

MFT Educator

May 2016

A Union of Professionals

www.mft59.org

"We is the most important word in the social justice vocabulary. The issue is not what we can't do, but what we can do when we stand together. ...

"The only effective answer to organized greed is organized labor."

Thomas Donahue,
Report to the Convention
from the AFL-CIO
Executive Council

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we must stand together now like never before."

— Reverend William Barber

Minneapolis Federation of Teachers & ESP, Local 59



From your president

What your union has done for you and what you have done for it!

By Lynn Nordgren

We have accomplished a lot together over the past 8 years! There simply is not enough space to tell the whole story but here are a few highlights of our collective work since 2008. We want you to feel confident in knowing there is a strong foundation in place so that our union and professions can continue to grow and be strong.

Mission and Vision

In 2009, MFT began a journey of changing its mission and vision. It started with creating a new worldview narrative around students. We expanded this narrative to our goals and actions so we could carry out that new narrative. We realized we, the professionals in education, were the ones who needed to stand up for what is best for students and fair to the professionals instead of relying on all the other non-educators who were taking over the conversation. That "new" narrative has been the basis for our union, district, and community work over the past 7 years – one that you will see reflected in the reflection of our efforts below.

Internal Operations – ensuring a strong foundation.

Update the MFT building and internal operations:

Cleaned up, repaired, and renovated the MFT offices both externally and internally to make the space more useable and professional. Brought in new staff to better support MFT's work. Established recycling and expanded the School Store. The building is now used more than ever by members for meetings and professional learning as well as by community groups for special events and meetings (creating lots of good will). We are very busy on a daily basis.

Improved communication:

1. Updated all MFT technology for staff.
2. Improved the MFT website, started a facebook page.
3. Resurrected The Educator newsletter.
4. Established ability to do global emails to improve union communication with members to better inform them on a wide variety of issues.
4. Began an annual MFT member online survey to better learn about issues important to you.
5. Conducted several public campaigns (Standing Together for Students, Equity for All, and Reclaim the Promise) to support what's best for students and schools.
6. Started a weekly radio show on KMOJ on issues of education and community.
7. Began parent engagement and partnership efforts (Let's Dream Together, The Trust Initiative, Parent Involvement Workshops, and a Reclaim the Promise drive).
8. Participated in many community/nonprofit panel discussions, conducted dozens of interviews on a variety of radio programs and TV news segments, participated in many interviews with local press, published several print pieces (sent dozens of pieces but was only published a few times).
9. Held 186 House meetings to discuss issues and campaigns.
10. Visited MPS sites to talk with staff and learn about issues.
11. Created and/or became engaged in many community events to advocate for students, our profession, and communicate about the good work of teaching, RSPs and the union.
12. Started conducting an annual survey to learn about issues important to you.
13. Established a Communications Committee so we can keep growing in our communication efforts.
14. Provided time at stewards' meetings to give feedback on specific issues at sites.



facebook



MFT Educator is a publication of the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, Local 59, AFT, AFL-CIO, NEA and Education MN

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MFT Local 59

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MFT Budget:

In 2008, MFT finances were very unhealthy (we had severe debt). We now have a very healthy financial foundation (in the black) because we tightened our belts, reviewed and

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Your union - from p. 2

rearranged our spending, and eliminated unnecessary costs. Early on, we uncovered some mistakes in the dues database that brought in another \$60,000 to the budget. We also found ways to get support for some of our work from Education MN as well as the American Federation of Teachers. We aligned our budget with MFT's mission and goals as well as found ways to support the membership and interact more intentionally within community.

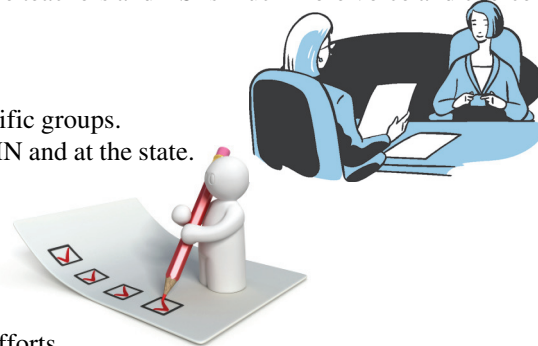
Internal Work of the Union

Many MFT committees had stopped functioning by 2008. Committees help carry out the work of the union by the union membership. Now, in 2016, the majority of committees have been returned to being fully functional and help push forward important efforts on behalf of all of the membership. About 500 members participate in some way – either on Labor-Management or Union committees, on MFT task forces or focus groups, and/or as building stewards. These are some of the ways democracy in our union is accomplished – by members pitching in and having a voice about their profession, the district, and their union.

Support for You.

Your MFT leadership worked very hard on a daily basis to ensure things are going well for all of you. The President, Business Agents, Officers, Executive board, and MFT Committees did so by:

1. Preventing the MFT contract from being declared extinct (18 month arbitration).
2. Fighting back the reformers targeted efforts to take down the MFT (and other unions, too). Stopped or held back several oppositional groups from gaining ground. Helped win the election of school board candidates supportive of teachers and their union.
3. Staying the high road to repair our formerly negative reputation to make it more professional, respected, and strong. We are now being listened to and worked with by a wider audience than in the past. People are realizing they really cannot work on education without working WITH those who work with students daily.
4. Improving relationships with the District leadership after getting through some initial tough times.
5. Working on a daily basis via MFT Business Agents and the President with individuals and whole schools to solve issues, protect contractual rights, and find solutions. Dozens of face-to-face meetings, hundreds of emails, phone calls and texts on a weekly basis are conducted or responded to.
6. Negotiating supportive contracts and Memorandum of Agreements that are helping move solutions forward on workload, time, class size, testing, time issues in schools, shared leadership, and more.
7. Helping re-establish Quality Compensation that brought back ProPay and teachers leadership compensation.
8. Partnering in the Grow Your Own (teachers) program with MPS and U of M.
9. Helping create Community Partnership Schools that lessen the workload and give teachers and RSPs much more voice and choice in how their schools operate.
10. Establishing the opportunity for elementary teachers to have two preps per day.
11. Giving secondary teachers more choice over their preparation times.
12. Lifting the voice of Related Services Professionals and negotiated more for specific groups.
13. Lifting Adult Education presence and voice at a District level, with Education MN and at the state.
14. Improving Interview and Select
15. Advocating for and helping make changes at sites with ineffective leadership.
16. Preventing MPS leadership from turning all sites into charter schools.
17. Continuing to move the agenda on Teacher Powered Schools.
18. Turning around Teacher Evaluation.
19. Helping with the annual MPS Teacher of the Year and Celebration of Teachers efforts.
20. Connecting district leadership with building stewards to have direct discussions on issues facing students, teachers, RSPs, schools, etc.



