

# The United Voice

## 4 Years Is Enough!



# The '4' Campaign

*4 years of the same salary is enough! 4 years of PLC outside the regular workday is enough!*

Membership in UTW is down this year. The percentage of teachers in UTW has been falling slowly for many years. The economy sucks and funding for public schools is way down. There are many enemies of public education and public sector teacher unions pushing for laws to restrict the rights of teachers. These forces are blaming teacher unions for a big share of the budget problems of state governments. These forces are funded by the wealthy elite in the private sector, led by the Koch brothers. We are in a fight for our professional lives and for the future of our students.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had this to say about the efforts of labor unions:

*The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress. Out of its bold struggles, economic and social reform gave birth to unemployment insurance, old age pensions, government relief for the destitute, and above all new wage levels that meant not mere survival, but a tolerable life. **The captains of industry did not lead this transformation; they resisted it until they were overcome.***

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Illinois Afl-Cio Convention, October 1965

The '4' Campaign represents a different way of doing business for UTW. It is necessary in these difficult times for all of us to take a good, hard look at who we are, what we stand for, and how we plan to accomplish our goals. We recently had a training for UTW Pro Reps and introduced the '4' Campaign. The response was fantastic! We had over 100 Pro Reps in attendance and they heard all about the campaign, the recent past in negotiations, membership numbers and the impact the budget cuts had on UTW, and they still came out of the meeting with real hope. Perhaps for the first time in many years.

What is the '4' Campaign? It is not just the buttons with the number 4 on them. Although they are a big part of it. The campaign also is a way to encourage members to get involved. There are several ways to get involved: wear the '4' button and when a colleague asks what the button is for, you have a wonderful opportunity to engage that colleague in a discussion about doing the right thing. Four years of the same salary is a sentiment with which almost every teacher will agree. That gives you an opportunity to talk the power of solidarity, the strength in numbers that comes with more teachers joining UTW.

Another way to get involved: Speak up and be heard. Write a letter or an email to the Wichita Eagle, or a BOE member, or an area legislator. Most of our teachers are Republicans, and with the Republican Party holding the legislative power, Republican teachers need to speak up about the deplorable level of funding from the state. There are also issues that need to be written about and sent to the Eagle. Likewise, there are things the USD 259 BOE needs to hear from teachers. There are articles in this edition of the United Voice to help you figure out what to write. You will also want to learn about the \$100 gift certificates to Target we are giving away each month. To get your name in the drawing, just follow the rules. See page three for the rules and page four for help writing that email.

One of the basic questions we have been asked about the campaign is, "Will it help with negotiations? Because our contract sucks!" Yeah, that question pretty well sums it up. This multi-faceted campaign is supposed to have an impact on negotiations, that is one of the purposes of all this activity. Will this intention result in a better contract? If we just wait and see, probably not. If we simply sit around and do what we've always done, we can expect the same results, and that is not acceptable. If we all help each other and become involved, then we have a chance of success. Read all of this issue, carefully. If we all pull together, we can make a difference. After all ...



*Four years is enough!*

# '4' Fridays

## The '4' Button

*May I wear it every day?* We would love to have every member wear the button everyday. Being realistic, we are suggesting that every Friday be a '4' Friday. If you usually wear a lanyard, put the button on the lanyard.

*What does it mean?* It represents our combined frustration with the salary and working conditions of teachers. Four years of the same salary is enough! Four years of PLC outside the regular workday is enough! Year after year of increased workload is enough!

*How will wearing a small button help?* The power of a union lies in the power of solidarity. A unified sense of what needs to happen to improve our situation would be a good beginning. Almost every teacher (and administrator and classified employee) will agree that four years is enough. This button will provide opportunities for UTW members to have discussions with colleagues about taking a stand. If we all do the right thing and take a stand and speak up, we can change things!

## Incentives!!

- **For the potential member** - Free UTW dues (\$8.93 per month) from now through the August paycheck - 11 months! This adds up to almost \$100 for those who sign up in the next week or two. This reduction in dues is being given to those teachers who signed up to join UTW since June!
- **For the members in the building:** UTW will provide a free lunch (pizza or sandwiches) for *all* UTW members in the building if either of the following criteria is met:
  - ▶ 75% membership in the building, or,
  - ▶ The members in the building sign up the equivalent of 5% of the teachers in the building. Example: If a building has 60 teachers, then there would have to be 3 new members to qualify for a free lunch for *all* members!

