

Dear Local President,

I am writing this letter to make you aware of a situation which I believe could seriously impact your Local's collective bargaining rights.

The National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI), whose major funders are ExxonMobil & the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, has been approaching School Districts offering grants to purportedly benefit students, school districts and teachers. The stated goals of the NMSI grant program appear to be laudable – increasing number of students in STEM careers and AP courses, and the reported success of the grants appear impressive. However, the grants all come with some non-negotiable baggage – **MERIT PAY**.

Participating teachers are directly paid by NMSI \$100 for each qualifying test score and also paid an additional \$1,000 award if they achieve a qualifying exam passing threshold set for the course they teach. A page from NMSI's PowerPoint Presentation is enclosed with this letter for your information.

When locals and Districts requested that the Financial Incentives be redirected away from individual teachers and instead given to the District to benefit particular programs or students, they were refused by NMSI. The only way a District can get a NMSI grant is for NMSI to give the "incentive" money directly to teachers who will be issued 1099 tax forms. NMSI told teachers and Districts, once the teacher gets the merit pay, they do not care what the teacher does with it and the teacher would be free to donate it to some District fund - but initially it must go to the teacher and a 1099 will be issued.

If NMSI's real goal is to promote STEM education and careers and bolster AP programs, then why are they so inflexible about rechanneling "incentive" funds?

The answer is that ExxonMobil (think Rex Tillerson), the Gates Foundation and NMSI are pushing merit pay and trying to find a back-door way to introduce it into Teacher Union strongholds. If we allow them to succeed, then we are undermining the rights and gains we have fought so long and hard for.

I recently learned that at least one Allegheny County School District accepted the NMSI grant without bothering to notify or bargain with its EA local. This would constitute an illegal unilateral alteration of the terms and conditions of employment since compensation is a mandatory subject of bargaining. Moreover, the NMSI Grant program also requires teachers to attend a series of training events that take place outside the contractual work day and work year. Any work on behalf of the school district beyond what your CBA covers is also a mandatory subject of bargaining. If this has happened in your District, you need to contact your UniServ Representative immediately, and you should probably file an Unfair Labor Practice Charge or a grievance. If Districts think they can get away with this blatant disregard of our collective bargaining rights, what will be left of our contracts in a few years?

We have all fought long and hard to get the contracts we have. Please do not give away your contract rights for the sake of a few people getting a couple of thousand dollars.

Please think before you act. Protect collective bargaining for teachers while you still have the right.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marylou Stefanko".

Marylou Stefanko
WR President

pc: WR UniServ Representatives

Enclosure

Elements of Success

Financial Incentives

Teacher Incentives

- + \$100 for each student who appears on their rosters and receives a qualifying score on the AP exam.
- + \$1,000 bonus based on certain AP exam passing thresholds for their class.
- + \$500 for attending training sessions and for the extra work they contribute because of the program.

Student Incentives

- + Exam Fees – total paid for low income students / half paid for all other students
- + \$100 for each passing AP Exam.

Administrator stipends and incentives

- + \$2,000 bonus ½ based on the school meeting pre-determined AP exam passing thresholds.

School Incentives

- + \$35,000 for equipment and supplies over a three year period

All incentives are for math, science and English only.



NATIONAL
MATH + SCIENCE
INITIATIVE