These are just some of the efforts to support you – all based on what you said you needed/wanted via surveys, site visits, focus groups, stewards, and more.

Political Actions – Member and Community Engagement

MFT has organized and hosted dozens of events each year where, if you totaled up all who have shown up to participate, it would be thousands – teachers, related services professionals, educational assistants, parents, community members, and sometimes students. Here are a few examples of our actions:

1. Marched together for our MFT contract settlement (600 rallied at the school board).

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Your union - from p. 3

2. Fought against a take over of our district by the corporate reformers (examples: rallying at Uptown Theater against a anti-teacher/ anti-union movie, training parents and community about the important issues facing education so they could go to reformers' meetings to speak up, attending/speaking up at various reform meetings, being a part of public debates, organizing for school board and legislative elections, etc.).
3. Spoke at School Board meetings on particular issues of importance; worked directly with School board and district administration to advocate for what members/schools want and need.
4. Stood up for marriage equality and voting rights (MFT held two rallies of about 375 people each time).
5. Stood by our families for income rights (CTUL partnership and celebration of their win for 200 people).
6. Protested the closure of MPS schools (600 showed up for North High and Cityview).
7. Did door knocking and phone banking of 33,000 citizens for school board and legislative elections each year.
8. Honored the past and rallied for equity (450 attended MLK Anniversary Rally and March).
9. Walked hand-in-hand with our sisters and brothers (Pride Parades – 125 walk each year).
10. Built partnerships with families through parent engagement workshops (over 1200 parents and community members have participated).
11. Held Standing Together for Students rally (400 people including politicians);
12. Put together Equity for All training; established a committee (100 participated).
13. Created and sponsored Equity for Reverend Barber dinner (225 people).
14. Held Equity for All march down Nicollet Mall with Rev. William Barber – 500 marchers).
16. Gave away 80,000 books to MPS students to support improved reading.
17. Hosted Mother's Day event at Urban League supporting jobs and education.
18. Helped with clean up on the North side after tornado.
19. Helped students' families who had been devastated by traumatic events.
20. Created Beds, Blankets and Books for MPS homeless and highly mobile students.
21. Sponsored college scholarships through MN Spokesman Recorder events.
22. Sponsored father-daughter and father-son events via community organization.
23. Sponsored and attended the Outfront Gala.
24. Fought and lobbied at the state capitol for many important issues.
25. Partnered with other unions on important issues.
26. Inspired members to become delegates at political conventions.
27. Marched and rallied with other groups in support of their actions (re: Postal Workers, \$15 NOW, etc.).
28. Supported the Archie Givens AA Literacy effort.
29. Supported the Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarship work.
30. Worked with firefighters on annual coat drive for MPS students.
31. Worked with Postal Workers on annual food drive.
32. Working in partnership with Take Action MN, Neighborhoods Organizing for Change, CTUL, OUTFRONT, EM, AFT, NEA, Urban League, Community Standards Initiative, and other organizations to help move a positive agenda forward for our families, students, communities, and schools.



Organizing - keeping our union strong and growing.

While we have more MFT members than we did eight years ago (2700 in 2008 up to 3143 currently), we always have to ensure that in some way, shape, or form, we not only keep our numbers strong but our members engaged. Like much of everything in life, things do not stay viable if you do not use them, nurture them, support them, or believe in them. We know what life is like without a union – just look to Wisconsin and Michigan and ask the professionals who live and work there. In the end, however, a union is much more than a bigger paycheck or protection from unfairness. It is about building a better world, a better city, a better district, better schools, and a better system of education for both students and the people who serve them. It is about building a better life for everyone. This cannot happen, however, without each of you being a part of it.

Kudos

One more time...kudos to all of you.

Thanks to everyone for the amazing things you do day in and day out. I have been so impressed with how you persevere even though times have been very tough in education and in MPS for the past decade. We survived and thrived as a union thanks to your continued support. And, as we move forward, it is critical that we come together as members of a strong union that looks to the future. Stay strong, positive, forward thinking, and optimistic by remembering you do some of the most important work there is in our world – helping students build successful lives to ensure a brighter future for all. So, one last time...***Onward and Upward Forever!***

With much love, appreciation, and admiration,

Lynn



From your business agent

The value of belonging to MFT

by Mike Leiter, MFT Business Agent

Belonging to a union connects you to a long, rich history of improvements in the working lives of all workers, including:

- Collective bargaining rights/right to strike
- Employer insurance coverage
- Holiday pay
- Pensions
- Pregnancy and parenting leave
- Sick leave
- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- Anti-discrimination laws
- Social Security
- and many, many more

The value of belonging to MFT is that you have a collective voice. Historically, MFT was instrumental in bringing about changes to the state laws to have collective bargaining rights in 1971 (following the MFT's landmark teacher strike in 1970). This aided the union's ability to seek improvements to pay, benefits, working conditions, but more importantly to have a voice to speak up for better learning conditions for students and professional respect for educators.

Belonging under the MFT contract brings many things, here a few to keep in mind:

- \$1.6M/year employer matching program (approx. \$640/year per teachers deferring to a 403b/457)
- Voice for students (such as class size)
- Compensation and benefits improvements

- Employer health care
- Lost prep reimbursement
- Paid holidays during school year (7 including July 4th)
- Paid sick leave/personal leave days
- Prep time, duty-free lunch
- Sabbaticals
- Wellness benefit (50% of sick leave at retirement)

The value of belonging to MFT as (member or fairshare) brings you the following:

- Negotiated contract
- Union Business Agent representation in school district investigation
- Grievance representation - general contract rights, and discipline lesser than discharge (not including arbitration)

The value of belonging to MFT as a member with MFT will bring you the following added benefits:

- 1 Million Dollar Liability Insurance
- Grievance representation all the way to arbitration for discipline matters
- Participation in Union Membership meetings and to be a Union Steward
- Right to vote in union elections
- Ability to run for local or state union office, including delegate to State and National conventions
- Right to vote on negotiated contracts
- Union Business Agent and union attorney guidance on a variety of statutory issues such as discrimination, accommodations, and benefits
- Attorney representation for layoff and termination hearings (application to extend dues membership required)
- Attorney representation in Board of Teaching investigations (Teachers License)
- Attorney representation in other Licensing Board investigations (Related Service Professionals Boards)
- Criminal attorney provided in investigation of job related accusations
- Member Benefit Programs, Professional Publications



Findus

online



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www.twitter.com/mft59



www.mft59.org

Follow us! Retweet, repost us and help spread the word about the great work of Minneapolis teachers!

