

Former Employees Official Statements

The following former employees previously resigned from their roles, in large part due to Tim's mistreatment and bullying.

1. Ryan Budziszewski, Former Bilingual Communications Specialist
 - a. **Forms of bullying witnessed/experienced by Tim, as defined by the MMSD handbook:**
Provocative or dehumanizing name calling; Belittling a person in public or in private; Excluding a person that would normally be expected to attend from meetings, trainings, or other work-related events; Shouting at a person in private or in public; Using vulgar language or inappropriate language towards a person; Unwarranted or invalid criticism; Excessive monitoring of a person's work
 - b. **Have you experienced OR witnessed "loud, disruptive, profane or obscene language or gestures that are clearly not part of the typical school district learning environment," by Tim? Yes**
 - c. **Comments:** "In December of 2020, T.L. had addressed our group for "our" failings in a communications message that went out to families, I believe. We later found out that the blame actually laid with T.L. and his failure of leadership and inability to communicate with his own team. Myself, and other colleagues were addressed in a manner the next morning that was very obviously not only rude, but abusive behavior. **We were yelled at and ridiculed virtually in a meeting in a manner that only a toxic white male addresses those who that person has little to no respect for. In this case, myself - a man of color, and two of my female colleagues.** The ridicule and yelling in this specific meeting left our supervisor speechless, because of the abusive nature of how we were addressed. This incident led me to ask myself if this was workplace abuse, and nearly everyone on the team individually assured me that it was. As in many abusive encounters, I asked myself if I was unworthy and incapable of working in this environment, and blamed myself. I lost self esteem during the months to follow and found myself struggling to keep pace due to the workplace environment and management from T.L.

Following this incident, our group was lacking general motivation and a sense of belonging, something that we had for years before T.L. had acquired his position. Because of this, I had written an uplifting email to our team, stating how much I appreciate the group and how wonderful it's been working with everyone over the years problem free. This email was professional and I stated that I don't like seeing coworkers hurt or belittled, the importance of honoring everyone's mental health, and that I was appreciative of everyone on the team. This email was well received by everyone on our team, minus T.L., who I had included as well. It was a necessary internal communication because everyone was still in a state of shock, working in fear, and operating with low morale.

Following this email, and an upcoming meeting where I reiterated the importance of operating with dignity and respect for all team members, I was called into a meeting

with T.L. And my supervisor. In this meeting, the week before the 20/21 holiday break, I was told I was in the wrong, had overstepped, and wasn't respecting authority and was undermining leadership. After being gaslit nearly the entire meeting, none of my or my colleagues' concerns were addressed, and **I was told that even mentioning mental health in internal communication is inappropriate** and I should seek counseling and resources—which I already had been at the time. At the end of the meeting, T.L. had told me that he was “trying his best to keep everyone on the team “ in the coming months. Regardless of budget abilities, I considered this to be beyond rude and interpreted this to be **a direct threat to my employment and to my wellbeing as a person working for MMSD**. This meeting occurred right before the Christmas weekend, and for the entire holiday season, I had declined in health and well-being, to say the least... due to operating out of fear and being reprimanded for professionally speaking my mind and sticking up for others on our team.

Overall, this experience, and other personal and others' experience were the reason I left MMSD. **White male toxicity was ruling unchecked and it was time to get out of a toxic and abusive work environment**. In the months following this incident, Mike Wetzel had been “fired” by Tim, even though it was not cleared with MTI nor HR. So in that case, T.L. attempted to fire one of us, which In that moment I knew that his previous threats towards myself could very much turn into reality. Mike Wetzel was therefore not fired, due to there being no just reason or legitimately to what T.L.s intentions were.

In the coming months during 2021, 5 of us on the Communications team would leave MMSD: Marla P, Taryn J, Marlita B, myself, and Tony R, were those who had left due to T.L. and the work environment and toxic culture. **I truly believe T.L. not only misrepresents MMSD values, but contributes to toxic work culture and is antithetical to the progress that MMSD seeks for students, families, and staff.**

In my case, it was an honor to serve families, and I hope that MMSD better vets high end management and makes sure that there are not more like T.L. are hired. **It is bad for retaining staff of color, female staff, and anyone who may or may not face discrimination in society**. I hope MMSD makes the right choice going forward regarding the role and employment of T.L. This is the only time in my life that I've taken the time to write this out about a former employer, due to the serious nature of these claims. The well-being of the Communications team and MMSD as a whole depends on HR making the right decision.”

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2. Taryn Johnson, Former Communications Bilingual Project Specialist:
 - a. **When did you first observe or encounter workplace bullying from Tim?** “Pretty immediately. It didn't take long for his true colors to show. He was immediately sexist

and belittling to all the women in the department, demonstrating how little he cared about our opinions and how little he valued our work or contributions. He consistently demonstrated his belief that he is better than everyone else and we're all idiots (this part is not gender-specific. He was equally demeaning to the men in the department). The work environment that he creates is toxic, unwelcoming and the opposite of what the district is trying to do (or at least says it's trying to do). It's clear Tim cares only about Tim. He should never be in charge of a team as he is the complete opposite of a team player. It took him over a year to learn how to pronounce my name and he knew nothing about me personally or even what I did at work, broadly in my role or in the every day. He never took any opportunity to care, or show up to meetings that he was scheduled for with the team, unless he wanted to yell at us, usually for something that wasn't even our fault. But how would he know? He never paid attention. All he ever seemed to care about was sucking up to the superintendent and saving his own ass." Taryn Johnson goes on to share Tim is "99% of the reason why I left the job I had for 9 years and had mostly enjoyed...Please fire him and stop paying him ridiculous sums of money to keep getting away with," bullying coworkers.

- b. Forms of bullying witnessed/experienced by Tim, as defined by the MMSD handbook:**
Belittling a person in public or in private; Excluding a person that would normally be expected to attend from meetings, trainings, or other work-related events; Shouting at a person in private or in public; Using vulgar language or inappropriate language towards a person; Unwarranted or invalid criticism
 - c. Have you experienced OR witnessed "loud, disruptive, profane or obscene language or gestures that are clearly not part of the typical school district learning environment," by Tim? Yes**
 - d. Do you feel the supervisor's behavior has inhibited the department's ability to properly function? Yes**
 - e. Was Tim's behavior a factor in your resignation from MMSD? Yes**
 - f. Did you mention Tim's behavior in your exit interview with MMSD? Yes**
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3. Tony Rodriguez, Former Communications Web Team Leader

- a. Forms of bullying witnessed/experienced by Tim, as defined by the MMSD handbook:**
Belittling a person in public or in private; Unwarranted or invalid criticism; Excessive monitoring of a person's work
- b. List any negative interactions or patterns of bullying you have experienced or witnessed from Tim.** "The below is copied and pasted from an email that I sent to the Chief of Staff on September 1, 2021. Less than two months later I tendered my resignation from MMSD, which was both my longest and most favorite job at the point, until it wasn't. The comments were made by Tim LeMonds." Quotes from Tim LeMonds in the email excerpts include:

- *"Tony, I don't mean to diminish your problems, but EVERYONE has problems,"*
- *"Wait, wait, wait, I gotta tell you that is a pet peeve of mine. I am not gonna praise you just for DOING YOUR JOB,"*

c. When did you first observe or encounter workplace bullying from Tim? "Within the first week of his employment Tim had made our Graphic Designer (at the time) Amy cry, and I believe this was before he was even our team supervisor.

d. Do you feel the supervisor's behavior inhibits the department's ability to properly function?
Yes.

e. Was Tim's behavior a factor in your resignation from MMSD? Yes