



2019-20 Employee Handbook Revisions

August 2019

Under the **Annual Employee Handbook Review**, representatives from MTI and the MMSD meet to identify Handbook issues for review and revision and then assign various **work groups** (comprised of MMSD and MTI appointed representatives) to discuss those matters, with a goal of advancing recommended revisions for consideration by the joint MTI-MMSD **Handbook Review Committee**. **Agreed upon recommendations are then** forwarded to the Superintendent and Board of Education for consideration. During the 2018-19 school year, representatives for MTI and the MMSD met to discuss potential Handbook changes to take effect in 2019-20. This update provides a summary of the Employee Handbook revisions approved for the 2019-20 school year.

2019-20 Employee Handbook Revisions:

Teacher Compensation: In the summer of 2018, the BOE directed District administration to work with MTI to identify modifications to the teacher salary schedule that would make it “**more sustainable**” (i.e., less costly). Potential changes advanced by Administration included reducing the number of salary tracks/lanes, creating a maximum salary for each track/lane, and modifying the salary schedule “curve”- each intended to reduce investments in teacher salaries. MTI representatives, while committing to collaborate with the District on exploring mutually agreeable changes that were in our members’ interest, consistently **opposed any salary schedule changes that would reduce investments** in our teaching staff. The MMSD-MTI Teacher Salary Schedule Committee met between August and November 2018 before the BOE eventually agreed to amend their directive to pursue reduced investments and, instead, approved the parties’ **recommended improvements to the salary schedule** including:

- Moving Improvement levels to every 5 years with 6 academic and/or PAC credits required to pass (in the transition, all teachers will be given a credit of 6 credits to use towards the next advancement)
- Removing half-steps for part-time employees, allowing part-time employees to advance a full step annually in the same manner as full-time employees
- Removing 2-year holds after Step 15, providing for annual step movement:
 - Teachers in the BA tracks will receive approximately an 0.87% increase every year instead of 1.75% every two years;
 - Teachers in the MA and PhD tracks will receive approximately a 1% increase every year instead of 2% every other year;
- Renaming steps as alpha rather than numerical

Given the advocacy of MTI, the Madison Metropolitan School District continues to compensate teachers on an objective salary schedule with tracks, lanes, and annual steps for defined salary advancement. All teachers were sent a communication this spring informing them of these changes.

ESEA Improvements: In previous Employee Handbook discussions, MTI successfully utilized the Handbook review process to secure a **\$15 per hour minimum starting wage** for all MMSD employees (2017), followed by **improvements to the EA/SEA salary schedule** (2018). For 2019-20, two minor, but important, improvements have been agreed to for ESEA-represented employees:

- a modification to **allow EAs/SEAs to receive one paid personal day charged to sick leave**
- **deletion of late resignation fees** for ESEA-represented employees

Substitute Teachers: The 2019-20 Employee Handbook will include changes to the substitute teacher assignment process to **prioritize requests from teachers**. The parties continue to meet to **discuss other modifications needed to address the District's chronic substitute teacher shortage**.

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 six (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 is available on both MTI's and the District's websites.

High School Scheduling: This work group met in the fall of 2018 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). MTI Reps advocated 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. The 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 or later (providing sufficient time to thoughtfully explore options).

LaFollette Four-Block Schedule: While the High School Scheduling work group explored scheduling options for East, Memorial, and West High Schools, a separate MTI-MMSD Work group was formed to discuss scheduling issues at LaFollette High School. LaFollette had been operating under a Four-block schedule for many years with teachers assigned to teach three of the four blocks each term. Scheduling complications in 2018-19, however, resulted in some LaFollette teachers assigned an A/B schedule, teaching six of eight blocks, while other LaFollette teachers taught three of four. This contributed to scheduling conflicts for students and workload increases for teachers. MTI and MMSD representatives, including teacher representatives from LaFollette, met on multiple occasions during the fall and winter of 2018 to discuss scheduling options before it was concluded to return LaFollette to a traditional seven-period day (like other MMSD high schools) effective with the 2019-20 school year.

Extra-Curricular Pay: MTI's work on the Employee Handbook this past school year has also assured **improvements in extra-curricular pay** for Track, Debate, and Forensics Varsity Coaches, while protecting pay rates for other coaches.

The parties failed to make progress on other MTI priorities for the 2019-20 Employee Handbook review, including on the issues of teacher **planning time (including sufficient planning time for cross-categorical staff) and shared decision-making**. **These issues will continue to be the focus of Employee Handbook review discussions during the 2019-20 school year.**