If you have questions about your rights as a member of MFT, feel free to contact your steward or a Business Agent at MFT - Mike Leiter at mleiter@mft59.org 612-287-0260 or Bonita Jones at bjones@mft59.org 612-287-0278. ■

What has your union done for you?

Take a look...

Much progress has been made in our collective MFT work over the past eight years despite the barriers and challenges we have faced as a union and in education overall. Contract Negotiations is one of the areas where we try to bring to life the things you need and want. While we never get everything in negotiations that we ask for (we do try, however), your MFT leadership keeps pushing forward with what you tell us is important even after contract negotiations is over. MFT advocates every day on your behalf.

One of the most important things we accomplished over the past eight years was saving our contract from extinction. Winning the eighteen-month arbitration put a solid foundation under our feet and kept our contract (and other union contracts) alive and well for the future. We must never take it for granted, however. We could become Wisconsin or Michigan in a heartbeat (or, in a few votes at the MN Capitol) so we must stay vigilant. Voting for candidates who are pro-public education, pro-student, pro-teacher/RSP, and pro-union is key.

Here is a summary of some of the top

ABE article correction

Thanks for running an article on ABE teachers! I appreciated the program I have worked in for 23 years finally getting some visibility. However it was frustrating to read information in the last line that makes our more-than-full time program seem part-time: "They are open in the morning until 12:45pm and in the evening as well."

items achieved through bargaining over the past three contracts:

Time

1. Two prep times for elementary sites per their choice.
2. Eight of ten preps for secondary to be used for personal preparation. Two preps for collaboration.
3. Dedicated preparation time during opening week for teachers put into the contract for the first time: 2.5 days, flex to 3.5 days.
4. Extended year for nurses; additional due process day; additional recordkeeping day; additional prep day for Library Media Services.
5. Reduction of meetings to one principal requested meeting per week. Teachers and RSPs determine other meetings, if any are needed.
6. Early education - shared rotation of weekend duty.
7. Adjustment to Interview and Select to improve the process and cut back on the time commitment: one place for interviews over two days.

Student Advocacy

8. Lower class sizes in high priority schools (18-20 students per class).
9. Put in place required options and

The Facts about the ABE Program:

We run a full school day, evening and Saturday program. I teach from 8:30 to 11:30 and again from 12:30 to 3:00pm. Classes begin again at 5:00 pm and run until 9:00pm. There is also a Citizenship class for a couple hours on Saturday mornings.

*Julie Rasmussen
South Campus ABE Teacher*

**"I don't
believe in
charity;
I believe in
solidarity."
— Eduardo Galeano**

strategies when class sizes go over an established number. Students deserve a teacher who can give them the attention they each deserve. Low class sizes help with that.

10. Standardized test audit and Student Assessment Committee created to work towards lowering the number of tests and assessments across the district (in the works). Student learning time will increase as testing decreases.
11. Student Behavior and Positive School Wide Engagement committee; changes to current implementation of Restorative Justice work (for 2016-17).

Professional Learning, Resources, Support, and Leadership

12. Quality Compensation – brought back ProPay courses that earned lane changes as well as leadership stipends and support for collaboration time with ESPs/SEAs.
13. Grow Your Own teachers – partnered with MPS and U of M to create our own pool of teachers of color. (First cohort graduated this year).
14. Increased the SEA Reserve capacity via a cohort model.

What has your union done - cont. on p. 12



Not currently a full-share member?

Go to mft59.org, scroll down and click on the "Join MFT 59!" box. Fill out the online form by selecting the first option.

The voice for professional educators and students

Our purpose

Education Minnesota is the leading advocate for public education in Minnesota. Our 70,000 members work in pre-K-12 schools and higher education institutions statewide. They include:

- Education support professionals.
- Faculty at several university campuses, community and technical colleges.
- College students preparing for an education career.
- Retired educators who have devoted their lives to students.

Education Minnesota gives “voice” to the issues that affect educators and their students. We make sure our members’ voices are heard anywhere decisions get made that affect public education—whether it’s at the state Capitol, in Washington, D.C., or with local school administrators.

How we serve members

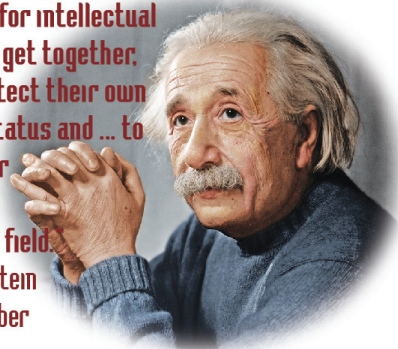
We organize members on a local basis. Education Minnesota has about 440 local unions statewide. Our locals help mentor new teachers, provide professional development, negotiate and maintain work contracts, and much more. Our 140 staff members in 16 offices statewide serve as resources to our locals.

Our leaders

Three teachers on leave from their classrooms lead our organization:

- President Denise Specht
- Vice President Paul Mueller
- Secretary-Treasurer Rodney Rowe

“I consider it important, indeed urgently necessary, for intellectual workers to get together, both to protect their own economic status and ... to secure their influence in the political field.”
—Albert Einstein
Union Member



Education Minnesota’s leaders are guided by our statements of principle, our strategic plan, and our constitution and bylaws.

Each spring more than 500 elected delegates meet to set policy and direction for our organization at our annual business meeting, the Representative Convention. Our governing board meets throughout the year to set dues, adopt a budget and carry out directives passed at the annual meeting.



