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## 2017-18 Employee Handbook Review Summary

### **Background**

MTI worked with MMSD to develop a collaborative Employee Handbook process to transition from Collective Bargaining Agreements to an Employee Handbook which became effective July 1, 2016 (as was required by Act 10). Due to that collaborative work, the Employee Handbook maintains the vast majority of the provisions and benefits previously negotiated in the Collective Bargaining Agreements.

One of the most important provisions of the Employee Handbook is Section 18, which provides for an annual Employee Handbook Review process in which an oversight group of MMSD and MTI representatives meet to discuss and recommend potential changes to the Employee Handbook. Consensus recommendations are then advanced to the Board of Education for consideration and action. This oversight group met during the summer of 2016 and has now completed their review and advanced their recommendations to the Board of Education for changes to become effective as of July 1, 2017.

### **2017-18 Employee Handbook Review Recommendations**

Following is a list of the recommended changes to the Employee Handbook effective July 1, 2017. As noted above, *all recommendations summarized below are contingent upon approval by the Board of Education, pursuant to Act 10.*

### **Recommendations that Impact all MTI-Represented Employees**

- **Salary Schedules Continue**

All salary schedules are recommended to continue for the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years including step/level/track and longevity increases.

The District *initially* advanced a proposal that would have *frozen* employee salaries as of July 1, 2017 (which would have allowed for no step, lane, track, level, or longevity movement), unless the freeze was lifted by the Board of Education.

MTI representatives strongly objected to the proposed freeze, citing increased turnover, stagnant wages, and declining take-home pay since Act 10 took effect. MTI also expressed concern that teachers have invested significant time and financial resources in obtaining additional credits/degrees with an expectation of additional remuneration. The pay freeze proposal was subsequently withdrawn by the District; however, *District representatives have indicated that they may need to bring this issue back to the oversight group for consideration if the November 8 Referendum fails.*

- **Retirement Sick Leave Payments Continue**

Retirement sick leave benefits are recommended to continue for the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years.

As some will recall, the District commissioned a compensation study which included a

recommendation to “phase out” or eliminate retirement sick leave benefits. The oversight group agreed not to advance this recommendation and, instead deferred further consideration to an MTI/MMSD sub-group charged with reviewing possible benefit modifications and making recommendations for consideration in 2018-19.

- **Bone Marrow or Organ Donor Leave**

Employees who have worked sufficient hours to be eligible and who have agreed to be a bone marrow or organ donor will now be eligible for leave from work similar to leave provided by the Family and Medical Leave Act.

- **Salary Deferrals - Tax Sheltered Annuities (TSA)**

The District currently offers employees the choice of fourteen (14) TSA vendors with whom employees can elect to have funds deducted to invest in a TSA. The oversight group recommended that current employees be allowed to continue with their current TSA plans; however, new employees or those wishing to change plans, may only participate in the three (3) plans selected by the District, in consultation with MTI.

### **EA-MTI Recommendations**

- Employee Handbook policies relative to Educational Assistants are recommended to continue without change. The Oversight Group did, however, discuss concerns over adequate wage levels and hours of work for Educational Assistants and agreed to continue discussions about potential solutions during the 2016-17 school year.
- MTI is also in the process of organizing a group to advocate for Living Wages for all MMSD employees and will be communicating more on that initiative in the weeks ahead.

### **SEE-MTI Recommendations (Clerical-Technical Employees)**

- Employee Handbook policies relative to Clerical-Technical employees are recommended to continue without change. The District raised concerns about the surplus/layoff reassignment language for SEE-MTI represented employees. After discussions with SEE-MTI representatives, the oversight group agreed to advance no recommended changes to these policies at this time, but will continue to discuss the issues.
- SEE-MTI representatives also raised concerns over the current Micro Computing Technician/Specialist Career Ladder and requested that a sub-group be created to review the career ladder to determine what modifications may be warranted. SEE-MTI representatives would also like the sub-group to explore the competitiveness of wage levels for technical employees.

### **SSA-MTI Recommendations (School Security Assistants)**

- Employee Handbook policies relative to Security Assistants are recommended to continue without change.
- Not as part of the Employee Handbook discussions, but critical to the work of School Security Assistants in the high schools, MTI lobbied the MMSD Board of Education and City of Madison to renew the contract to continue Educational Resource Officers (EROs) in Madison high schools. We are pleased to report that the BOE and City have now agreed to a new contract that will continue EROs.

