

United Teachers of Dade
2200 Biscayne Boulevard
Miami, Florida 33137

Council of Building Stewards Meeting
February 19, 2009

Unapproved Minutes

This regular Council of Building Stewards meeting was called to order by President Aronowitz at approximately 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Honorable Kendrick Meek.

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

Adoption of Minutes: It was moved by Thomas Nunn and properly seconded to adopt the minutes of January 15, 2009 as presented. Motion Carried. It was properly moved and seconded by Thomas Nunn to amend the minutes of February 5, 2009 to include discussion on working to the contract. Motion carried.

Agenda

Special Item: The Honorable Kendrick Meek

Congressman Kendrick Meek addressed the Council of Stewards, thanking UTD for supporting his candidacy. He said that it was a bold move taken by the UTD leadership, and he promised that he would be the best when he wins in 2010. Congressman Meek also stated that we have a battle to fight: Teachers are essential just like the firefighters, and it always seems that when there is a Budget shortfall, education and health pay the price. Congressman Meek thanked the UTD leadership for the endorsement and he looks forward to being an instrument of change and to ensuring that education is properly funded.

President Aronowitz announced that we will have the regular business meeting of the Council of Stewards this evening, and then we will break into smaller groups to continue working on recommendations and actions in order to make sure that the School Board honors their commitment to us.

Special Recognition: James Thompson, Teacher Excellence Award Winner, International Technology Education Association

President Aronowitz recognized James Thompson, Steward at Hialeah Senior High School, the recipient of the Teacher Excellence Award from the International Technology Education Association.

Mr. Thompson addressed the Council of Stewards stating that he has been a member of UTD for the past thirty years and he is very proud to be recognized and stand in front of his constituents at UTD.

Special Report: Dionne Bryant, UTD Steward at Miami Norland Senior High School

Ms. Bryant addressed that Stewards and explained how she was involuntarily transferred before Christmas to John F. Kennedy Middle School. Ms. Bryant stated that she was returned to Miami Norland Senior High School, thanks to Ms. Smith the Reading Coach, the efforts of UTD staff Michael Molnar and Frieda Griffith (her school Organizer) and the UTD leadership.

President's Report: Karen Aronowitz

2-Day Issue

President Aronowitz reported that the district is trying to build reserves that are not mandated by the law. The fact is, that if they fall below 2%, then they have to report to the Commissioner of Education and they do not want to have the DOE come and review the District. President Aronowitz proceeded to read letters and faxes received from the district regarding proposed dates for collective bargaining, to which we have not responded. President Aronowitz reiterated that UTD will not voluntarily open the contract – there are different ways that UTD can be called into bargaining – if the FEFP is not sufficient, the district can declare fiscal urgency which they do not want to do because then the State would come in. President Aronowitz also stated that when they voted on the E item at the last School Board meeting, they essentially voted to take away \$25.5 million from the salary pot – so there is no point in opening collective bargaining when the School Board actually has already voted on the item.

Collective Bargaining Team

President Aronowitz reminded the Council of Stewards that she had asked for people who would be interested in serving on the collective bargaining team to submit their names. President Aronowitz stated that she would be selecting ten people, in addition to the Legal Counsel, Officers, and others that serve on the team. The other 390 who submitted their names will be part of the team which means if we are called into bargaining all 390 members will be attending, but only ten will be able to sit at the bargaining table. President Aronowitz stated that it would be very unlikely that M-DCPS would release the 400 members of the team, so we will be asking that sessions take place in the evening.

President Aronowitz also stated that once you are selected to be part of the collective bargaining team, you must attend the training sessions – they will be mandatory.

The following names were drawn and selected for the UTD Collective Bargaining Team: Iliana Herrera, Angela Gonzalez, Timothy Randall, Isaac Catineira, Michele Rubin, Karla Mats.
Alternates: Andrew Carr, Vincent Davis, Edwina Vincent, Iciar Maiz.

Black History Celebration (2/21/09)

President Aronowitz reminded the Council of Stewards of the upcoming Black History Celebration being held on February 21, 2009 at Miami Jackson Senior – Reg Weaver, will be the guest speaker.

Membership Picnic (3/14/09)

The UTD Annual Membership Picnic will be held March 14, 2009 from 12 to 4:00 p.m. at Tropical Park – all members are invited to participate but must RSVP.

Education Rally in Orlando, Florida (2/28/09)

President Aronowitz reminded the Council of Stewards that UTD will be participating in the Education Rally. We will be renting buses for the event – the cost is \$15 per participant and lunch will be provided. Members interested in participating are asked to contact David Pack of the UTD Staff.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report: Fedrick C. Ingram

Financial Management Review for the Second Quarter (October, November, December 2008 and Year- to- Date)

Secretary/Treasurer Ingram explained the key financial points of the Management Review report to the Council of Stewards. Secretary/Treasurer Ingram reported that our FTE's for the month of December, 2008, were 13,553, and for the month of February 2009 our FTE's were 13,542 –the UTD Budget is based on an FTE count of 14,450.

Secretary/Treasurer stated that if there are any questions regarding the Financial Management Review report– to please feel free to contact him or Ms. Gladys Podnar.

First Vice President's Report: Artie Leichner

Substitute Survey

First Vice President Leichner stated that over 44% of our members had responded to the Substitute Survey and he will be sharing the information with the Superintendent.

Balanced Billing

Mr. Leichner stated that he has been receiving calls regarding hospitals sending bills for the difference the insurance does not pay. Mr. Leichner reminded the Council that insurance companies have pre-negotiated agreements with the hospitals. Mr. Leichner stated that if members receive a bill from a hospital that does not look right, to please forward the information.

Update on EESAC Monies

Mr. Leichner reported that he was not going to waste dues money at the local level regarding this issue – he will be turning the information over to the Inspector General to investigate M-DCPS.

UTD Action Plan Discussions

President Aronowitz stated that the district expects us to play in the sand box – that we made noise at the last School Board meeting and that we would go away – we will not go away and we cannot relent. We will be asking all of our members to continue attending School Board meetings. We will be distributing flyers in the community and in special events being held throughout Dade County to properly inform the community at large of what is going on with the district and the Budget.

The Stewards were given thirty minutes to work on their actions plans – following wish they discussed their recommendations, plans and activities. President Aronowitz also reported on activities /action plan that UTD is involved in.

President Aronowitz also stated that UTD will continue to operate within the law -- if individuals choose to work to the contract that will be their choice. President Aronowitz reiterated that there are people out their that would love to take legal action against UTD and shut us down – and we will not endanger the Union.

Adjournment

It was properly moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Karen Aronowitz
President

Fedrick C. Ingram
Secretary/Treasurer