



What can you do to support public schools?

Talk to friends, family members, students and parents. Share what you know, and ask them to get involved. Ask what's important to them, and share what is personally important to you as an educator.

Organize a gathering at your school, place of worship, neighborhood organization, etc. Schools and Communities United or the MTEA will send a speaker. Send requests to salaskd@mtea.weac.org or call Lori at (414) 861-8423.

Sign and circulate the community schools petition at mtea.weac.org

Contact your state legislators and ask them to support public community schools, not school takeovers. Go to: capwiz.com/nea/wi/state/main/?state=WI

Attend future actions, hearings, picket lines and meetings of those who support public schools and believe we should improve our schools, not abandon them. SAVE THE DATE of Monday, February 16 at 4pm, and watch for additional future actions.

Spread the word. Encourage others to stay informed:

- Sign up for emails at mtea.weac.org under Resources>Publications>Subscribe
- Like Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association on Facebook
- Follow @MTEAunion on Twitter
- Like Schools and Communities United on Facebook
- Register for "Email sign-up" at SchoolsAndCommunitiesUnited.org

Community vows to fight budget cuts, privatization

Nearly four hundred parents, educators, students and community members came together on Saturday, February 7, determined to fight public education budget cuts, school takeover legislation, and the expansion of voucher and privately run charter schools.

The gathering took place just four days after Governor Walker released his budget proposal, which dramatically cuts K-12 public education by \$127 million statewide and cuts UW system funding by \$300 million. (See article on reverse side for more details on the proposed budget.)

The event, organized by MTEA and other organizations in the Schools and Communities United coalition, was held at MATC and featured over a dozen workshops on topics such as bilingual education, community schools, advocating for students with special needs, and problems with voucher schools and privately run charter schools.

State Rep. Mandela Barnes announced that he will introduce legislation to support community schools as an alternative to current proposals that punish public schools in high poverty areas or hand them over to private companies to operate.

MTEA president Bob Peterson told the group: "Today we face one of the greatest challenges of our lifetime. We have a governor who is set on destroying the public sector to benefit the wealthy few. If it's public, Walker wants it defunded and turned over to private operators. We know that when governors cut budgets, when companies move family sustaining jobs out of our community and when business leaders and politicians ignore the glaring racial and economic inequalities, it's time to organize and to stand up for what is moral and just."

The coalition plans to take several steps to fight the proposed budget cuts and oppose school takeovers and privatization, including:

- Demonstrations opposing the budget (save the date of Feb. 16 at 4pm)
- Informational meetings with concerned parents and educators at schools, organizations or places of worship (contact salaskd@mtea.weac.org if you can plan something, and MTEA will send a speaker)
- Testimony at budget hearings
- Social media petitions and campaigns

Watch your email and the MTEA Facebook page and website for more info. Get involved, stay involved, and reach out to others so they can take action!



Walker budget takes aim at our students

When the governor released his 2015-17 proposed budget, he failed to mention critical cuts to K-12 public schools.

In addition to a massive \$300 million cut to the UW System, Walker's budget includes a \$150 per pupil cut to K-12 public schools, which means an overall cut of \$127 million statewide to K-12 public schools and a significant budget cut for Milwaukee Public Schools.

Walker's budget also proposes:

- Unlimited expansion of the statewide voucher program.
- A state board that could authorize charter schools anywhere in the state, taking power away from publicly elected local school boards.
- Alternative licensure that allows any person with a bachelor's degree and "real life experience" to get a three-year renewable 6-12 license if they pass a test.

- Ending the Smarter Balanced Test.
- A statewide accountability system that would rate schools using A-F letter grades.
- Different accountability tests for different schools.
- Closing the Chapter 220 desegregation program to new students and eventually ending it.

"Walker wants to cut public education and inflict massive cuts on one of the most highly acclaimed public university systems in the country, while promoting unlimited expansion of unaccountable, taxpayer-funded private voucher and charter schools, and lowering teacher quality by gutting licensure requirements," said MTEA president Bob Peterson.

What's next?

March: The Joint Finance Committee will hold a public hearing in the Milwau-



Image credit: Nicolas Lampert, justseeds.org

kee area. MTEA members should plan to attend, and let parents know now that these hearings are coming.

April: Public hearings in Madison. Again, educators and parents should attend and testify. After hearings conclude, the Joint Finance Committee will make its final adjustments to the budget and send it to both the Senate and the Assembly for a vote.

Watch for more information on how you can get involved in the weeks to come!

Short term disability open enrollment in March

MTEA members who want to sign up for short term disability insurance can do so during the plan's open enrollment period from March 1 – April 3, 2015. This is also a time for current subscribers to make changes to their plans, if desired.

The short term disability plan can be used to provide replacement income in the event of injury, illness or disability,

including maternity leave.

Information sessions will be held at the MTEA office with representatives from WEA Member Benefits and Aflac on the following dates at 5pm each day: March 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25, 30, and 31.

You can register for the informational sessions at mtea.weac.org/events.

MTEA representation on ETF board

MTEA Vice President Kim Schroeder has been elected to the Teachers' Retirement Board and will serve on the Wisconsin Employee Trust Fund Board. This Board sets policy for the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF); appoints the ETF Secretary; approves tables used for computing benefits,

contribution rates and actuarial assumptions; authorizes all annuities except for disability; approves or rejects ETF administrative rules; and generally oversees the benefit programs, except group insurance and deferred compensation.

Upcoming events

MTEA's Annual MPS Principal Survey, starts Fri. Feb. 13, ends Fri. Feb. 27. Watch for the survey link via email. Results will be available for viewing at the MTEA office in March.

Praxis II Prep. Wed. Feb. 18 at 4:30pm. Register at mtea.weac.org

New Teacher Rejuvenation, Tue. Feb. 24 at 4:30pm. Hear about the rewards and challenges of teaching with educators who've completed their first few years.

What to Do if You Are Assaulted at Work, Thu. Mar. 12 at 4:30pm. Learn how to protect yourself and know your rights. Register at mtea.weac.org.

Substitute Teacher Annual Meeting, Tue. Mar. 24 at 4:30pm. Includes a light dinner. Open to substitute teachers who are MTEA members, and any substitute teacher considering membership.

mtea

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