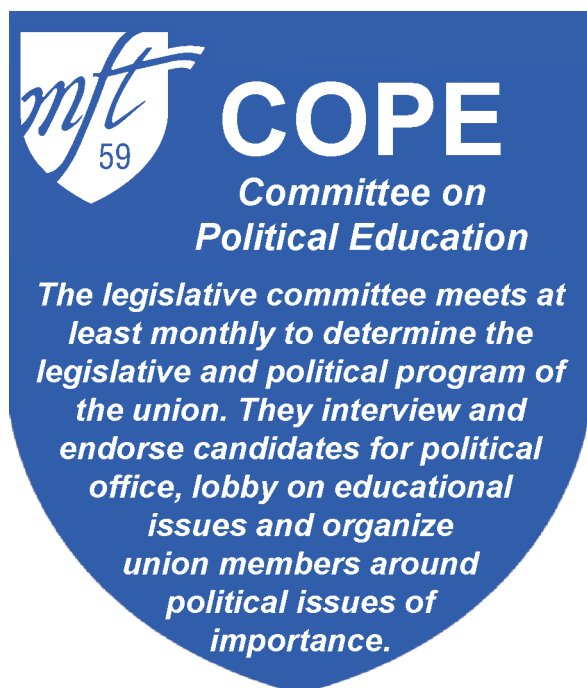
Our history

Education Minnesota was formed in 1998 as a result of the merger between the Minnesota Education Association and the Minnesota Federation of Teachers. MEA, originally called the Minnesota State Teachers Association, started in 1861. MFT began as the Grade Teachers Organization in 1898. Both MFT and MEA advocated for professional standards, improved working conditions and increased education opportunities for all students. On a national level, the MFT aligned itself with the American Federation of Teachers and the AFL-CIO while the MEA affiliated with the National Education Association. In 1991, MEA and MFT initiated merger discussions after both organizations recognized that they could be more effective working together than separately.

A national leader

Education Minnesota led the nation in bringing the two state education unions together. Since then, educators in Florida, Montana and New York have followed. Today, Education Minnesota members hold memberships with the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association and the AFL-CIO. The combined forces make Education Minnesota the strongest advocate for Minnesota educators and the students they teach.

Contact us at: Education Minnesota, 41 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55103; 651-227-9541; Website: educationminnesota.org ■



Political
Update

MFT school board candidate endorsements

On Wednesday, April 6, 2016 MFT 59 held a screening for Minneapolis School Board candidates. All declared candidates were invited to indicate their interest in the MFT endorsement by completing a public questionnaire, (all responses are available to view on the MFT website) and by screening with members of the COPE/Legislative committee. Directors Reimnitz and Asberry declined to complete a questionnaire, and declined to seek an endorsement from MFT.

In keeping with our commitment to increased community engagement, community members were invited to attend the screening, and submit a question in advance. Over fifty MFT members, MPS parents and delegates participated in this event.

Candidates were asked to define their positions on Education Policy, the role of Labor, Social Justice concerns, with a specific focus on the following criteria: consistent avocation for a strong public education system, commitment to equity, rejection of market-based education reform, past support for MFT and MFT values and a commitment to increased community engagement.

Based on these criteria, MFT 59 endorsed Director Kim Ellison for the At-Large seat, Kerry Jo Felder for District 2, Bob Walser for District 4 and Ira Jourdain for District 6. Districts 2, 4, and 6 are the West half of the city of Minneapolis.

On Sunday, April 10, 2016 the Minneapolis DFL held their city convention. Due in large part to the strong showing of MFT members, all four candidates received the DFL endorsement on the first ballot. Please continue to support our candidates throughout the upcoming race, and help elect a school board that will work to place parents, students and educators at the center of decision-making.

UNION MADE

**“United we
Bargain;
Divided we
Beg.”**

COPE drive

It's time for MFT's annual COPE Drive! COPE (Committee on Political Education) is how we pay for our political program. Voluntary COPE funds are separate from your regular dues. Because members contribute to COPE, we are able to run phone banks, host door knocks, produce literature and lobby at the Capitol. This year, in addition to facing a potentially difficult school board election, we face many challenges at the Legislative level – including retiring State Representatives and Senators and, of course, funding for Pre-K. Please consider contributing to COPE or increasing your contribution so that we can continue the great work MFT has done in the past and continues to do.

Political updates provided by MFT Organizer Lynne Bolton. She can be reached via email at LBolton@mft59.org

Referendum update

In addition to the Presidential and School Board elections, Minneapolis voters will be asked to renew the current referendum to support the Minneapolis schools. Continued funding is crucial to the health of our public schools. As educators, Minneapolis voters will look to us for information about the need to renew the referendum. Please consider hosting a house-party or volunteering this summer and fall to make this a success.



Legislative update

By Louise Sundin

Education bill riddled with flaws, shows some progress

Mpls Educators make their voice heard!

We know that educators need a seat at the table when laws are made because you, not politicians, know what's best for your students. MFT makes sure professional educators' voices are heard when policy decisions are made. And more and more members are taking advantage of that by testifying and lobbying at the Capitol this year.

As an example, Janet Kujat (see photo below), Minneapolis



Kindergarten teacher at Dowling, testified before the House and Senate Education Policy and funding committees on the need for Pre-K funding so Minneapolis families can get a good start with Pre-K classes in the public schools.

Heather Turngren of Minneapolis, told legislators that early childhood family education and adult basic education teachers should have access to the same protections as K-12 teachers.

A record number of union educators came to St. Paul this session to talk with lawmakers, telling their stories about how decisions made in the

Legislature affect their students and the profession. These efforts framed the education bill. But unfortunately, legislators hastily put together a final deal – which didn't include some of the suggestions educators provided.

The 2016 legislative session came to a chaotic end around some important education issues. The final bill contains flawed policies, serious omissions, and no increase in base per pupil funding. Of the 599-page final supplemental finance bill, over 240 pages were dedicated to education. However, it was jammed together in the back room without public input. While many provisions in the education section of the bill maybe good, there is no appropriation that helps all students. Although it is a non-funding year, the idea of providing very few funds for lots of individual initiatives seems to be a new trend. It is less costly to fund a laundry list of small initiatives with one-time money than to put money on the formula. And, the amounts appropriated are grossly mismatched to the needs.