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Welcome to Friendly

# Get Involved and You Might Win a \$100 Gift Certificate!

Getting involved and getting active doesn't have to mean walking a picket line and carrying a sign. It can mean being willing to wear a button every Friday. And if someone asks what the '4' means, you tell them, "4 years of the same salary is enough! If you agree, then join us and help!" That is getting involved. But there is another involvement you can do in the privacy of your own home, and it might get a \$100 Gift Certificate from Target!

All you have to do is write a letter to a BOE member, Legislator, or the Wichita Eagle. Provide us with printed proof and your name goes in the monthly drawing. Proof could be sending us a copy of the email, via BCC. You could also go to your sent folder, click on the email, and then click print. It will print the email and who you sent it to and when. Then send us the print out via inter-school mail. Simple. Just make sure you don't send these emails from a school computer!

Concerned that writing the email might not be simple? What do you say? The next article will provide you with some ideas for those letters or emails.

## *Rules for Monthly Drawing*

- Monthly Drawing for members writing a letter to the editor, a legislator, or a BOE member.
- **There will be two winners for each drawing: Each winner will receive a \$100 Gift Certificate to Target!**
- Printed proof (or BCC) must be provided of any email or letter sent to the Wichita Eagle, a Kansas State Legislator, or the USD 259 BOE. Proof may be emailed to [utw@utw-ks.org](mailto:utw@utw-ks.org).
- Only 1 entry per member, per month, per type of correspondence (1 legislator, 1 for the paper, 1 BOE).
- The first drawing will occur on Oct. 21, 2011 at 2PM. The second drawing will be on Nov. 21, 2011, at 2PM. The third and final drawing will be on Dec. 19, 2011 at 2PM.
- All letters or emails must be in support of public education and address issues facing teachers, such as: school funding, KPERS, No Child Left Behind, the '4' Campaign, etc.
- **Do not send these emails from a school computer!**



*About 110 Pro Reps attended the training for The '4' Campaign!*

# Will This Campaign Help Us In Negotiations?

There has been grumbling about negotiations and the contract approved by teachers. This is the fourth year in a row for the same salary. The school funding for USD 259 has dropped dramatically recently. When you combine a horrible economy with a philosophical belief in the smallest possible government, you get multiple cuts in school funding from the state. That makes for a very difficult situation for the BOE and the union.

Last year's team was between a rock and a hard place. There was a need for some type of financial improvement for teachers. On the other hand, the district was attempting to budget for a loss of almost \$30 million. Teacher jobs were directly in the crosshairs of those budget cuts. When we did our Negotiations Survey in the fall, we asked, "There is a possibility the district will be forced to cut their budget again for next year. Please answer this question based on that assumption. Of the two options below, which one do you most prefer? A) Continue the freeze of all salary items in order to protect jobs, or B) Get some money for teachers, even if it means reducing the number of teachers in the district." 72% responded with A – protect jobs, even if it means continuing the freezes. The team was surprised at those results. It also placed some constraints on them in the spring. Despite some creative thinking and proposals to unfreeze tracks and longevity, in the end, there was no money. Period.

Many folks might believe that we did much better in negotiations six or seven years ago. Monetarily, they are right. There are factors, however, which need to be considered before coming to a conclusion. The *Montoy* case was lost by the state and the result was a huge increase in school funding. Wichita benefitted greatly. In negotiations, the benefit was basically only in money. Even though money is very important to a teacher negotiating team, it is not the only barometer of success. Success for UTW teams in the area of workload and teacher rights have been few and far between.

There has been a missing link to our negotiations. Do you know what that missing link is? You. Teachers have not been a part of the mix for many, many years in Wichita. That has lessened our ability to be successful. Remember – a teacher's working conditions are a student's learning conditions. Through greater teacher involvement and activity, we have a chance of having a greater impact on negotiations than anyone has seen for years.

The '4' Campaign is not just about increasing membership and writing emails to legislators. It is also about helping you learn what it means to become involved, so that when the Negotiations Team needs you, you can be there to help. We all need to pull together if we are going to have success.

## **This year's UTW Negotiations Team**

**Sara Harrison-** 1st grade- Mueller Elementary

**Susan Phillips-** 5th grade- Cloud Elementary

**Shirley Rose-** Science- Curtis Middle

**Nicole Herrera-** English- Mayberry Middle

**Dwight Goodman-** SPED- East High

**Sara Harjo-** English- South High

**Greg Jones-** UTW Staff, Chief Spokesperson

**Keith Welty-** UTW Staff

**Randy Mousley-** UTW Vice President

**Larry Landwehr-** UTW President





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at 316-267-4457**



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### *The United Voice*

Keith Welty, Editor

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