



2018 Employee Handbook Update #5

February, 2018

This month, representatives from MTI and the MMSD will be finalizing the annual **Employee Handbook Review/Revision** process outlined in Section 18 of the Handbook. Various **work groups** comprised of MMSD and MTI appointed representatives have been meeting since last summer, with a goal of advancing recommended revisions for consideration by the joint MTI-MMSD **Handbook Review Committee**. This work is now complete and the MTI-MMSD Handbook Review Committee will meet **February 6** to finalize consensus recommendations to share with the Superintendent to forward to the Board of Education for consideration later this month.

Since Governor Walker's Act 10 prohibited collective bargaining for public sector employees in Wisconsin, MTI is one of the few unions in the state which has maintained a strong employee voice in the pay, benefits, and workplace policies now contained in Employee Handbooks. This advocacy is supported by MTI members who support the work of their Union both financially, as well as via their service and leadership on MTI committees and work groups. ***Over fifty (50) MTI members have represented you and provided leadership through their participation in these Employee Handbook discussions.***

The following provides a summary of their work:

School Calendar Work Group

The MTI-MMSD **School Calendar** work group has reached consensus on a recommended 2018-19 school calendar which will include a return **to a ten (10) day winter break**; scheduling the various **staff only days** on various week days (as opposed to the current Friday only practice); as well as numerous other issues (*2018-19 school calendar attached*). Based on member feedback, MTI representatives strongly advocated for these changes. With the 2018-19 calendar set, the District has committed to work with MTI representatives to start work on the 2019-20 calendar now.

Substitute Teacher Work Group

The MTI-MMSD **Substitute Teacher** work group has reached consensus to modify 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 for substitute teachers to work a sufficient number of days to receive this benefit. The work group has also agreed to recommend an **increase in the long-term rate of pay for substitute teachers** from being calculated off of Track 1, Level 4, of the Teacher Salary Schedule (currently **\$181.30** per day) to being calculated off of Track 1, Level 6, of the Teacher Salary Schedule (currently **\$197.25 per day**) and increase the rate of pay for summer substitutes to \$25 per hour.

Benefits Work Group

The MTI-MMSD **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).
- **TERP and Retirement Sick Leave benefits continue.** No changes are being recommended for TERP or Retirement Sick Leave benefits, *meaning eligible employees will continue to receive these critically important benefits through, at least, the 2018-19 school year.* The continuation of these benefits has been of high priority to MTI members

EA/SEA Salary Schedule Work Group

The MTI-MMSD **EA/SEA Salary Schedule** met to explore improvements to the EA/SEA salary schedule made necessary due to the achievement of a \$15 per hour entry wage. Those discussions led to recommendations to **modify 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. Included in this recommendation is **a modification in the wage “steps” to provide for annual pay increases for all steps on the EA/SEA wage schedules** as a result of the compression caused by the \$15 starting wage. MTI had advocated for the new wage rates to take effect this semester, but District representatives indicated that they were unable to fund this until the commencement of the 2018-19 school year.

Teacher Work Day Group

The MTI-MMSD **Teacher Work Day** group was unable to reach consensus recommendations on the important issue of teacher planning time so no Employee Handbook recommended changes in this area are being advanced at this time. MTI representatives have been advocating for additional Handbook protections to ensure sufficient professional (i.e., self-directed) planning time for teachers, including some level of professional planning time on staff only days.

- MTI representatives advocated for Handbook language which would **explicitly define individual planning time for middle and high school teachers** (the current Employee Handbook provides specific individual planning time for full-time elementary teachers (4 ½ hours per week, in addition to Monday early release), but does not explicitly address middle and high school planning. In the past, secondary teachers were typically provided planning time when they were not assigned classroom responsibilities. However, that time has increasingly been encroached upon with other District requirements which have resulted in significant decreases in time for professional planning and preparation.
- MTI representatives also advocated for one-half (½) of each Staff Only Day be reserved for the professional planning needs of all teachers. Since students are not present on these days, we

reasoned that utilizing these days would be a “no cost” means of providing all teachers with some additional professional planning time. The composition of the remaining one-half (½) of the day could still be determined by the SBLT and school principal and could continue to include such things as professional development. Current Employee Handbook language requires that the structure of the staff only days is to be “determined collaboratively at the building level by the principal and SBLT”.

Unfortunately, the MTI representatives were unable to bring the District representatives to consensus recommendations on these important issues so no changes are being advanced. However, both parties have agreed to continue discussions on these critically important issues with the hope of bringing some consensus solutions forward in the future.

Special Education Work Group

The MTI-MMSD **Special Education** were unable to agree on recommended changes relative to Special Education issue. The District representatives had sought increased pay for chairing IEPs but were planning to fund that through decreased pay for chairing Section 504 plans. MTI representatives had advocated for increases to both rates and further emphasized the professional planning needs of special educators (see planning time discussions in Teacher Work Day summary above).

Other issues

The parties have also reached consensus on recommendations to:

- Provide explicit criteria for the consideration of unpaid leave of absence requests.
- Restrict unpaid childrearing leaves to employees who have worked for the District at least one year.
- Amend the annual \$1,500 stipend for Teacher National Board Certification to include Psychologists with the NCSP designation.
- Modify the personal leave day restrictions from the last two weeks of any semester to the last week of any semester.
- Modify BRS job posting language to be consistent with teachers.
- 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.

Teacher Compensation Work Group

The MTI-MMSD **Teacher Compensation** work group continues to meet to discuss potential modifications to the teacher salary schedule as part of the development of the 2018-19 MMSD budget.

The MTI-MMSD Teacher Compensation Work Group is scheduled to meeting again on **February 7** with a goal of producing some draft recommendations by the middle of February to share with teachers and others for feedback.

All MTI Teacher members will receive an update on the Teacher Compensation Work group via separate e-mail.

Next Steps

The recommendations of the various work groups will be reviewed by the MTI-MMSD Employee Handbook Review Committee on **February 6** for consideration and recommendation. Revisions recommended by the Review Committee will then be forwarded to the Superintendent to advance to the Board of Education later this month. The Board of Education has final authority over the recommended changes to the Employee Handbook.

Interested MTI members are invited to learn more about the Handbook work and recommendations at the **MTI Employee Handbook Update and Q & A** on **Tuesday, February 20, at 4:30 p.m., at MTI Headquarters**, 33 Nob Hill Road (*this meeting will be held immediately prior to the MTI Faculty Representative Council meeting*).