



2018-19 Employee Handbook Annual Review Update #3

November 2, 2018

Background

This past summer, representatives from MTI and the MMSD began to meet in the annual **Employee Handbook Review/Revision** process outlined in Section 18 of the Employee Handbook. Various **work groups** comprised of MMSD and MTI appointed representatives have been meeting, with a goal of advancing recommended revisions for consideration by the joint MTI-MMSD **Handbook Review Committee** to forward to the Superintendent and Board of Education for consideration later this fall.

Employee Handbook Review Update:

School Calendar Work Group: The MTI-MMSD school calendar committee met on August 29 and October 2 and has finalized their recommendations for the 2019-20 school calendar. Highlights include the retention of a **2-week winter break period** (December 23, 2019-January 3, 2020); **the retention of a 1-week spring break period** (March 30-April 3, 2020); and **an additional day off for teachers on February 28**. There will continue to be 6 Staff Only days spread throughout the year. Parent-teacher conferences for middle and high schools will be held during the third and fourth full weeks of November, and the comp day will continue to be the day before Thanksgiving (November 28 is Thanksgiving). The New Teacher days will be August 21-23, followed by the Staff Learning/Prep days August 26-29, and the Voluntary day on August 30. The student year will begin the day after Labor Day, **September 3, 2019**, and end **June 10, 2020**, with the last Staff Only day on **June 11, 2020**. The 2019-20 calendar will be available on both MTI's and the District's websites shortly.

Teacher Compensation Work Group: The MTI-MMSD Teacher Compensation Committee continues to discuss potential changes to the **teacher salary schedule**. The Committee has been meeting weekly, including a meeting October 25 with Superintendent Cheatham in attendance and, most recently, on November 1. The District continues to explore changes meant to make the salary schedule "sustainable" (i.e., less costly). MTI continues to oppose proposals intended to reduce investments in teacher salaries but continues to be willing to explore modifications that teachers would support and that would assist the District in attracting and retaining the high-quality educators our students deserve. The Committee met **November 1** at which time District administration advised that they will be meeting with the BOE on Monday, **November 12**, to seek direction on one of two paths forward. One path would involve continuing to work with MTI to identify salary schedule changes which are supported by teachers that do not result in decreased investments in the salary schedule. The second path would involve the District pursuing salary schedule changes intended to **reduce investments** in the teacher salary schedule. MTI reps on the committee believe that **additional investments** are necessary in order to attract and retain the teachers our students deserve and have advised the District reps that we will actively oppose changes to the schedule which are not supported by educators. *All MTI members will continue to receive updates via e-mail on these discussions and status of MTI's Employee Handbook work. (See the recent **Teacher Compensation Update** for additional details on what is being discussed.)*

High School Scheduling Work Group: This work group met on **August 13** and **October 15** to discuss the District's exploration into potential changes to high school scheduling, including the consideration of block scheduling for the four (4) comprehensive high schools (as well as revisions to LaFollette's current block schedule). These considerations are driven by a desire to provide high school students with more course options and to address scheduling limitations due to new graduation requirements, expansion of Health to 10th grade, scheduling conflicts between AVID, World Languages, and Orchestra, as well as the impact of Pathways. MTI reps shared teacher concerns that a move to a block schedule, without the necessary resources and support, could actually restrict course offerings to students while simultaneously increasing demands on teacher time due to increased preps and/or decreased planning time. All parties agreed that these scheduling considerations need to be discussed further, that educator voice needs to be incorporated into the planning process, and that any changes considered

would be for the 2020-21 school year (*providing sufficient time to thoughtfully explore options*). The work group has provided a communication to all high school staff that included the rationale, timeline, and process for considering changes. The work group also agreed to survey all high school staff for their input on these considerations. The work group is scheduled to meet again on **December 3** to review the results of the survey and discuss next steps.

LaFollette Four-block Schedule

While the High School Scheduling Work group continues to explore scheduling options for East, Memorial, and West High Schools, a separate MTI-MMSD Work Group has been formed to discuss scheduling issues at LaFollette High School. LaFollette has been operating under a Four-block schedule for many years with teachers assigned to teach three of the four blocks each term. Recent scheduling complications have resulted in some LaFollette teachers assigned an A/B schedule, teaching six of eight blocks while other LaFollette teachers teach three of four. This has contributed to scheduling conflicts for students and workload increases for teachers and needs to be addressed this semester. MTI and MMSD representatives, including teacher representatives from LaFollette, met on **October 31** and agreed to bring the LaFollette Scheduling issues into Employee Handbook discussions and to prioritize this work to seek consensus recommendations by winter break. MTI representatives will work to identify available scheduling options and will advocate for the necessary resources to support those options to ensure that they are best for students and staff.