What's in the bill(s)

Funding:

- Of the state's \$900 M projected budget surplus, the Governor dedicated \$62 M for education, the Senate Democrats earmarked \$48 M, and House Republicans \$0 for education in their initial budget proposals.
- \$25 M to expand early childhood options. This was originally money for voluntary pre-K, but was changed at the last minute. The appropriation for so-called pre-K, didn't include the important quality measure of requiring teachers who are licensed. Research has pointed to strong teacher qualifications as being one of the defining characteristics of high-quality pre-K programming.

Legislative update - cont.
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Addressing grievances and discipline

A central tenet of all collective bargaining agreements is due process. Due process requires that an employee have notice and an opportunity to respond to allegations made by the employer. It is not a coincidence that due

process is also a central tenet of our criminal justice system as enshrined in the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

The employer and the union establish and agree to grievance and discipline procedures. Nearly all collective bargaining agreements have provisions for

resolving grievances and disciplining employees. Those provisions are clearly set forth, in writing, in the collective bargaining agreement, which is distributed to all union members. Collective bargaining agreements only require that an employer follow procedures that are clearly laid out in the agreement when seeking to rep-

rimand, demote, or terminate an employee. A union job is not a "job for life." However, a union job does afford workers greater protection against unfair unilateral actions by employers. ■

Legislative update - from p. 9

- \$12.1 M in one-time matching grants over six years to help schools hire more school counselors, psychologists, nurses, social workers and chemical dependency counselors. This will do little to improve Minnesota's ranking as dead last among states in student/support staff ratios.
- \$33,000 in 2017 and \$1.45 M and \$750,000 in next biennium for school-linked mental health grants.
- \$1 M to create more full-service community schools across the state to help meet the needs of students and families.
- \$4.9 M to bring funding parity to non-metro school districts.
- \$2 M for early literacy programs and school readiness for children ages 16 months to 4 years.

Testing: Requires districts that do not have an agreement with their teachers' union regarding testing to establish a district assessment committee with an equal number of teachers and administrators and at least one parent. Although federal law requires the reading and math MCAs be given to children in grades 3-8 and once in high school, the district assessment committee would be given authority to recommend that other tests be added or removed from the testing calendar.

- Requires MDE to disaggregate student performance data by ESSA required categories.
- Approved several provisions to make standardized testing more transparent and accountable.
- Requires districts to publish a list/calendar of the tests for each student at the beginning of the school year.
- Makes it easier for parents who want to opt their children out of standardized testing by creating a universal opt-out form provided by the state education department.
- Creates a database where educators can report technical glitches in testing administration and new disclosure of social media surveillance by testing companies.
- Allows students to take either SAT or ACT and have exam fees covered.
- Requires MDE and MnSCU to develop

benchmarks on high school MCAs tied to career and college readiness.

Student discipline:

- Creates a Student Discipline Working Group to review Minnesota's Pupil Fair Dismissal Act. Education Minnesota supports this, but feels teachers and paraprofessionals are extremely underrepresented on this task force.
- Allows teachers to remove students from their class for violent or disruptive behavior. Requires school boards to report assaults on staff and what action, if any, administration decided to take. Notifies teachers if a student coming into their

- \$750,000 to Minneapolis YMCA to get individuals the credentials to become early childhood educators.

Student loan debt:

Allows all Minnesotans to receive a refundable tax credit for some of their student loan payments. The credit kicks in if an individual's student loan payments are more than 10 % of their adjusted gross income.

- Teachers get 75 % of that payment amount above the 10 % threshold in a refundable tax credit. Maximum credit is \$1,000.
- Changes state law so forgiven student loan debt is not considered income.
- Offers educators a refundable tax credit of up to \$2,500 for attaining a master's degree in their core content area.

"MFT makes sure professional educators voices are heard when policy decisions are made."

class has a history of violent behavior.

- Requires districts to report to MDE physical assaults on employees by students and MDE to report data annually.
- Provides \$2.75 M for school-wide PBIS to reduce use of restrictive procedures and increase positive practices.

Educator recruitment and retention:

Recognizes the teacher shortage by appropriating millions of dollars for student loan forgiveness, helping paraprofessionals earn teaching licenses and hiring more support staff, and adding school districts where teachers of color are underrepresented to the state's shortage area report. Four provisions will help MPS expand the diversity of teacher candidates:

- \$1.5 M for teacher residency programs like MPS program cited as a model for residency programs.
- \$2 M for teacher loan forgiveness for teachers in shortage area
- \$2.8 M for stipends for low-income teachers who go into shortage areas
- \$310,000 increase for Collaborative Urban Educator (CUE) program
- \$4.3 million to help paraprofessionals obtain teacher licenses and student teach in shortage areas
- \$270,000 Increase funding for American Indian Education Teacher prep grants

Teacher licensure:

Creates a teacher licensure task force made up of 12 members of the Legislature to review a state legislative auditor report that recommends big changes to the state's licensing system to make it less complex and confusing by consolidating functions into one entity. BOT must issue standard license to applicants who hold similar out-of-state teaching license, completes all exams, etc.

- \$250,000 to help the Board of Teaching for its operating shortfall.
- Requires at least one hour of suicide prevention best practices
- Allows BOT to issue waivers for Montessori teachers
- Allows BOT to grant three one-year waivers for CTE instructor
- BOT must offer alternative options for license renewal for NBC
- Requires BOT to maintain an online teacher application system

Education Content:

- Districts required to administer a civics test based on US Citizenship test. Students must score 30 out of 50.
- MDE must adopt most recent national physical education standards as state K-12 physical education standards.
- Details circumstances under which a student may be excluded from gym class.

Legislative update - cont. on p. 11

Legislative update - from p. 10

- Encourages districts to adopt character development programs.
- Creates career tech ed incentive aid for students who are enrolled in a certificate program up to \$1 M.
- Requires districts to report efforts to screen students for dyslexia and convergence insufficiency disorder.

Teacher Development and Evaluation:

Lawmakers failed yet again to pay for the state's mandate for teacher development and evaluation. Only \$10 M statewide increase in Q-Comp is a drop in a large bucket.

- Adds induction and mentoring for teachers in underrepresented classes.
- Adds "provide all enrolled students with improved and equitable access to more effective teachers."

