



# Madison Teachers Inc.

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Douglas P. Keillor, Executive Director

March 27, 2018

Superintendent Cheatham,

We saw the article in the Wisconsin State Journal on Monday, March 26th and found the tone of your quotes in the article disturbing and provocative. We have heard similar concerns from MTI membership.

The primary concerns center around the impression given that MMSD staff is not engaging in proactive work around student behavior, and are engaging in actions that fail to "warn" students before more serious behaviors occur. The article on the front page appeared to place blame on educators in schools.

The reality is that MTI members, leaders and staff have been calling for more interventions, more support and more accountability for student behaviors at the lower tiers. The call for changes to the current climate in our schools is resounding across MMSD. We know that you have heard this as well in your visits to schools. The idea that staff is not intervening with students out of fear or for other reasons is a willing and political deflection of responsibility from administrators (primarily non-school based) onto teachers and other staff in our schools. Our data and other measures of climate are a product of many factors that include a sense of frustration around a lack of consistently effective supports for our staff and students around behavior education.

We fully recognize a need to change outcomes for our students and the need to engage in work that reduces disparities around achievement and discipline. The way to do this is to develop systems that increase shared accountability and maximize supports at the individual student and classroom level. Engaging in shared leadership that includes staff, students, families, community and administration is critical, and that level of collaboration doesn't currently exist here.

If the WSJ article represented your sentiments inaccurately then you should clarify to MMSD staff and the public. Your words do matter a great deal to your staff. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

MTI Board of Directors

Andrew Waity, Karen Vieth, Andrew Mayhall, Cari Falk,  
Kira Fobbs, Jessica Hotz, Michael Jones, Kerry Motoviloff, and Peter Opps

