



Bargaining Edition The VOICE

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Summer Bargaining Update #3



We have completed our “full book” negotiations (reviewing all language in the full contracts for teachers and non-instructional staff and adding, deleting, or changing relevant language). We met today, Friday, July 28th, in the hopes that we would come to an agreement and settle our contract completely. We didn't. Here is what is currently on the table. We meet again Monday, July 31st at 7:30 a.m. to continue our work.

Compensation

Teachers/All Instructional:

- ◆ Salary increase of \$1,000 for all NOT on the pay-for-performance salary schedule (ie: not annual contract). This salary increase is NOT tied to teacher evaluation in any fashion.
- ◆ Salary increase of \$1,000 for all teachers on the pay-for-performance salary schedule (ie: annual contract) who earned an “effective” final rating and \$1,033 for those who earned a “highly effective” final rating.

Classified Unit (Non-instructional staff):

- ◆ A step increase for all eligible employees with an additional step added to the top of the salary schedule AND an across-the-board increase to each step so that the total increase averages 2.14% for all employees (ie: step plus amount added to the step).

Supplements

- ◆ Increase from \$24,000 to \$25,500 of the academic and athletic supplement base, plus the increase of MS Band Director, HOSA, and Vocational Activities (to be re-named CTE Activities) supplements to 5%, the increase of HS Student Council to 4%, and the addition of a Sideline Cheerleading supplement for Spring at 5%. Also, agreement to incrementally increase the supplement base to the pre-cut level of \$32,000 within five years.

Benefits (Insurance)

- ◆ Continue the \$750 H.S.A. contribution for employees in eligible plans and maintain the \$6,010 district contribution to health insurance premiums.
- ◆ Add an optional 3rd insurance plan choice of a high deductible plan for 2018 only with a deductible of \$2,500 for single coverage that would be priced at approximately 12% lower than the RENEWAL rates for the existing H.S.A. eligible plan. If the total cost of the plan is lower than the district's contribution of \$6,010, then the district would contribute the difference (along with the \$750 already being contributed) to the employee's H.S.A. account for employees in this new plan.

HUH?

There is a good possibility that the premium for the new high deductible plan would actually be LESS than what the district contributes to employees for health insurance premiums (that's the \$6,010 figure). Since the district can't pay more than 99% of the total premium per employee plan, the difference between those amounts would be contributed to the employees' H.S.A. account. Yes, your insurance would be paid almost entirely by the district and there would still be money left over to put into your H.S.A. each month.

WHAT'S THE CATCH??

A high deductible plan like this also means higher out of pocket maximums (in this case \$6,000 for individual), greater percentage of cost borne by the employee even after meeting the individual deductible of \$2,500, and greater risk for the employee. It will NOT be for everyone...or maybe anyone...depending on your circumstances. Remember, you get what you pay for.

- ◆ Agreement to begin planning for a transition to a self-insurance insurance program in the future so that any amount paid in excess premiums goes to lower employee costs versus being at the mercy of a large insurance company's drive for profit which is our current situation. This does nothing for us now, but is essential to future planning.

(continued on page 2)

**St. Lucie Classroom Teachers'
Association and Classified Unit**

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(continued from Page 1)

If you recall, last year we saw a 7% decrease in premiums from FL Blue in their renewal for 2017. Your premiums went down in December 2016 and you saw a bit more money in your paycheck.

Now, we are looking at a likely double-digit increase in premiums (with estimates ranging from 10-15%). Unfortunately, we won't have premium renewal final amounts until the end of August and it would only be employees who shoulder the risk, because the district has offered no increase in their contribution amount regardless of the increase in premiums.

The district believes that this offer is fair given their financial picture and that the Board is not willing to dip into their reserve (which currently stands at a bit over 5% or 4.7% if the current proposed raise is factored in). Either way, it is well above what is required by law (only 3%) and above the levels the Board has been willing to go in the past (as low as 4%) in order to adequately compensate employees.

The FL legislature has done neither us nor the district any favors this year, including wrapping \$244 million that should have been on the table for overall salary increases into one-time bonuses for a select group. We have proposed a one-time bonus for our members who are ineligible for the state bonuses such as non-classroom instructional teachers and non-instructional staff. The district rejected this offer, but proposed coming back to the table in November in the event additional money is available. While this seems reasonable, we believe the district can fund these bonuses now, knowing that it is likely we will see an increase in students and a commensurate increase in funding with the October FTE. Our community is booming with new homes and developments. Taking a chance now, is not really taking that much of a chance. Why wait? It's hard to agree to what essentially is a partial settlement in hopes of more later, even if on some past occasions the district has agreed to more compensation when we've returned to the table mid-year.

What happens if we don't have an agreement prior to the start of school?

We keep negotiating and working towards one.

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

Monday, July 31st @ 7:30 a.m.

Chief Negotiator, David Freeland, contributed to this report.



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