



Bargaining Edition The VOICE

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Summer Bargaining Update #1



The work of the SLCTA/CU Bargaining Team will continue full force over the summer as we continue to work on the full book contract language negotiations, teacher evaluation system, and compensation and insurance. Bargaining meetings are scheduled throughout June, with desire of both the union's negotiating team and the district's team to complete negotiations so that salary increases and ratification can happen when school starts up again.

Here is a list of the items still in process of negotiation without an agreement:

Compensation and Benefits

Currently, there are no proposals on the table for either compensation or benefits from either the district or the union. The state legislature touts a "huge" increase in education funding, but quite a bit is tied up with strings to be used for certain purposes only. We are looking at an approximate \$71 increase per student over last year. This is a modest increase, at best. There is also money set aside in HB 7069 (signed last week by the Governor) for bonuses for teachers rated effective or highly effective. The Compensation and Insurance Sub-Committee is scheduled to meet on June 26th to begin to hammer out a raise for employees this year.

Supplements

In December, 2016 the CTA/CU proposed a series of additional supplements and also some supplement changes to bring some equity to the supplement schedule. These proposals included increasing the MS Band Director to 5%, Student Council, to 4%, HOSA to 5%, and Vocational Activities to 5%, changing the Sideline Cheerleading Head Coach to add a Spring and Fall Head at 5% each, along with an Associate Sideline Cheerleading Coach supplement for Spring and Fall at 3.5% each, and adding a Skills USA supplement at 5%. The union also proposed a salary schedule supplement of \$500 for Certified Braille Transcriber, and adding language to the CU contract for school-based foreign language translation.

In addition, the union proposed restoring the supplement base amount (upon which all supplements are calculated) back to the level previously in place before the massive budget cuts of 2007.

CU Evaluation and CU Classroom Subbing Rate

The CTA/CU proposed an increase in the CU rate for subbing in classrooms from \$20 to \$30 per full day and to \$15 for a half day. The CU Evaluation will be reviewed during the next Steering Committee meeting (June 21st) to provide more clarity in the rubric to eliminate principal-specific subjectivity in ratings.

Bereavement Days

The union has proposed 3 days of bereavement leave, not charged to sick leave. The district considers this proposal to have a potential financial impact and is waiting to respond to it when firmer numbers are available from the state budget.

Medicaid Billing

The union and the district have exchanged proposals regarding the distribution of Medicaid dollars generated from services to students, procedures for Medicaid billing, and providing time for employees to complete the work of Medicaid billing. An agreement was reached on procedures some language for billing procedures, and will monitor planning and other contractual time for all.

Academic Freedom

The union has proposed language for academic freedom that says the following: "As responsible, professional educators, teachers shall have the authority to assign grades to students in accordance with state law and district policies. In addition, teachers shall determine the instructional methodologies and practices used within their classrooms to achieve desired academic results. This shall include professional decision-making with regard to the day-to-day pacing of their courses and lessons, the materials used for instruction, and the determination for how content shall be delivered." As salary and placements become more and more dependent upon student test scores, teachers should have the freedom to make professional decisions that impact their students' performance and not be chained to methodologies and strategies that are deemed "one size fits all". The district flatly rejected this proposal. **Article continues on p.2**

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Job Security for Annual Contract Teachers

Each year for the last several negotiation cycles, we have proposed language to provide added job security to annual contract teachers—especially those who are rated effective and highly effective. The arbitrary nature of non-reappointment, in St. Lucie, especially when a teacher has been successful (as measured by their teacher evaluation) can make the difference between someone choosing to come here or go to one of the 37 other districts (including Martin, Indian River, Okeechobee, and Palm Beach) where some protection from these arbitrary non-reappointments is offered in their contracts.

Unfortunately, HB 7069 stripped this language from contracts where it is already negotiated and now keeps other districts from agreeing to any. It is counterintuitive to say we want to retain great teachers and then non-reappoint them or give them no job security. This battle will probably move to the courts in one way or another.

Teacher Evaluation

The teacher evaluation system is as yet unresolved with issues still outstanding such as whether the DPP will be inclusive or additive, which tests will be used to measure student performance, and the non-classroom teacher evaluation system.

Negotiating sessions are open to the public and are published on the district's website. Upcoming dates are:

Monday, June 19th @ 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, June 21st @ 1:00 p.m.

Monday, June 26th @ 8:30 a.m.

Chief Negotiator, David Freeland contributed to this report.

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