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Magnifier

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What Does the Union Do for Me?

One of the most frequent comments heard from members “in the trenches” are variations on the theme, “what’s the union doing for me” or “is being a union member worth the price?” When it comes to wages and benefits, the answer is a resounding **YES!** A 2003 study by the Economic Policy Institute (http://www.epi.org/publications/entry/briefingpapers_bp143/) reports “that Unions raise wages of unionized workers by roughly 20% and raise compensation, including both wages and benefits, by about 28%.” The study goes on to state, “Unions play a pivotal role both in securing legislated labor protections and rights such as safety and health, overtime, and family/medical leave and in enforcing those rights on the job.”

Still, the question is often asked, “What about *my* dues dollars?” As with any service-oriented organization, a large portion of the UniServ budget is related to personnel costs. Approximately 75% of the budget pays the salary and fringe benefits for the UniServ Professional and Associate Staff employees. What do you get for this? Staff services are many and varied. The goal is to provide you and the local/bargaining unit with ideas, information, training, consultation, and representation.

The services provided by the UniServ staff (services that are not readily accessible to nonunion employees) include, but are not limited to, the following:

Negotiations Assistance related to:

- Contract Evaluations
- Surveying the Membership
- Coordinating Negotiations
- Goal Setting
- Language Writing
- Fringe Benefits
- Costing the Package
- Analyzing the School Budget and Related Data
- Negotiations Strategy
- Verbal Skills Training
- Negotiations Law
- Internal/External PR
- Mediation/Impasse Resolution
- Crisis Management

Contract Maintenance Assistance regarding:

- Negotiating the Grievance Clause
- Grievance Committee
- Structure/Authority
- Grievance Committee Training
- Writing the Grievance
- Representation at any level, if needed
- Arbitration Assistance
- Legal help, if needed
- Information on Current Arbitration Cases

Legal Rights Assistance related to:

- Information on Members Rights
- Training for Member Representation
- Unemployment Claims/Appeals
- Health, Dental, and LTD Insurance Claims
- Worker’s Compensation Claims
- Family and Medical Leave
- Questions/Appeals
- Harassment Claims
- DPI Certification Questions
- Layoffs
- Accusations of Physical and Sexual Abuse
- Representation/Consultation for Hearings
- Help in Filing Equal Rights Cases
- Legal Referrals, Assistance if needed

Group Legal Services Program:

- Political Action
- Help with Conducting Political Campaigns
- Information on Bills in Legislature
- Information on Legislators’ Voting Records
- Ideas for Political Action Committee Activities
- Education about Government

Professional Development:

- PI 34 Licensing Support
- National Board Certification Support

UNE Member Testifies Against Bill to Regulate Restraints for Students

Teachers and Education Support Professionals from across Wisconsin stepped up to testify at a Senate Education Committee hearing on February 18, 2010 regarding a proposed bill that could pose a risk to the safety of school children as well as school staff.

The bill, [SB 468](#), would prohibit seclusion and severely restrict instances in which educators could use physical restraint or a timeout. Under the bill, physical restraint may only be used in the case of an emergency, and only if other less intrusive interventions have failed. Many conditions are also placed on the use of timeouts including not allowing educators to threaten a timeout to obtain control of a student's behavior.

Current law allows school personnel to use reasonable and necessary contact to maintain an orderly and positive learning environment and defers to the judgment of school personnel in exercising that right. The proposed legislation would severely restrict an educator's ability to exercise that judgment and prohibits or puts so many conditions on the use of restraint, seclusion, and even time-outs that educators may hesitate to intervene when quick action is needed to protect school safety.

Joining WEAC President Mary Bell in testifying against the proposed legislation were several educators from across the state, including UNE member **Troy Polson**, a **Special Education teacher in DePere** for almost a decade. Polson says he does everything he can to avoid using physical restraint on kids, but there are times when other measures don't work. He told a State



UNE Member Troy Polson, a Special Education Teacher in De Pere, testifies before a Senate Education Committee against SB 468.

Senate Panel on Thursday (February 18) that the consequences can be violent, describing incidents where "out of control" students have bit, scratched, and thrown and tipped over furniture and books during tantrums, with little regard to others safety or property. Polson says he's seen classrooms that look like "a tornado touched down" after such outbursts.

Adapted from WEAC.org, "News From the Capitol", 2/19/10.

Dinner with Area Legislators

United Northeast Educators (UNE), together with Bayland Educators and the Green Bay Education Association (GBEA), held a dinner with area Legislators on Monday, March 1, 2010 at the Comfort Suites in Green Bay.

Over 120 members, members' spouses, school district administrators and UniServ staff attended the event. Following a cocktail mingling session and banquet dinner, the legislators responded to questions prepared in advance and offered from the floor. Some of the topics covered included national health care reform, school finance reform and the Employee Free Choice Act.



Legislators respond to questions at the annual UNE/Bayland/GBEA Dinner with Area Legislators. From left: Craig Moser (representative for Steve Kagen—8th AD), Ted Zigmunt (2nd AD), Jim Soletski (88th AD), Tom Nelson (5th AD), Robert Cowles (2nd SD). Not pictured: Dave Hansen (30th SD).

All legislators within the geographic area covered by UNE, Bayland and GBEA were invited to attend the dinner. We sincerely thank the following legislators for attending:

- ✓ Senator Robert Cowles, 2nd SD
- ✓ Senator Dave Hansen, 30th SD
- ✓ Representative Ted Zigmunt, 2nd AD
- ✓ Representative Tom Nelson, 5th AD
- ✓ Representative Jim Soletski, 88th AD

Thanks also to the following representatives from Congressman Steve Kagen's (8th CD) office:

- ✓ Craig Moser, District Director
- ✓ Gail Garrity-Reed, Special Projects Coordinator

And last, but not least, a big thank you to all of the UNE members and their spouses who took time out of their busy schedules to attend this important event.



