

---

Union Meeting Minutes  
November 28, 2007

**President, Rob Panning-Miller, called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.**

The union hall was filled with "red!" Members are encouraged to wear red every Wednesday to show solidarity with their negotiations team. Attendees were encouraged to share the information heard tonight with colleagues at their sites.

**1. Announcements**

Rob distributed a Proposed Teacher Strategic Plan Recommendations response from the union. It was put together after having conversations with teachers and the executive board. It highlights things the district could do that would really make a difference in the district. There are five recommendations:

1. Focused reduction of class-size.
2. School Autonomy/Site-Based Management
3. Improve Parent and Community relationship through a focus on Pre-K and early Elementary.
4. Integration of City/County/State Social Services
5. Joint Committee to examine institutionalized racism.

Rob asked for feedback on this document.

The Education Minnesota Representative Convention will be held in March. Please consider submitting your name as a delegate. It's important to have the voice of Minneapolis teachers at this convention. The elections will be held in January.

## **2. Education Minnesota President**

Tom Dooher, President of Education Minnesota, gave his support to our negotiations efforts and explained what Ed MN can do for us. Ed MN did a crisis assessment and will provide funding to help us through the tough times.

There is strength in numbers, 70,000 teachers across Minnesota. Ed MN will show the district that they are in solidarity with MFT.

## **3. Negotiations Team**

The negotiations team was introduced: Rob Panning-Miller, Anne Lewerenz, Bonita Jones, Brionna Harder, Carla Korb, Frank Suppa, Janet Kujat, John Heegard, Lyle Young, Lynn Nordgren, Mike Bedard, Mike Leiter, Sue Backus and Teferi Fufa.

## **4. Issues Overview**

The district came out with their proposal on November 21. These are the five major areas of concern:

### **1. Seniority**

This issue was not a surprise. The district wants "Interview and Select" across the board. In essence, in the proposal presented, seniority doesn't exist. The "Interview and Select" process says that basically the principal and district have authority to hire and assign teachers to positions.

### **2. Salary Schedule**

The district proposed 0% both years and a one-time payment of \$1,500 that will not be added to base salary. They also want everyone to automatically be moved an ATPPS type system year two. The way ATPPS is run now would be changed significantly. For movement on this new schedule, they proposed 2 evaluations per year and credit for college credit, TAP and Pro-Pay only.

### **3. Health Insurance**

The district wants to take away "fully paid" single coverage insurance. After the first year, the teacher will pick up the increase... approximately \$650 for next year and that is likely to increase in the coming years as health insurance costs continue to rise.

#### 4. Retiree Health Insurance

Currently, retirees can buy into the district insurance plan until they reach Medicare age. The district gives them a yearly payment to supplement the cost. The district wants to stop giving this payment after this year. There will be no further "Early Retirement Incentives" or cash supplement payments towards insurance.

#### 5. Length of Day

The proposed language says that the district wants to increase the school day and year without additional compensation. The minimum school day would be 7  $\frac{3}{4}$  hours according to the proposed contract language. They could force you to work as many hours as they choose and let you go if you don't comply.

### **5. Organizing Committee**

A committee has been formed to plan strategies and events that will mobilize the membership in support of a contract settlement. The members of the Organizing Committee are: Tim Leach, chair, Bonita Jones, Greg Denysenko, Greg Nielsen, Christine Canard, Rebecca Miller, Adrienne Chivers and Janet Kujat.

Each steward was asked to take a poster supporting the negotiations team. The intent is to have all the members at every site sign it in red ink. The posters will be brought to the School Board rally on December 11. It is hoped that members will attend the rally in mass. Each person will receive a red t-shirt. More information about the time of the rally will be coming.

A list of School Board Members was distributed. Members are encouraged to call or email board members telling them that they support their negotiations team and expect respect for the work they are doing and a contract settlement that honors that. Do not email during the duty day. Using a home email address would be best.

## 6. Feedback & Discussion

On January 15, if we aren't settled, the district loses about \$1,000,000 a day. We need to be very vocal in our message to the district that we expect a decent settlement.

There was some discussion about "Work to Rule". "Work to Rule" means you only work during contractually defined duty day. After the defined day, you leave and don't do anything additional. It's very likely that we might ask members to do "Work to Rule" in December.

The superintendent gets a 3% raise this year and next with no evaluation!

We are not going to give up anything in regard to seniority. We need to look at what the real problems are and fix them. "Interview and Select" is not the answer to the district woes.

What is the timeline? We have applied for mediation in hopes that this will move the process along quicker. The first meeting with the mediator is November 30.

It was suggested that maybe the Union should take out an ad in the newspaper.

It was suggested that the teachers, both active and retired, that live in Minneapolis be targeted to get messages to the board, as constituents.

Relevant Bumper Stickers: *"The problems will not be solved by the minds that created them!"* *"If you're not angry, you're not paying attention!"*

We must have a sizable increase on the salary schedule. We have given up too much for too long.

It was suggested that we get out a chronological timeline of events for teachers to use when talking with neighbors. A list of talking points will be created.

It's important that the membership stands united, whether they agree with every strategy or not.

Members are encouraged to attend the district-wide staff meeting on Thursday, November 29, to discuss the strategic planning recommendations. The meeting will be held in the auditorium at Anne Sullivan Communication Center. There are two sessions: 2:45 and 4:30. It's important that the teacher's voices are heard before the board adopts the plan in December.

You can also attend a community Conversation about the Strategic Plan on Monday, Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. This will be at the Minneapolis Urban League at 2100 Plymouth Avenue North.

Members should also attend next Tuesday's School Board meeting (Dec. 4) at 6 p.m. and WEAR RED.

**The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 pm. There were over 200 members in attendance!**