School Governance:

- Requires schools to establish site teams and requires that the team have equal numbers of teachers and administrators and at least one parent.
- Details requirements of the agreements between districts and unions regarding the establishment and reporting of teacher governed schools.
- Funds planning grants for teacher-powered school up to \$50,000 and operation grants up to \$100,000 until \$500,000 total is spent.
- Education Innovation Partnership Collaborative Center one-time funding of \$500,000.

Equity and Diversity:

- \$1.5 M one-time funding for Girls in Action
- \$1.5 M to Dreamline Corps to expand programming in MPS.
- \$35 M for programs focused on employment, entrepreneurship, and education
- \$2 M for competitive grants focused on job training, skill development, internships, engagement of fathers, academic and behavioral interventions for low income and students of color.
- \$2 M for positive youth development, community engagement, legal services for organizations focused on Somali youth.
- \$880,000 to Indian OIC for programs on

improving educational outcomes and college readiness for American Indian students.

- Incentives for late-arriving EL learners to stay in school.
- Plus a dozen additional focused appropriations on equity and diversity.

What's not in the legislation

Base Funding:

No increase in basic per-pupil funding or compensatory funding or special education cross-subsidy for school districts.

Paperwork overburden:

The goal to create a system to reduce the paperwork burden and redundancy for special educators so they have more time to work with students was eliminated. The bill actually de-funded an online system to streamline paperwork for special education teachers, even though redundant paperwork is a contributing factor to the extreme shortage of special education teachers.

ECFE and ABE parity:

Changes to Minnesota law so ECFE and ABE positions are covered under the continuing contract law and Teacher Tenure Act did not make it into the final legislation. This would ensure our ECFE and ABE teachers are on the same playing field as their K-12 peers and receive the same protections.

Student data privacy:

Changes to Minnesota law to protect students from the misuse of their data by testing and other education technology companies hit the cutting-room floor.

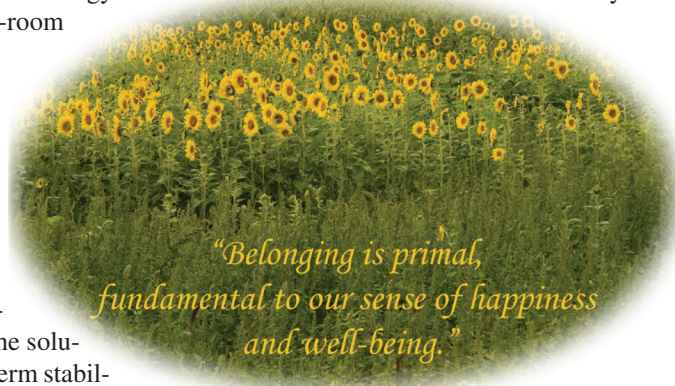
Pensions:

A comprehensive Teachers Retirement Association package of 'shared sacrifice' did not succeed. The sustainability package included commitments to being a part of the solution to improve the long-term stabil-

ity of the plan. A bill that did pass includes minor changes, one that will hit current retirees' pocketbooks – at least temporarily. Educator retirees will see their cost of living adjustment drop to 1% for one year. It did not include the 1% employers' contribution increase which costs an additional \$43 M for school districts to implement. Promises by LCPR to address the issue of sustainability next session. Thankfully, Governor Dayton vetoed this bill as being unfair to just one part of the solution.

What unions fought off

- A bill that would have stripped away many of the benefits of the Health Insurance Transparency and Accountability Act. HITA passed two years ago and has helped school employees across Minnesota get more affordable, quality health care by increasing competition and transparency in the insurance bidding process.
- Changes to unrequested leaves of absence (layoffs): State PELRA laws on ULAs remains the same.
- An attempt to create a neo-voucher system by increasing Minnesota's K-12 education expense credit and including private school tuition as a qualified expense was defeated.
- A nasty attempt by Steve Drazkowski (R) Mazeppa, to separate out the two state contracts and insert policies into the bill that would weaken the voice of public workers, including educators. The bill was supposed to ratify collective bargaining agreements for four state-employee groups that represent about 30,000 state workers. Drazkowski's changes would have stifled the voice of workers by limiting public employee unions' political activity. ■



What has your union done - from p. 6

15. Technology - no charge to replace broken/stolen items (reasonable care/precaution still expected, though!).
16. Restored Library book budget.

Voice Over Our Profession and Work

17. Community Partnerships Schools - allowing sites to create the schools they want and get out from under all of the district dictates - but still keeping the contract in place. Improvement of shared decision making at a site via a 67% voting process on major changes.
18. Academic Collaboration Group created to vet all new initiatives and review of Return on Investment on existing programs.
19. Reclaimed the original Professional Development Process along with return of the A of T process to ensure teaming and support is in place (more to follow).
20. Labor Management Committee for Library Media Services professionals along with IT and Teaching & Learning to work collaboratively on issues. Gives LMS a bigger voice.
21. Adjustment of Teacher Evaluation process for 2016-17 to make it meaningful and useful. (In the works.)
22. No forced placements into High Priority or SIG sites. Interview required - can say no.
23. Improved Special Ed Labor Management Committee work and increased in Special Ed professional meetings and professional learning efforts.
24. Special Ed/RSPs have choice over PDP Team, meetings, and goals.

Salaries and Benefits

25. Increased Reserve teacher pay from \$120 per day to \$160 - and more for long call.
26. Increased salaries progressively (even in tough budget years). Increased the new teacher/RSP starting salary - hit the \$40,000 mark and surpassed it. (It should be an \$85,000 starting salary - we did ask for that!)
27. New dental plan rates, especially family coverage, helped other bargaining unit employees to have access to the plan, too.

28. Wellness Incentive - one day of Sick Leave reimbursement for wellness activities.
29. Removed Employee Relation's cap on contribution to single and capped teacher's contribution to Plan 1 to \$600 max. Steady increases towards Family Health Insurance.

AND, last but not least...

Negotiated three Adult Education contracts that increased salaries and hourly wages along with providing staff with more voice and support for students.

