

Life without MEA? See it now – in Wisconsin

MEA is the only organization with enough people behind it to resist the move to cash in on the \$14 billion a year spent on public schools. This is why we've been under attack for so long: the corporations behind the Mackinac Center want us out of the way so they can monetize the public schools through vouchers and on-line schools.

Right to Work was part of this as was banning payroll dues deduction, but the death blow in other states has been outlawing collective bargaining itself. In Wisconsin, membership fell 60% when Gov. Scott Walker banned collective bargaining in 2011.

When bargaining is outlawed, it is sometimes replaced by an institutionalized version of collective begging, usually called "Meet and Confer." Here's a Meet and Confer notice from a Texas school district website:

What is consultation?

Because collective bargaining is illegal for public school employees, many districts have a consultation policy that allows a school board to "meet and confer" with educators about educational policy and employment conditions. This is different than collective bargaining and therefore legal because employees' input is considered advisory; there is no binding legal contract and the school boards make any final decisions.

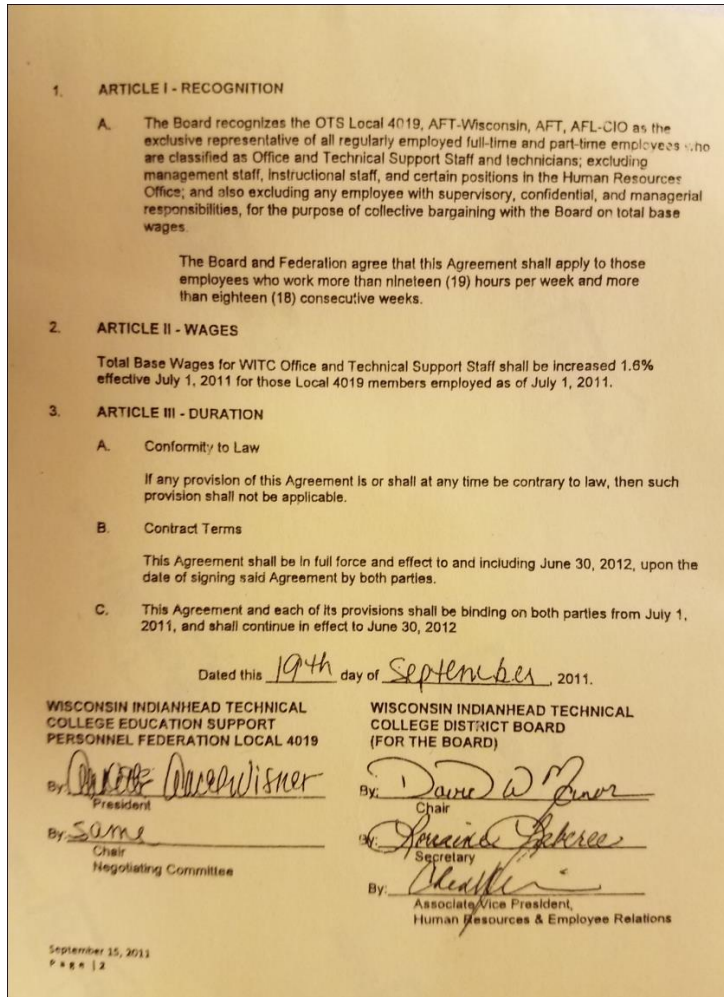
Meet and Confer is usually formalized into scheduled meetings, as they are in Janesville, Wisconsin:

School District of Janesville					
Meet and Confer					
Wednesday, April 3, 2013					
4:00 p.m.					
Purpose: Communication and Statutory Posting		Facilitator: Varies with agenda item			
		Note Taker: Debra Blazer		Posted: April 2, 2013	
Date: April 3, 2013		Time: 4:00 p.m.		Location: Educational Services Center 527 S. Franklin Street	
Invitees: James Degan; Jose Camillo; John Love; Tracy Schenk; Donna Stenner; Debra Griffith; James Reif; David Parr; James Millard; James Dulin; Alison Bjoin; Angela Lynch; Teresa Rauscher; Steven Huth; Kevin Murray; Kristin Hesselbacher; Bill Sodemann; Keith Pennington; Mary Ann Kahl; Karen Schulte; Amanda Harper; Bill Boyd and Barb Boyd.					

Item	Pillar	Information, Discussion or Action	Topic	Presenter:	Time
1.			Open Meeting	Bill Sodemann Stephen Sperry	
2.			Safety Message	Yolanda Cargile	3 min.
3.	People	Discussion	Discussion on Health Plan and Dental Plan	Bill Sodemann Mary Ann Kahl Bill Boyd	5 min.
4.	People	Discussion	Discussion on Voluntary Benefits and Other Benefits Provided by the Board	Bill Sodemann Mary Ann Kahl	5 min.

5 minutes set aside for listening to Health and Dental coverage concerns.

In Wisconsin, the repeal of the collective bargaining law left just one subject bargainable: wages, and even then only up to an inflationary increase. As a result, contracts in that state can run a single page:



There are currently 300 schools, mostly religious, that receive vouchers in Wisconsin. Voucher programs were expanded in 2011 after the bargaining ban took effect and [funding for them is expected to grow](#).

The lesson here is that the long range well-being of your students, your schools and your career depend on resisting the push to weaken your union. Remain an active member. Tell this story. Follow [MEAMatters](#) on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). Friend MEA on [Facebook](#) and on [Twitter](#).

And get politically active. Activism is growing every day. Sign up for MEA's [Capitol Comments](#). When the call comes to fight legislation, make the call and write the letter. In the next election cycle, knock doors and make phone calls.

Join the fight to keep public schools public.