

MSCF Minute



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Bargaining

by Kevin Lindstrom, MSCF president and chief negotiator

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For the first 15 years of MSCF's existence, it seemed like we were in a constant state of contract bargaining. One round would finish, well after the expiration of the previous contract, and it would be time to start on the next round. That pattern changed with the settlement of the 2015-17 contract, which was completed last January and expires June 30, 2017.

We haven't talked much about bargaining over the course of the past year or so. Well, that's about to change. It's time to get ready to negotiate the 2017-19 contract.

As we are required to do by contract language, we sent notice to the system office last fall of our desire to initiate bargaining for the 2017-19 contract. Since that time, the bargaining team has been meeting to begin preliminary planning for the process. We anticipate meeting with the Minnesota State team sometime later this spring.

The bargaining team has two activities planned to engage you in the process and to gather your feedback. The first activity is the distribution of a bargaining survey. The surveys should go in the mail,

to your home address on file, either late this week or early next week. You should have yours no later than the end of next week. The turnaround time is tight, with the completed surveys due back in our office by February 15. We ask that you fill the survey out as soon as you receive it and put it back in the mail in the envelope provided.

The second activity we plan to use to gather your feedback is a "Contract Congress," which will be held on Saturday, February 25 at Anoka Technical College. Each chapter is invited to send two representatives to the Congress. Your chapter president has received a couple of emails about this event, including a call for participants.

Three members of the bargaining team, along with our field staff and bargaining specialists from Education Minnesota, have been meeting to plan the Congress. Your chapter will be receiving additional communications from that group in the coming days. Included in the communications will be prompts to use in a local meeting for the purpose of providing your local

representatives with feedback to carry to the Congress. At the end of the day on the 25th, we intend to have heard, processed, and prioritized your feedback for use by the bargaining team.

The MSCF Membership Engagement and Recruitment Committee (MERC) will be observers at the Contract Congress. Bargaining is one of the topics around which we can do a good deal of organizing. Getting this group involved early will likely help our efforts as the process progresses. The MERC is also a great place to process items that come up in the conversations around bargaining that may not necessarily fit into bargaining.

The bargaining team looks forward to engaging with you on this critical effort. As always, if you have questions or concerns, you are welcome to contact any member of the bargaining team. Here is their contact information:

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Welcome New Members!

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