MEDIA RELEASE

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MATC TEACHERS UNION ENDORSES BERNIE SANDERS FOR PRESIDENT

Following a 10-month process involving full and part-time faculty, academic support staff and counselors, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Local 212’s Committee on Political Education (COPE) has endorsed Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders for president.

“This endorsement is about values. Senator Bernie Sanders has been vocal and unwavering in his support for fair and equitable treatment of workers, access to high quality, affordable healthcare and strengthening of public education, to name a few”, declared Dr. Lisa Conley, an MATC Natural Science Instructor and President of Local 212. “At the end of the day, Senator Sanders most closely aligns with the very things that our union stands for.”

Dr. Conley explained that the union polled its members last May to identify a top-tier slate of preferred candidates. A COPE team then analyzed the candidates’ positions on issues of critical importance to MATC employees and students, sharing this information with members who also participated in a later preference poll and a caucus event. The process culminated with COPE’s endorsement vote over the weekend.

“As excited as we are to work for Bernie Sanders’ enroute to the Wisconsin election on April 7, Local 212 COPE members also voted to support whomever emerges as the Democratic Party candidate”, said Local 212 COPE’s Chairperson, Dr. Dave Weingrod. “This is, in part, because the Trump administration’s policies have been a disaster for our members and our students.”

Weingrod listed as examples the Trump/DeVos positions on student debt, the cost of higher education, their removal of regulations on predatory for-profit colleges, Trump’s attacks on immigrants who have relied on MATC since it’s founding in 1913, and Trump’s refusal to confront the nation’s unacceptable economic inequality as just some of the many issues where the union differs with Trump and aligns most closely with Sanders.

Local 212 was the first higher education union in the U.S. to successfully negotiate a contract.