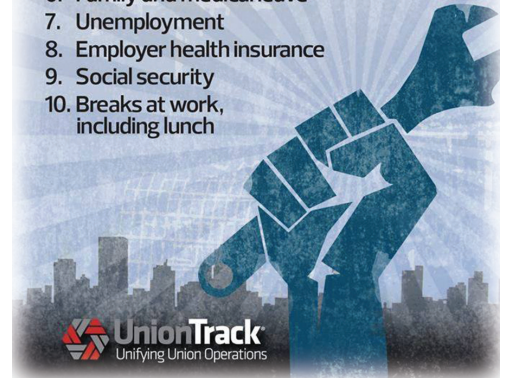
We must keep moving forward!

Negotiating a contract is about ensuring good things happen for students and the professionals who serve them - you! A lot of useful and important contract language has been negotiated over the years but we should never be satisfied because there is always more that can be done. It is up to all of us as union members to keep pushing forward a positive agenda by becoming an active participant in the MFT - in any capacity you can! If everyone pitches in just a little, it adds up to a lot. Go to your site's union meetings, participate in a MFT focus group or on a committee, take a MFT survey, invite the union leadership

Union Contributions

Did you know that labor unions made the following 10 things possible?

1. 8-hour workday and 40-hour work week
2. Paid sick leave, holidays and vacations
3. Overtime pay
4. Minimum wage
5. Child labor laws
6. Family and medical leave
7. Unemployment
8. Employer health insurance
9. Social security
10. Breaks at work, including lunch



to your school for a conversation, attend a member house meeting, show up at a MFT event, vote on your contract and in the elections, help with phone banking, go to community events and talk positively about our union and our schools! There are many ways to step up to keep us strong. The health and welfare of our union and profession depends on it.

Thanks for all you do and remember,
Onward and Upward! ■

Why does America need unions?

Since 1978, the percentage of American workers in labor unions has been cut in half.

Also since 1978, average pay has increased 997% for CEOs and 10.9% for workers.

COINCIDENCE?

OCCUPY DEMOCRATS

Thank a union: 36 ways unions have improved your life

Let's get one thing straight...

Employers and Corporations did not feel generous and decide to give you two days off every week to have a social/personal life. (We now call them weekends). Corporations did not just feel like being nice one day and give their employees paid vacations. CEOs didn't get together in a boardroom and say "Let's give our employees more rights at work" or "Maybe there should be laws to limit our power over an employee".

Virtually ALL the benefits you have at work, whether you work in the public or private sector, all of the benefits and rights you enjoy everyday are there because unions fought hard and long for them against big business who did everything they could to prevent giving you your rights. Many union leaders and members even lost their lives for things we take for granted today.

The right-wing attack on unions is nothing more than ignorance, lack of education, and propaganda.

If republicans would rather support corporations instead of organized groups of workers working to secure a fair work environment A.K.A a union, I ask them to walk the walk as well. Give up every benefit and right that you use that unions are responsible for.

Complete trust and submit yourself to the corporate agenda you fight for. Play by their rules with no influence from democrats or labor unions to try to force rights among the workers of this country. Dedicate your life to their life goal of making your company more money than the year before. Just understand that this may mean sacrificing the union fought rights you enjoy everyday. I mean, you don't want to be a hypocrite, do you? Like bashing unions on your union fought lunch break? Which means if you practice what you preach, you don't get a lunch break.

Corporations use to work employees 80+ hours a week, offer no breaks, hire children, offer horrid, unsanitary work conditions, paid literally next to nothing, and even murder. Not murder with a pen like they do today, but actual murder. They basically did whatever they wanted.

Thank a union - cont. on p. 15

- 1 Weekends
- 2 All Breaks at Work, including your Lunch Breaks
- 3 Paid Vacation
- 4 FMLA
- 5 Sick Leave
- 6 Social Security
- 7 Minimum Wage
- 8 Civil Rights Act/Title VII (Prohibits Employer Discrimination)
- 9 8-Hour Work Day
- 10 Overtime Pay
- 11 Child Labor Laws
- 12 Occupational Safety & Health Act (OSHA)
- 13 40 Hour Work Week
- 14 Worker's Compensation (Worker's Comp)
- 15 Unemployment Insurance
- 16 Pensions
- 17 Workplace Safety Standards and Regulations
- 18 Employer Health Care Insurance
- 19 Collective Bargaining Rights for Employees
- 20 Wrongful Termination Laws
- 21 Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967
- 22 Whistleblower Protection Laws
- 23 Employee Polygraph Protect Act (Prohibits Employer from using a lie detector test on an employee)
- 24 Veteran's Employment and Training Services (VETS)
- 25 Compensation increases and Evaluations (Raises)
- 26 Sexual Harassment Laws
- 27 Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)
- 28 Holiday Pay
- 29 Employer Dental, Life, and Vision Insurance
- 30 Privacy Rights
- 31 Pregnancy and Parental Leave
- 32 Military Leave
- 33 The Right to Strike
- 34 Public Education for Children
- 35 Equal Pay Acts of 1963 & 2011 (Requires employers pay men and women equally for the same amount of work)
- 36 Laws Ending Sweatshops in the United States

I'm a professional.

What can a union do for me?

Joining with your colleagues in a union at your workplace offers many benefits. On the job, your union brings together the collective strength of you and your co-workers to insure meaningful negotiations with management for an equitable contract. Negotiations are not limited to only wages and salaries, but can also include staffing and overtime, safety and health, cost of living raises, provisions for continuing education, adequate pensions, vacations, equitable promotion systems and transfer policies, and a workable grievance system. Through your union, you and your co-workers

oversee carrying out the provisions of the contract. If necessary, a union may take contract violations to third-party impartial arbitration.

