



Solidarity!

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MTI's Anti-Racism Work

MTI membership has taken on leadership roles in work on race and equity across the district. We also recognize that this work needs to be further developed and strengthened. Last week, the MTI Board met with members of the Black Educators Network (BEN) to listen and discuss ideas for advancing anti-racist work in MTI and in MMSD. Some of these ideas included:

- Aligning MTI and MMSD calendars to help reduce scheduling conflicts that limit participation for members of color.
- Developing training opportunities for Faculty Reps/elected leaders around race and equity, with a focus on applying this in Union work.

- Clarifying the purpose of meetings and the roles that different Union positions play to build engagement among educators of color.
- Connecting MTI members of color with opportunities at the state and national levels (WEAC/NEA).
- Reviewing and reflecting upon how conversations are taking place in all MTI spaces and groups to help all members feel welcome and heard as Union brothers and sisters.

Members of the Black Educators Network will be meeting with the MTI Diversity and Equity Committee in April to follow up on this discussion.

Talking About the N-Word: Never Say it

We have had a number of incidents this school year in which MMSD staff have said the n-word in various contexts in the presence of students. Some instances have involved staff citing this word as an example of inappropriate language. Other instances have involved staff repeating offensive comments made by students which included the word. We are not aware of any circumstance in which staff have directed the word at students with derogatory intent. Regardless of the context or circumstances, the District has taken a zero-tolerance approach whenever the n-word has been said in the presence of students.

MTI strongly advises members to **never say the n-word in any context or in any circumstance**. When discussing or reporting the use of such racial epithets or racially charged language by students or others, **do not repeat the hurtful or offensive word** and instead use an alternative method of reporting what was said. The "n-word" is the clearest example.

What about curriculum? In teaching works of literature that include such epithets or address such topics, **MTI recommends that teachers review the literature and curriculum plan in advance with local administration (i.e., your building principal)**. This allows the principal the opportunity to identify and highlight any concerns in advance and provide teachers notice of any District expectations or guidance in this area. Such a proactive discussion may also lead to ideas about providing ample forewarning to students and families that the topic will be covered. In this instance also, MTI strongly advises teachers never to say the n-word, **including in reading of the text aloud**. MTI has also requested that the District provide teachers greater clarification in this area and recommends that teachers contact building principals directly for such clarity.



Exercise Your Political Rights: Important Elections Vote—April 2

The Spring 2019 general election takes place right after spring break on **Tuesday, April 2**. MTI -Voters has endorsed candidates

and urges all members to make a plan to vote and to get involved in these important campaigns. See MTI's webpage under Elections—Spring 2019 for additional information, including opportunities for involvement.

Employee Discipline: MTI Representation, Due Process, and Just Cause

Some of the most important rights afforded Union members are the right to representation and the right to due process and just cause protection in disciplinary matters. Representation means that the employee is not left alone to navigate such high stakes employment challenges by themselves but will receive representation and support from highly-trained MTI labor relations professionals, and legal counsel as needed. Simply stated, due process and just cause protections are intended to ensure that disciplinary matters are fairly investigated, supported by facts, and that consequences are appropriate. (*continued on reverse*)

Employee Discipline: MTI Representation, Due Process, and Just Cause (continued)

MTI regularly provides representation to MTI members subject to discipline by District administration. In instances where due process and/or just cause for the discipline are questioned, MTI members have the right via the grievance procedure in the Employee Handbook to challenge such discipline, and MTI staff and legal counsel assist them to ensure these rights are protected. The grievance procedure includes the option to appeal the dispute to an Independent Hearing Office (IHO) who will conduct a hearing, review the facts, and make a determination on whether the District had just cause to discipline the employee. That decision is then subject to review by the Board of Education, which ultimately retains authority for such decisions (a change made with Act 10).

Rather than go through a lengthy grievance appeals process, some employees who have been subject to discipline may choose to resign rather than contest a disciplinary matter. When an MTI member chooses this route, MTI staff may work with them to maximize the terms of any resignation agreement. MTI's specific representational work on behalf of specific individuals is, appropriately, kept confidential.

District employees who choose not to be members of MTI are also covered by these Employee Handbook rights due to MTI's advocacy to incorporate these policies in the Employee Handbook. However, MTI provides no staff and/or legal representation for non-members in this or any other area.

MTI Faculty Reps/ESEA Building Reps Organizing For Educators

Unions support members by advocating for "bread and butter" issues like wages, benefits, and working conditions. These are important to all of us, but we know that other issues also significantly impact our work and our satisfaction with our jobs. Faculty/Building Reps help organize members around issues by listening and looking for areas where members see a need for change. They connect individuals with others and with existing work being done by MTI. This can result in advocacy on Handbook issues, committee work, and organizing with members of the community and other organizations. MTI members are proud of what we've accomplished as a Union and hopeful for the future. Bringing educators together around issues that are widely and deeply felt involves communication and organizing skills. If you think that you would be interested in learning more about how you can get involved in this work contact one of the Reps at your school or President Waity (awaity@madisonteachers.org) or ESEA-MTI President Judy Ferwerda (hkyhouse@tds.net).

**MTI Cares' Bowl-A-Thon
and Silent Auction
Sunday, April 7, 2019,
from 12-3 p.m., at
Village Lanes in Monona
(208 Owen Road)
Sign up on the MTI website.**



MTI Membership Opportunities

The following meetings, seminars, and workshops are available to all MTI, ESEA & USO members (*only*).

MTI & WEA Member Benefits: Financial Services for all MTI Members

MTI and WEA Member Benefits are providing opportunities to enhance the financial well-being of all MTI members. Check the MTI website (www.madisonteachers.org) to sign-up for seminars.

Save the Dates:

- Saving For Your Future—April 25
- Student Loan Forgiveness—May 6

In addition, **Steve Pike** (retired teacher and current WEA Member Benefits Consultant) is available for a **free 60-minute financial consultation**. This is ideal if you are just getting started, have specific questions, or would like a quick check-in. It's a convenient way to meet with someone face-to-face to get some general help or guidance. Consultations are held at MTI. Sign-up is available on the MTI website (www.madisonteachers.org).

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MTI National Board Certification Training Workshops for 2018-19. MTI members pursuing National Board Certification are invited to participate in monthly NBC support workshops. The next session is **April 10**, at 5:30 p.m., at MTI.

MTI members in need of assistance: See your MTI Faculty/Building Representative or contact MTI staff (608-257-0491 or mti@madisonteachers.org) should you have a question or need *assistance with any work-related matter*.

Calendar of Events

MTI Special Education Sub-Committee
March 18, 4:15 p.m., MTI

MTI Member Organizers
March 18, 4:30 p.m., MTI

MTI Faculty Representative Council
March 19, 4:30 p.m., MTI

ESEA-MTI General Membership
March 20, 4:15 p.m., MTI

Spring Break—March 25-29

VOTE! Election Day—April 2

MTI Board of Directors
April 9, 4:30 p.m., MTI

Our Union Makes Us Strong!
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MTI's web page - www.madisonteachers.org
MTI's e-mail - MTI@madisonteachers.org