



MTI Teacher Compensation Update

November 2, 2018

Teacher Compensation Discussions

MMSD HR staff have advised that they have been directed by the Board of Education to make recommended teacher salary schedule changes to create a more “sustainable” (i.e. less costly) salary schedule in light of current revenue restrictions and are expected to report back to the BOE on November 12 so that the BOE could consider any salary schedule changes as part of the 2019-20 budget considerations. MTI agreed to schedule multiple meetings of the MTI-MMSD teacher Compensation Committee to discuss these challenges and attempt to identify any recommended teacher salary schedule changes which would be **valued and supported by teachers**. Meetings of this group were held on **September 6 and 13**; **October 4, 11, and 25**; and **November 1**.

Issues being discussed to date:

- The proposed **elimination of ½ steps** on the teacher salary schedule. Currently, part-time teachers working 30% to 70% receive a ½ step movement on the salary schedule, in addition to receiving a pro-rated salary. Both the MTI and District representatives would like to see this changed to allow all teachers to receive a full step movement on the salary schedule.
- The proposed **elimination of the two-year incentive levels** beyond level 15. Currently, once teachers reach step 15 they are required to earn three credits every two years to advance to the next level. Both the MTI and District representatives would like to modify these incentive levels and allow teachers at level 15 and beyond to advance on the schedule annually.
- The possible **reduction in the number of salary tracks/lanes**. The teacher salary schedule currently includes eight (8) salary tracks associated with educational attainment: BA, BA+12, BA+24, BA+48, MA, MA+12, MA+24, MA+48, and PhD/MFA. In order to simplify the salary schedule, and reduce investments in the salary schedule, District representatives have been exploring the possibility of condensing the number of tracks/lanes to four, two for BA and two for MA. MTI representatives are skeptical that such a change would be valued by teachers but expressed willingness to continue the discussions. The MTI reps believe that many educators value the multiple tracks on the schedule and do not support proposals intended to reduce investments in the schedule.
- The possible **capping of the teacher salary schedule**. The current teacher salary schedule has no “maximum”. Teachers beyond step fifteen (15) receive salary step increases every other year thereafter. In order to reduce investments in the salary schedule, the District representative are exploring the idea of capping the steps after a defined number of years (e. g. 30 years) and **replacing continued step movement with scheduled lump-sum longevity payments**. MTI reps believe that experienced educators value the current continued salary movement and do not support proposals intended to reduce investments in the schedule.
- The possible **modification of the salary curve**. The current salary schedule is indexed to the base rate and provides greater salary increases to teachers moving through the first 7-10 years of the schedule. The current schedule also includes some “super cells” in which teachers receive more significant salary increases (e.g. track 5 movement from level 12 to 13). The District representatives are exploring possible modifications to the index to provide more uniform percentage increases or dollar increases between steps. MTI representatives are willing to explore the redistribution of increases across the schedule which would address some of the current perceived inequities and be valued by teachers.

- The Committee has also shared ideas **about incorporating additional professional development** activities into the salary schedule. Currently, the salary schedule encourages continuing education via academic credits and/or professional advancement credits.
- The MTI representatives have expressed interest in identifying and recommending any additional salary schedule changes which have the support of educators and would allow the District to attract and retain the highly qualified teachers our students deserve.
- The Committee has also discussed the fact that the teacher salary schedule is only one piece of the teacher compensation equation. Base-wage increases and benefit costs also impact teacher compensation. Without adequate revenue increases, increasing costs in one area can reduce available revenue for compensation in other areas. Benefit contribution levels and base-wage bargaining will be determined in other avenues later this school year.
- **The state-wide political elections this fall will go a long way in determining the resources available to the MMSD to compensate staff and fund programs.** With the five-year school revenue referendum passed in 2013 expiring this year, and with no change in the current state revenue limits, District reps indicate that they expect annual school revenue to increase by only 1% annually. Such would be insufficient to fund the costs of the current salary schedule, let alone a cost-of-living base-wage, absent continued referendum to provide the needed resources. Therefore, political change is necessary to provide the funding necessary to support our public schools. MTI reps agree that political change is needed to provide our public schools the resources that are needed. However, MTI reps also believe that, regardless of the state support, the MMSD needs to maintain (and increase) its investments in teacher salaries in order to attract and retain the educators our students deserve.

Status of discussions:

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 MTI will actively oppose changes to the schedule opposed by our members that reduce investments in teacher salaries.

All MTI members will continue to receive updates via e-mail on these discussions and status of MTI's Employee Handbook work.