Support the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education

With so much going on in our own communities and at the State Capitol, it is sometimes easy to forget that what goes on in Washington, D.C. also has a big impact on our schools. The truth is that the federal government can and does get very involved in how we run and fund public education in this country.

One prime example is the “No Child Left Behind” law, which desperately needs some common sense revisions and full funding. On a more positive note, there was last year’s federal stimulus package, which helped save or create 325,000 education jobs in the country and provided \$25 billion in school construction bonds. We now need an Emergency Education Jobs Proposal to save and create jobs during 2010 and 2011.

It is very important that we work to elect federal office holders who believe that every school should be a great public school and are willing to support legislation to make it happen. The way we support candidates like this is through the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, our Political Action Committee or PAC.



The fund is made up of voluntary contributions from current and retired NEA members, their families and NEA/state affiliate staff members. By law, only voluntary contributions (never

dues dollars) can be given to federal candidates. And contributions made to state and local PACs cannot be put into the federal fund because they can only be used to support and advocate for candidates running for state and local office.

Every dollar contributed goes directly to electing pro-public education candidates. The contributions do not pay any administrative or fundraising costs. The funds go to help both Democrats and Republicans who are truly strong supporters of education.

In the next month or two, you will be asked by one of your colleagues to support the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education. Please consider a contribution of \$36—\$3 a month in the course of a year—or however much you feel you can afford. It will be a very important investment in the future of public education in Wisconsin and throughout the country.

This is an 11.29 communication with WEAC members, Federal Statute CFR 100.8 (b)(4)

When Must Taxes Be Paid on IRA and Employer-Sponsored Retirement Funds?

By Tax Management Services, Inc.

Traditional IRAs and most employer-sponsored retirement plans (i.e., **your WRS pension**) are tax-deferred accounts, which mean they are typically funded with pre-tax or tax-deductible dollars. As a result, taxes are not payable until funds are withdrawn, generally in retirement.



Withdrawals from tax-deferred accounts are subject to income tax at your current tax rate. In addition, withdrawals taken prior to age 59½ are subject to a 10% federal income tax penalty.

If you made nondeductible contributions to a traditional IRA, you have what is called a “cost basis” in the IRA. Your cost basis is the total of the nondeductible contributions to the IRA minus any previous withdrawals or distributions of nondeductible contributions. The recovery of this basis is not seen as taxable income.

Roth IRA’s are an exception. Roth accounts are funded with after-tax dollars; thus qualified distributions (after age 59½ and the account has been held for at least five years) are free of federal income tax.

Traditional IRAs, most employer-sponsored retirement plans, and 403(b) plans are subject to annual required minimum distributions (RMDs) that must begin after the account owner reaches age 70½. Failure to take RMDs triggers a 50% federal income tax penalty on the amount that should have been withdrawn. Roth IRAs are exempt from RMDs.

When you begin taking distributions from your retirement accounts, make sure to note any required beginning dates and the appropriate distribution amount in order to avoid unnecessary penalties.

For more Tax Tips, visit our “Learning Center” at www.TMSmoney.com Select “Tax Library.”

Questions? Contact Tim Majewski, (920) 432-1985, timm@TMSmoney.com. Tax Management Services is proud to be your UNE Preferred Provider.

The next step in Moving Education Forward

School funding continues to be our union's number one priority, and you can help in Moving Education Forward by joining actions in your community to raise awareness of school funding reform.

This coming April 19-23 is Education Forward Action Week. It's a way for us to show our community and our elected officials how school funding problems have impacted our schools. We need to show our district's parents and family members that class sizes are growing and course offerings are being cut back. We need to explain to our state legislators that the state school funding formula is putting too much of a burden on local taxpayers to fund education.

In short, our students need your help. Reach out to your local union president to see what's being done in your district. The first action as part of the Moving Education Forward effort is for your local union to do an assessment of how school funding has affected your school and to have your colleagues and community members sign a resolution supporting reform. The next action is to engage the community in why school funding reform is needed. And the third action is to tell lawmakers what they can do to help our state's students.

There's much we can do to Move Education Forward, and it's time to take the next step. Your local president and UniServ Director have information about actions being organized to educate our community and our lawmakers that we need a better way to fund our schools. Some of it is as simple as writing a postcard or wearing a button. Reach out to your local president or UniServ Director to see how you can help out. You can also visit www.weac.org/schoolfunding to learn more about how we're Moving Education Forward.



UNE Activity Calendar

March 16 - Negotiators Meeting
(Bay Negotiators & ESP negotiators)
5:30 p.m. UniServ Office

April 2 - Spring Holiday—Office Closed

April 13 - Bob Moeller's Financial Planning
6:30 p.m. Lombardi Middle School

April 14 - UNE Board Meeting
5:00 p.m. UniServ Office

Pre-WEAC RA
7:00 p.m. UniServ Office

April 15-16 - WEAC Professional Staff Meeting
Madison

April 20 - Bay Area Negotiators Meeting
6:00 p.m. UniServ Office

April 21 - M&O ESP Meeting
5:30 p.m. Holiday Inn, Kelly Lake

April 23-25 - WEAC RA
KI Center, Green Bay

April 26 - BE/UNE Legislative Meeting
5:00 p.m. TBD

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April 15th Isn't Going Away

- Income Tax Prep
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- Small Business Accounting

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