### **Substitute Teacher Recommendations**

- The District suggested editorial changes to the substitute teacher assignment language, in order to align the Handbook language with the Aesop system used to assign substitutes. A request for a particular substitute will continue to be given preference, but the system will move to other alternative substitutes if the preferred candidate does not timely respond. This change is intended to expedite the filling of vacant substitute jobs.

Modifications were also made to substitute teacher health insurance language to clarify the timeline to be considered for eligibility determinations. Substitute teachers are now eligible for full benefits if they average 30 hours per week during a period of Oct. 5 – Oct. 4 annually. This timeline was adjusted from the typical school year calendar as initially indicated in the Employee Handbook. Such was done, because last year the District delayed implementation until well into the school year. While the eligibility standards are higher for substitutes, those who are eligible for the benefit will receive a higher percentage of the premium paid by the District than the previous \$400 per month.

- The District has also agreed to an on-going substitute teacher sub-group, including USO-MTI representatives, to discuss: 1) technology issues; 2) BEP issues for substitute teachers; 3) safety/emergency procedures; 4) sick leave; 5) implementing a more straightforward method for determining health insurance eligibility; and 6) other ideas to address the substitute teacher shortage. USO-MTI representatives shared that teachers regularly report that the chronic shortage of substitute teachers across the District is negatively impacting teaching and learning. USO-MTI requested that the parties work collaboratively and intentionally to identify potential solutions to the chronic substitute teacher shortage, including the use of building-based substitutes, and advocated for sufficient revenues necessary to fund such solutions.

## Teacher Recommendations

- **TERP Continues**  
The Teacher Emeritus Retirement Program (TERP) is recommended to continue for the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years. As some will recall, the District commissioned a compensation study that recommended “phasing out” or eliminating TERP benefits. The oversight group agreed to advance no recommended changes to TERP benefits and, instead deferred that work to an MTI/MMSD sub-group charged with reviewing possible benefit modifications and making recommendations for consideration in 2018-19.
- **Extended Pay Issues**  
In an effort to achieve more proximate “professional” pay, it is recommended to *increase* the rate of pay for teachers attending **Professional Development provided by Central Office to \$25 per hour**. Teachers working to develop curriculum on behalf of **Central Office for District-wide deployment** will also be paid **\$25 per hour**. Teachers working on **school-related curriculum work** (i.e., not Central Office-developed), **staff development, federal projects, and other non-pupil work** will be paid a flat rate of **\$15.30** per hour (a rate equal to the current Base 3). This will provide *an increase in pay* for those teachers currently paid at Base 1 (\$11 per hour) or Base 2 (\$13.10 per hour). The Committee had hoped to increase this rate to \$25 per hour as well, but revenue is not available to accomplish that at this time.
- **Calendar and Professional Development**  
Up to six (6) Staff-Only days (currently 4) can be scheduled during the 2017-18 school year. The oversight group felt that with the number of new initiatives teachers are dealing with, is important to have additional staff development time during the school year on days without students. ***The structure of the days is to be determined collaboratively at the building level by the principal and SBLT.***

If there is a need to make up instructional minutes due to snow days, the District will consult with the Handbook review committee to determine how best to add the necessary minutes (including the potential of eliminating Staff-Only days, eliminating Monday Early Release, or adding minutes to the instructional day).

The Handbook will no longer require a ten (10) day winter break and six (6) day spring break, but rather the length of winter break and spring break will be determined annually as part of the collaborative Handbook process (in 2016-17 the oversight group agreed to reduce winter break from

10 to 9 days and spring break from 6 to 5 days in order to avoid an extension of the school year into the third week of June). A sub-group of MTI and MMSD representatives will be working to finalize the 2017-18 school calendar, including the scheduling of breaks, in the next couple of months.

New teachers will be required to work one (1) additional day for induction and training, beginning with the 2017-18 school year and will receive one (1) PAC credit for this additional day.

- **Career Internships and Stipends**

A schedule was recommended to provide a stipend for Career Internship Instructors for successfully placed students in internship positions. The District will also have the authority to add additional stipend work in the future for additional work that is not covered elsewhere in the Handbook.

