



## **2017 Employee Handbook Update #4**

December, 2017

Representatives from MTI and the MMSD continue to meet as part of the annual **Employee Handbook Review/Revision** process outlined in Section 18 of the Handbook. Various work groups have been designated, comprised of MMSD and MTI appointed representatives, with a goal of advancing recommended revisions for consideration by the joint Handbook Review Committee. The consensus recommendations of the Handbook Review Committee will then be shared with the Superintendent to forward to the Board of Education for consideration.

### **School Calendar Work Group**

The MTI-MMSD **School Calendar** work group met on **December 12** to discuss the draft 2018-19 calendar recommended by MTI appointees last spring which included a recommended return to a **ten (10) day winter break**; scheduling the various **staff only days** across week days (as opposed to the current Friday only practice); as well as numerous other issues. Progress has been made on both issues at the December 12 meeting, and the District appointees are going to review the latest draft calendar with the MMSD Senior Leadership Team next week with the hope of finalizing the 2018-19 calendar shortly. We will provide specifics details of the calendar once these recommendations have been finalized. After the 2018-19 school calendar is set, the group will commence work on the 2019-20 school calendar.

### **Substitute Teacher Work Group and Benefits Committee**

The MTI-MMSD Employee Handbook Review Committee met on **December 12** to approve the recommendations of the **Substitute Teacher** work group and the **Benefits Committee**. These recommendations include:

**Substitute Teacher Recommendations** - Modifying the **eligibility criteria for health insurance** for substitute teachers to allow those who work a minimum of 140 days the previous school year to be eligible for health insurance during the following school year. Substitutes will also retain eligibility for health insurance benefit should they meet the criteria under the Affordable Care Act. This is viewed as a needed improvement to increase health insurance access for substitute teachers and further incentive substitute teachers to work a sufficient number of days to receive this benefit.

**Benefits Committee Recommendations** -The **Benefits** work group met during the 2017-18 school year and recommended various changes for consideration by the Handbook Review Committee including, among other things:

- The timing of benefit eligibility change (when coverage starts and ends) to have eligibility commence one month sooner for new hires; be extended by one month for 9 and 10-month ESEA-MTI represented employees retiring at the end of the school year; and end a month earlier for employees who voluntarily resign or retire during the school year.
- Provide a voluntary short-term disability insurance plan for ESEA-MTI represented employees and other hourly non-teaching staff (teachers have access to the sick leave bank which serves as a short-term disability plan). The plan would provide 66% of pay for disabled employees after a 14-day waiting period and benefits would continue for 75 days or until long-term disability

commences, whichever is sooner. The plan is voluntary and 100% employee paid (i.e. the employer would pay none of the premium). **Interested members must sign up for coverage by December 31, 2017 in order to have benefits commence in 2018.**

### **Teacher Work Day Group**

The MTI-MMSD **Teacher Work Day** work group met on **December 11**. MTI representatives have been advocating for changes to the Employee Handbook to provide sufficient **professional planning time for teachers to plan and prepare for their instructional responsibilities**, particularly for middle and high school teachers with no explicit planning time referenced in the Handbook. At the meeting, District representatives expressed some reluctance to carve out an explicit entitlement to professional planning for middle and high school teachers, emphasizing the principal's need to maintain managerial discretion over the scheduling of work within the school day. MTI participants relayed that "time", and more specifically professional, self-determined planning time, is of paramount importance to those we represent in order to deliver quality instruction. MTI members need some acknowledgement of these needs now. The work group has agreed to continue this discussion in January.

The MTI appointees to this work group have also suggested revisions to the **staff only day** schedules to limit PD and other-directed activities on such days to no more than ½ of the day and provide the remaining ½ day for the professional planning and preparation needs of educators.

The District appointees to the work group are asking for changes in the current Employee Handbook language on staff only days to allow the District to occasionally determine the agenda for "intensive schools" on such days (the current Employee Handbook policy requires that the structure of all staff only days be collaboratively determined at the building by the SBLT and principal). MTI appointees oppose this proposed change.

MTI appointees are advocating to ensure that **School Based Leadership Teams (SBLTs)** are provided the legitimate voice that the Employee Handbook states they are supposed to have in designing the structure and content of staff only days. Numerous SBLT participants report that they are provided little input into such activities with the principal and/or Central Office mandating activities on such days. Additional meetings of this work group are being scheduled in January.

### **EA/SEA Salary Schedule Work Group**

The MTI-MMSD **EA/SEA Salary Schedule** work group met on **December 13** to explore improvements to the EA/SEA salary schedule made necessary due to the achievement of a \$15 per hour entry wage. Those discussions included a consideration for modifying the EA/SEA wage schedule to provide one pay rate for both EA and SEA work hours (currently paid at two separate rates). This is seen as a major improvement and would provide a significant pay bump particularly for EA hours. This school year, a number of SEAs witnessed some of their hours being reclassified to "Regular EA" hours at a lower pay rate even with no substantive change in assignment. Changing to one uniform pay rate for all EA/SEA hours would help address those concerns. The work group is also looking at modifications to the EA/SEA wage schedule in order to provide for annual pay increases for all steps on the EA/SEA wage schedules (beyond the base wage increase) as a result of the compression caused by the \$15 starting wage. The primary point of contention between the MTI and MMSD representatives on this work group is that the MMSD is recommending that any wage improvements become effective with the 2018-19 school year and MTI is advocating that wage increases be effective in the current school year, as soon as possible.

## **Teacher Compensation Work Group**

The MTI-MMSD **Teacher Compensation** work group met on **October 24** and **November 7** to discuss potential modifications to the teacher salary schedule. Those considerations include: potential modifications to the number of tracks on the salary schedule, possibly collapsing the current eight track schedule to fewer tracks, while still maintaining a premium for Masters degrees; adjusting the salary curve to accelerate advancement, in order to provide teachers “professional salaries” earlier in their career; adding salary incentives for hard-to-staff bilingual and cross-categorical teaching positions to attract and retain certified staff; exploring incentives for other “high needs” areas or schools; potential modifications to incentive professional development; and identifying opportunities and compensation incentives for career ladder opportunities such as teacher leadership positions or administrator development. All of these considerations would involve increased investment by the District in teacher compensation.

District HR staff shared an update on the progress of these discussions at the BOE Operations Work Group meeting on November 13. MTI representatives received a similar update at the MTI Faculty Representative Council meeting on November 28.

The MTI-MMSD Teacher Compensation Work Group will continue to meet over the next few months to further this work in hope of reaching consensus recommendations for salary schedule changes effective for the 2018-19 school year. MTI members will continue to receive updates as this work progresses, as well as information on additional opportunities to learn more and offer input.

## **Special Education Work Group**

The MTI-MMSD **Special Education** work group met to discuss planning time needs, as well as compensation for Section 504 plans. No recommendations have been agreed to relative to IEP or Section 504 compensation. The planning time issues are being referred to the Teacher Work Day group for inclusion in their discussions about planning time.

## **Other issues**

The MTI-MMSD representatives have agreed to form a work group to look into various extra duty positions and related compensation adjustments which would start work on these matters later this spring after work is complete on Teacher salary schedule recommendations.

## **Next Steps**

The work groups described above will continue to meet to work towards consensus recommendations. The recommendations of the various work groups will then be forwarded to the MTI-MMSD Employee Handbook Review Committee for consideration and recommendation. Revisions recommended by the Review Committee will then be forwarded to the Superintendent to advance to the Board of Education. The Board of Education has final authority over the recommended changes to the Employee Handbook.

**All MTI members will continue to be provided updates as these discussions continue.**