School Climate and Shared Leadership Work Group: This work group is discussing School Climate and Shared Leadership issues, including changes to School Based Leadership Team (SBLT) composition and functioning and other processes to build genuine shared leadership structures within our schools. The work group has met on **July 24** and **September 10** at which time MTI representatives outlined some general ideas and concerns, including: 1) changes to allow school staff to select their own representatives to the School Based Leadership Team (SBLT) to ensure that genuine staff voice was incorporated; 2) changes to ensure that the agenda for SBLT meetings are collaboratively developed by the team (*rather than determined by the principal or Central Office*); and 3) creating specific School Culture and Climate teams within each building, selected by staff and charged with discussing and addressing culture and climate concerns. The premise of all of these suggestions is to create high functioning schools with genuine shared leadership. District representatives have agreed to discuss MTI's suggestions and return to the next meeting with ideas on next steps (*this meeting was previously scheduled for **October 29** but is currently being rescheduled due to unavailability of District staff*).

Teacher Planning Time Work Group: The Teacher Workday/Planning Time Committee met with representatives from MMSD on **October 23rd**. Discussion about defining a guaranteed amount of individual planning time for **middle and high school** educators continued (*the Employee Handbook specifically defines planning time for elementary teachers only*). While there has been some progress made in getting MMSD recognition of the demands on secondary educators, no consensus on defined amounts of individual planning time has been reached. The committee will be gathering additional information in preparation for the next steps in the discussion.

Concerns about the need for individual planning time for CC educators were raised. Specifically, the number of additional duties assigned to CC educators, the lack of substitute coverage along with staffing reductions, additional meetings, and the emphasis on completing all paperwork on time were identified as key challenges. MTI reps on the committee are developing a proposal to give additional independent planning time to CC educators on All Staff Days and by providing substitute coverage as needed.

In addition to these issues, MTI reps on the committee are also looking at developing Handbook language to guarantee some independent planning time on All Staff Days. Issues specific to 4K and Early Childhood educators have also been discussed. The committee will continue to meet in an effort to reach consensus on all of these issues.

Extra-curricular Pay Work Group

The Extra-Duty Handbook Committee has engaged in two joint discussions over “Addendum I – Co-Curricular Staff.” This addendum covers the compensation for folks who perform additional work with students outside of the regular school day, such as coaching athletic and academic teams, and directing theater performances, among other things. Employees covered by this addendum can be regular staff who work a secondary assignment, or they can be “non-faculty” positions filled by someone who is only employed in a co-curricular capacity. Discussions so far have revolved around the following topics:

- Compensation adjustments for Forensic/Debate Coaches due to increase in the length of season and commitment for coaches.
- Compensation for middle school music directors for after-hours performances.
- Making minor changes to compensation for some positions, as well as creating updated job titles for clarity.
- Providing discretion to compensate high school club advisors who participate with their clubs in external events with other schools, both within and outside of MMSD. Currently there is a defined group of clubs that receive compensation, some of which are not available in all schools.

There will be at least one more meeting before this committee completes its work for the 2019-20 Handbook. We are hopeful that this collaborative work leads to better rewards for teachers and other co-curricular staff who dedicate their time to these activities outside of the regular work day.

ESEA and USO Work Groups

A major EA/SEA Salary Schedule improvement was achieved for 2018-19 which, combined with the \$15 per hour entry wage and 2.13% base-wage increase, has raised hundreds of EAs and SEAs to “living wages”. USO members have pursued the increase in the long-term rate of pay which was recommended by the Handbook Committee last school year but failed to be approved by the Board of Education due to its budgetary impact. This past week the BOE approved a proposal from TJ Mertz to increase the long-term rate of pay, but not to the level recommended by the Handbook Committee last spring. MTI is working to modify that proposal to ensure that the long-term pay rate continues to be linked to the Teacher Salary Schedule.

ESEA and USO leaders will be meeting over the next couple of months to discuss any revisions they would like to see in the Employee Handbook related to employees represented in these areas (Educational Assistants, SEAs, NAs, Clerical/Technical Employees, School Security Assistants, etc.). ESEA members and USO members are encouraged to share their ideas/concerns with their elected leadership and/or MTI staff at mti@madisonteachers.org.

If you have any Handbook related questions, ideas or suggestions, share them at:

mti@madisonteachers.org