- **Late Resignation Penalty**

Teachers can resign from employment with the District without penalty through the last day of the school year. Given the increasing number of late resignation notices received by the District and a desire to promote early notice of resignation, it was agreed to **increase the teacher late resignation penalties** as follows: the penalty for resignation notice provided after the last day of the school year will increase from \$200 to \$400; for notice after July 1, the penalty will increase from \$250 to \$450; for notice after August 1, the penalty will increase from \$300 to \$500; and failure to provide at least 30 days' written notice will continue to be an additional \$100 assessment. *MTI successfully advocated to amend the resignation language to also authorize the Human Resources department to **waive the late resignation penalty when extenuating circumstances exist.***

MTI appointees also shared that on numerous occasions, late resignation notices have been due to principals either not providing specific assignments, or changing assignments after the end of the school year. Teachers want and need to know what they are scheduled to teach for the upcoming school year, so they can plan and prepare accordingly. Teachers who are not provided such confirmation of their assignment by the last day of school, or teachers who suddenly have their assignment changed at the end of the school year, are more likely to search for alternative employment opportunities and consequently provide late notice of resignation. District appointees indicated that principals are required to have their staffing plans solidified and communicated to staff by the middle of March, **and they agreed to follow up with principals to ensure this happens.**

- **Physical Education Teacher Assignments**

The parties agreed to change the assignment process for art and music teachers a number of years ago, in an effort to assign staff in a more efficient manner to **minimize the number of assigned work sites and travel time between sites**. The District wants to expand the assignment process to include physical education teachers and, given the positive experiences of art and music staff, the MTI appointees agreed to this process which should result in more logical, geographically-proximate assignments. The District agreed to share details of the assignment process with physical education teachers for their questions and feedback prior to the implementation of the new process.

- **Professional Advancement Credits**

The process of submitting PAC credits has been streamlined so that credits are first submitted to the Human Resources Department for approval. Any denial of advancement can then be appealed to the MTI-MMSD PAC committee. Language was also agreed upon to advise MTI when credits were denied, so that MTI can help monitor this process.

- **Summer School Compensation**

In an effort to attract more summer school teachers, the District wanted to increase the hourly pay rate for summer school. Their solution is to reduce the **weekly hours of summer school teachers from 30 hours per week to 25 hours per week**, with the weekly wage remaining the same. While this increases the "hourly" rate of pay, it has no impact on the weekly pay. Additionally, rather than reducing teaching time during summer school, the District is *eliminating* the paid planning time

currently provided, in order to reduce the length of the work day (meaning summer school teachers will need to plan on their own time). MTI representatives did not necessarily view this as a positive change, but agreed to go along with the District's plan in order to see if it works to attract additional summer school teachers in the short term. *In order to attract more summer school teachers long-term, MTI representatives advocated that the weekly summer school pay rates need to be increased substantially to provide professional pay to teachers performing professional services.* The District shares that opinion, but asserts they have insufficient revenue to accomplish this.

- **Special Education**

Editorial changes were recommended to the Special Education Handbook policies. The District had initially proposed eliminating the cap on the number of IEP evaluations that can be assigned to special education teachers, but agreed to rescind that proposal after hearing the objections of MTI representatives. Therefore, the current limits will continue.

### **On-going Committees:**

While the oversight group agreed to conclude their work on the 2017-18 Employee Handbook review, they also agreed to continue to discuss various issues and concerns during the 2016-17 school year to inform and prepare for next summer's Employee Handbook review process. Included in those sub-groups are the following:

1. **Teacher salary sub-group.** This group was recommended by the District to explore issues raised in the Compensation Study, and determine what recommendations to advance to the Oversight Group regarding changes to the teacher salary schedule.
2. **Benefits sub-group.** This group was recommended by the District to explore benefits issues raised by the Compensation Study and determine what recommendations to advance to the Oversight Group.
3. **Teacher planning time sub-group.** This group was recommended by MTI to explore the importance and sufficiency of teacher planning time and will determine what recommendations to advance to the Oversight Group. Already this school year, MTI has received numerous concerns from teachers relative to planning time lost due to scheduled IEP meetings and other meetings.
4. **School Based Leadership Teams (SBLT) sub-group.** This group was recommended by MTI to explore issues surrounding SBLTs to assure that they are representative teams of school staff empowered to provide leadership, and will determine what recommendations to advance to the Oversight Group.
5. **Special education sub-group.** This group will meet to discuss issues surrounding special education and will determine what recommendations to advance to the Oversight Group.
6. **Substitute teachers sub-group.**
7. **Educational Assistants sub-group.**
8. **Clerical/Technical employees sub-group.**

### **Your Union, Your Voice**

The collaborative Employee Handbook review process utilized by MTI and MMSD is an innovative local response to the elimination of public employee collective bargaining rights in the State of Wisconsin. Through this collaborative work, involving employee representatives and District administration, MTI-represented employees are provided a voice in the work place. Along with MTI staff, over twenty-four (24) MTI members, appointed by MTI leadership, served as your representatives on the various sub-groups involved in the Employee Handbook discussions.