable "*...flexibility to contract-out with certified teachers.*" **So adamant was the Board that they even rejected MTI's counter proposal to enable the exception to when "a student's needs cannot be met by District staff and programs."**

**The District refused salary schedule increases, not knowing how Governor Walker's budget will impact the District.** This will make it the fourth year of no increases in salary schedules. The Contract's enable the District to increase salaries at any time. The Contracts also enable the District to charge employees up to 10% of the health insurance premium. The District had similar authority under the current Contracts, but did not enforce it.

Of significance to senior teachers is that the **Union preserved the Teacher Emeritus Retirement Program (TERP)** and the **Retirement Insurance Account (RIA)** by which one's insurance premiums can be paid from earned, but unused sick leave. The latter applies also to members of SEE-MTI, EA-MTI, SSA-MTI and USO-MTI.

**EA-MTI** members can be required to attend teacher professional development. If they do, they will be paid at their regular rate. If they are not required to attend, they can attend and be paid or take the day off.

The hours of work for members of **SEE-MTI** has been modified *effective July 1, 2013, to enable one to be paid at the overtime rate of 1.5 times their hourly rate after eight (8) hours per day or 40 hours per week.* Currently the overtime rate applies at eight hours per day or 37.75 hours per week.

Given the problems presented resulting from the dispute between UW Health and Physicians Plus (i.e. Physicians Plus restricting access to UW physicians) **MTI and the District agreed that Unity (UW Health) can be offered to MTI represented staff.** At the present time, Unity claims that they will not participate if Physicians Plus is also offered. MTI and the District agreed to seek resolution of this difficulty.

With the Contracts running through June 30, 2014, **keep in mind that to get fully out from under the cloud caused by Act 10,** what is needed is a change in the Legislature, the Governor and the Board of Education. All can be impacted by elections this fall, next spring and in 2014. **Pledge now to do you part. Work with your Union brothers and sisters to cause change.**

Ratification was held for all five (5) MTI bargaining units last Wednesday. Notice of a possible meeting to be called on short notice was distributed to all MTI Boards of Directors and Bargaining Committees, as well as to MTI Faculty Representatives. Notice on the day of the meeting was distributed electronically via MTI's website to all of the above and to all members for whom MTI has cell phone numbers (text) and to those for whom it has personal email addresses. Many Faculty Representatives established telephone trees with those at their work site. This means of communication, although brief, produced a large turnout.

MTI's webpage will offer full details of the Contract provisions for all five (5) bargaining units. **Note that said revisions do not become effective until July 1, 2013.**

**USO-MTI Membership Meeting  
October 17, 4:15 p.m., MTI**

The USO-MTI general membership meeting will be held on October 17, at 4:15 p.m., at MTI Headquarters (821 Williamson St.). The purpose of the meeting is to update members on the status of issues facing substitute teachers and the election of Union officers. Attend this general membership meeting where you will be nominating and electing Union Officers to steward USO-MTI into the future. **You still have a voice, make it heard!"**

Contact MTI Assistant Director Jeff Knight ([knightj@madisonteachers.org](mailto:knightj@madisonteachers.org)) if you have any questions or concerns.

**Calendar of Events**



- **Monday, October 8, 4:30 p.m., MTI**  
MTI Board of Directors
- **Tuesday, October 16, 4:15 p.m., SCFL**  
MTI Faculty Representative Council
- **Wednesday, October 17, 4:15 p.m., MTI**  
USO-MTI General Membership Meeting
- **Thursday/Friday, October 25/26**  
Professional Development Days (Morning)  
Individual Teacher Planning Time (Afternoon)



As a show of **SOLIDARITY**, wear **MTI RED** every **MONDAY!**

**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)