Outside of the workplace, unions work for you as well. The status of your profession and the



well-being of the individual practitioner are affected not only by

employing institutions but also by government. Union organizations have been extremely effective in advocating on behalf of their members in the halls of government at the federal, state, and county levels. Every day unions work hard for their members in Congress, state legislatures, city hall, the courts and other departments and agencies of government. Additionally, unions offer professionals the opportunity to meet and interact with other professionals in their field or in related areas of work. ■

<http://dpeaflcio.org/professionals/what-can-a-union-do-for-me/>

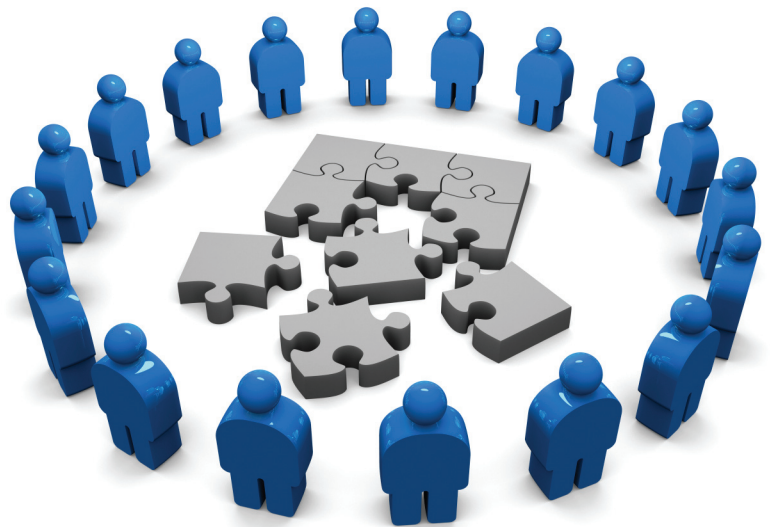


THE MINNEAPOLIS COMMITTEE OF THIRTEEN

*"advocating for Minneapolis teachers'
pension security"*

With your support, the Committee of 13 advocates for our defined benefit pensions. We work to make sure that you have the facts about your MPS/TRA defined benefit pension. We also make sure that the legislators who serve on Minnesota's Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement have up-to-date information on MPS/TRA pensions.

We provide facts that counter the biased information distributed by groups seeking to undermine our retirement security. You'll find up-to-date news from the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement, the Minnesota Legislature and Congress at <http://committeeof13.org>



"Be strong enough to stand alone, be yourself enough to stand apart, but be wise enough to stand together when the time comes."

— Mark Amend

Thank a union - from p. 13

This is what they were like before unions. Don't take my word for it, look it up. If we rid the world of unions tomorrow, who is to say that they won't go right back to the way they were merely 70 years ago? The GOP governor of Maine signed a bill to repeal child labor laws this year, maybe they are going back to their roots whether we have unions or not.

So conservatives, please practice what you preach and give up all these rights and leave the umbrella of these laws, for they were brought to you by unions (see list of the 36 items on page 13).

So will conservatives give up all 36 of these union fought rights? Will they stand by their rhetoric that unions are thugs and refuse to take benefits from these "thugs" or will they hypocritically carry on the diatribe that unions are ruining this country while enjoying their weekends and paid vacations?

OR...

Maybe they could just admit that while not perfect, like anything else, unions have done great things for working people that they use and benefit from everyday of their lives?

Maybe a conservative union-hating family got to have some of the best moments of their lives while on vacation from work, and they still got to come to a job still there waiting for them, because of unions?

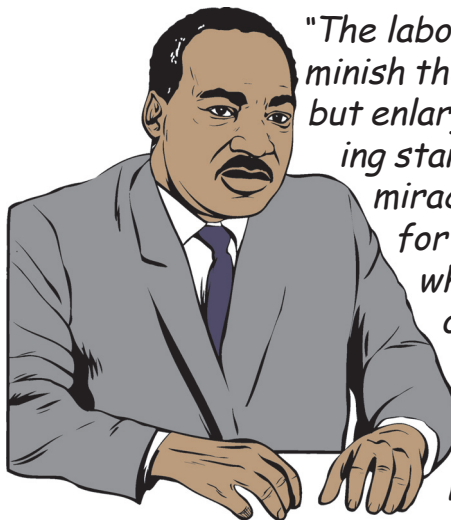
Maybe a conservative can't wait for their lunch break at work so they can turn on the radio and listen to Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck talk about how horrible unions are?

If you don't want to give up all your union fought rights and benefits at work, I understand. I don't want to either, that's why I'm pro-union and vote Democrat.

But maybe you could just admit that unions are not demons spawned from hell, and admit the FACT that they have improved your life in more ways than one?



Or am I asking too much? ■



"The labor movement did not diminish the strength of the nation but enlarged it. By raising the living standards of millions, labor miraculously created a market for industry and lifted the whole nation to undreamed of levels of production. Those who attack labor forget these simple truths, but history remembers them."

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.,
speech to AFL-CIO,
Dec. 11, 1961

We need your feedback!

As you persevere through another school year, we'd like you to take a few moments to let us know how we're doing.

What articles would you like to see this year? What items matter to you? Do you like success stories; do you prefer articles on the workings of MPS, or a combination of both? Do you want to know more about the legislative side of things, or is activism more your thing? Take a moment to let us know.

We'd also like to know if you have the time to write for us. Would you like the opportunity to help tell your stories to your fellow professionals? In short, we want to know what matters to you. We want to create a team of writing teachers who can carry a message either to the public at large, or to your co-workers, about the important work you all do.



This is *your* publication. To make it as successful as possible, we need to hear from you. Please contact Sue Backus, MFT First Vice President at subac001@live.com with your comments and suggestions. ■

Why wear union blue on Wednesdays?



Every Wednesday,

MFT members should wear union blue (**royal blue**) to show the following:

1. We believe in solidarity and unity because together, we can make a difference!
2. We will always stand up for what's best for students and our profession.
3. We have strong and important voices that need to be heard on the issues facing the school system, students, families, and the city.
4. We have solutions as well as ideas for innovation to continuously improve education and student outcomes.
5. We support the efforts of MFT leadership – if we see you in blue, we know you are behind the efforts to:
 - reduce class sizes, student loads, and caseloads
 - streamline the workload for effectiveness
 - support students and their needs
 - improve the quality of our school system overall
 - stop the over-testing of students
 - build trust and collaboration; increase collaboration
 - improve the culture and climate throughout the district
 - and, more...
6. We want to be recognized. Union blue becomes an easy way to identify Minneapolis Federation of Teachers members (as well as, our affiliates – Education MN (state union) and the national organizations – the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association).
7. We stand together even if we are not always in agreement; we stand with each other for the good of the whole. It is a great feeling when everyone wears blue - a sense of pride is created that in turn builds synergy. A shirt, sweater, tie, scarf, jacket - anything **blue** works. You can also find MFT Gear Wear at mft59.org



Let's wear blue on Wednesdays!

**Send a photo of MFT members wearing blue –
whether a few of you do or the whole staff –
take a snapshot and email to subac001@live.com**

**We will put the picture
on our mft59.org website! ■**

