

United Teachers of Dade
2200 Biscayne Boulevard
Miami, Florida 33137

UTD Council of Stewards Meeting
November 20, 2008

Approved Minutes

This regular meeting of the Council of Building Stewards was called to order by President Aronowitz at approximately 6:00 p.m. June Johnson led the Pledge of Allegiance. A moment of silence was observed on behalf of two recently deceased members: Dr. Arletta Young, former UTD Steward and Ms. Genevieve Yarnold, former UTD First Vice President, who retired in 1998.

Adoption of Agenda: It was properly moved and seconded to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: It was properly moved and seconded to adopt the minutes of October 16, 2008 as presented. Motion carried.

Agenda

Special Item: President Aronowitz acknowledged Ms. LaKenya Sharpe, UTD Steward, Math and Science Teacher at Van E. Blanton Elementary school, who is the recipient of the \$25,000 Milken Family Foundation, Education Award.

Ms. Sharpe addressed the Council of Stewards and stated it was an honor to be representing UTD and the UTD Black Caucus in getting the award. President Aronowitz reminded the Council of Stewards that all Caucuses are opened to all members of the United Teachers of Dade.

President's Report: Karen Aronowitz

Health Insurance Update

President Aronowitz reminded the Council of Stewards that funds for salary increases and health insurance come from the same "pot of money." According to Dick Hinds, the new MDCPS Director of Budget and Operations, the shortage of funds is worse than was reported previously. President Aronowitz stated that the District has indicated that the health insurance increase is 9.2%, and the District continuously keeps constructing the Budget without putting UTD at the center – they have not offered any money for health care increases. President Aronowitz stated that we have scheduled another round of bargaining for health insurance, but the earliest we could conclude would be in March and we will remain under the current health care coverage. President Aronowitz reminded the Council of Stewards that as the District continues to pay for insurance, this decreases the amount of monies available to bargain for our salaries. It costs \$26 million for health insurance for all employees; UTD's portion of that is \$ 18.2 million.

President Aronowitz reminded the Council of Stewards that whatever is negotiated in health care insurance must be voted on by our bargaining unit members. Depending on what the district will be able to offer we could be at another impasse with this issue.

Impasse Hearing Update cancelled and rescheduled for 12/15/08 and 12/16/08

President Aronowitz reported that due to a new Superintendent, the District asked for a continuance, and the Magistrate granted it, over our objections. The new hearing is set for December 15-16, 2008 at the School Board. Once again, President Aronowitz reminded the

Council of Stewards that we are fighting for the same pot of money – the district has allocated no money for the collective bargaining agreement and health insurance. President Aronowitz stated that we will continue to fight and get the community involved. President Aronowitz also stated that in reality, depending on the State budget, the School Board can call a fiscal emergency even if we win.

School Board Meeting Update

President Aronowitz stated that at the last School Board meeting, Dr. Sol Stinson was voted on to be the Chairperson and Dr. Martha Perez the Vice Chair. President Aronowitz added that Ana Rivas Logan made it clear at the School Board meeting that she would not consider the Budget to be balanced until teachers got their contracted raises.

Legislative Session

President Aronowitz reported that our work will begin right after Thanksgiving -- we want every legislator in Miami-Dade County to know the teachers in their district. We will be sending teams to keep a close watch on how each legislator votes, and to tell legislators how to vote on issues that affect public education. We will be very proactive this legislative session when it begins in March and we need everyone's support in order to make a big impact.

Discussion followed.

Differentiated Accountability

Dr. Randy Biro, Director of Educational Policy, explained the Differentiated Accountability Model and the impact it is having on the most at-risk schools. Dr. Biro reported that at the present time we have four Intervene schools, schools that are most at-risk. She stated that UTD representatives have visited and spoken to the faculty at one of these schools and asked if the district had provided them with any additional support, and the answer was "no". As a matter of fact, there is a shortage of paper at the school, some teachers could not get Teacher Manuals for required subjects and one teacher remarked that she had more observers in her class in one week than she has seen in her thirty years of teaching. Dr. Biro also stated that if the schools continue to be an "F" they can be closed and reopened by the district with different teachers and administrators; it could close and be reopened as a Charter School or multiple Charter schools, or it can be closed and reopened by a Management Company.

Dr. Biro stated that Differentiated Accountability is a very confusing, punitive program and not all of the information being given is even understood by the parties implementing it. Stewards are encouraged to contact Dr. Biro and their UTD Staff Organizers for answers to questions or concerns.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report: Fedrick C. Ingram

President Aronowitz stated that since Mr. Ingram is out of town, Ms. Gladys Podnar, Director of Finance and Operations would give the report.

Financial Management Review

Ms. Gladys Podnar, Director of Finance and Operations, reviewed the Financial Management Report for the First Quarter 2008-2009 (July, August and September) in its entirety with the Council of Stewards. This report will be placed on the UTD Web site.

Discussion followed.

Ms. Podnar also thanked the Stewards who had attended and participated in the Budget training presentation she gave at the Stewards Training session.

President Aronowitz thanked the Stewards who volunteered and took the time to attend the Steward Training session – she is aware that we are facing hard times, but membership is the livelihood of this Union and we need to maintain membership in order to continue the programs that we offer.

Discussion followed.

First Vice President's Report: Artie Leichner

EESAC Monies

Vice President Leichner reminded the Council of Stewards that EESAC monies from some schools had been taken by the administration and he acknowledged Rhonda Simms for bringing this matter to our attention. Mr. Leichner stated he has met with Dick Hinds, M-DCPS Budget office, and he has been assured that monies will be returned. Mr. Leichner asked Stewards to check with their EESAC Chairpersons and find out if the monies have been returned, if they have not, please let Artie know.

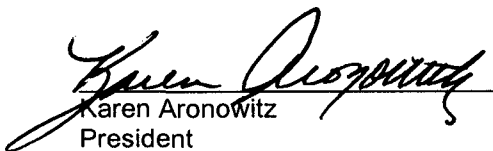
Mr. Leichner stated that lay-offs continue to happen. He added that although the 93 suggestions that UTD presented to the prior MDCPS administration were dismissed as having no value, the new Superintendent is saying our suggestions do have value. The new Superintendent is also looking at all salaries for those working downtown and is making personnel changes.

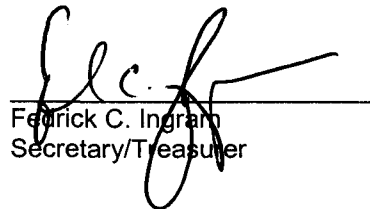
Mr. Leichner reported the UTD leadership is continuing their school visitations, and we need to stand together during these difficult times.

Discussion followed.

Adjournment

With nothing further to discuss, President Aronowitz wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving holiday and the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.


Karen Aronowitz
President


Frederick C. Ingram
Secretary/Treasurer