



Education Association of St. Lucie LOCAL 3616

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The VOICE

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23-24 Negotiation Update #1

This is a quick update on negotiations for compensation. We are only one session into negotiations, and we seem to have a long way to go. Here is what has happened so far:

The Back Story:

In July 2023, the union asked the district to begin negotiations regarding salary for our 3 bargaining units.

At that time, we were told that we needed to wait until we received final numbers for student enrollment due to Florida's new Universal Voucher bill (HB1) which could lower student enrollment.

We agreed to wait so that we were operating with a full picture of the financial situation.

A Plot Twist:

While the union was asked to wait to begin negotiating our salary agreements for 2023-2024, The School Board voted (3-2) to approve a 26% raise for the superintendent. It was a shocking proposal and despite objections, it passed. In response to objections, the Board was quick to state on the record: "This action sets a precedent for what we want St. Lucie Public Schools to be... We want the best for ALL of our staff."

Fast forward to September 28th:

On Thursday September 28th, the union and the district met to negotiate compensation. The district asked to begin with CTA (teacher) compensation due to the arbitrary state deadline of October 1st for TSIA (Teacher Salary Increase Allocation) funding. The district began by providing 3 proposals across the table.

The District's Proposal:

The district provided 3 proposals that together:

1. Provide large increases (~10%) for some members and small increases (~2%) for others.
2. Compress salary schedules more than their current compression – contrary to the district's own goal.
3. Use referendum funds to supplement the base increases for some groups of teachers and supplant base increases for other groups of teachers.

The district brought a proposal that benefits some at the expense of others, that meets no interests of our members, and that is totally unacceptable. In fact, it borders on insulting.

23-24 Negotiation Update #1 continued

A Teachable Moment:

When the union and the district originally went to our members and the community to promote the referendum, it was described as a way to supplement the funding for programs and salaries provided by the state. It was a way to make our county better than our neighbors, run the best programs, and attract the top talent to our schools for the benefit of our students and our community.

supplement

[*subp-luh-muhnt*; verb *subp-luh-ment*]

noun

1. something added to complete a thing, supply a deficiency, or reinforce or extend a whole.

verb (used with object)

1. to complete, add to, or extend by a supplement.

supplant

[*sub-plant*, -plahnt]

verb (used with object)

1. to take the place of (another), as through force, scheming, strategy, or the like.
2. to replace (one thing) by something else.

With this proposal, the district seeks to supplant funding for salaries, rather than supplement salaries. This is something we've become familiar with in Florida. We call it *the Florida Lottery Shell Game*.

What's Next:

We return to the table on Wednesday, October 4th at 2:30. At that meeting the union will present a proposal that:

1. Provides meaningful, permanent, base salary increases.
2. Provides a realistic increase that is aligned with the **precedent** set by the superintendent's raise.
3. Provides consistent increases to **all** members of our bargaining units.
4. Begins to decompress our salary schedules.
5. Does not use referendum funds to supplant proper district funding of compensation instead of supplementing it.

We also have the same expectations for any agreement for our CU and ProTech bargaining units and we do not intend to sign any agreements until we have agreements ready for **all** of our bargaining units.

We will continue to keep you updated as negotiations progress. Keep an eye on your home email and our social media for updates.

What to Report... When to Report It with CTA Vice-President Rebecca Petrie

We've started to see an increase in employees being investigated for allegations of "failure to report suspected abuse to DCF." **Here are some reminders about mandatory reporting to DCF.**

FLORIDA LAW requires "any person, including, but not limited to teachers or other school officials or personnel who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the Department of Children and Families (DCF)."

**IF IN
DOUBT,
JUST
REPORT
IT**

1-800-96-ABUSE

Failure to report is a 3rd degree felony. You do not need permission to report suspected abuse.

Individuals reporting suspected abuse or neglect are immune from any liability when making such reports to DCF in good faith.

The Florida Dept. of Children and Families website is a wonderful resource. According to the website:

1. What is abuse?

For children: "Abuse" means any willful act or threatened act that results in any physical, mental, or sexual injury or harm that causes or is likely to cause the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired. Abuse of a child includes acts or omissions. Corporal discipline of a child by a parent or legal custodian for disciplinary purposes does not in itself constitute abuse when it does not result in harm to the child.

<https://www.myflfamilies.com/services/abuse/abuse-hotline>



Helpful Tips if You are Facing Disciplinary Action

None of us want to think about facing disciplinary action. Unfortunately, it is a very real possibility in the age in which we are living. Keep these recommendations in mind in the event that you are facing disciplinary action - whether at the school level, district level, or if law enforcement/DCF are involved.

Do:

Remain calm.



Contact your Worksite Leader (building rep) or the Education Association office immediately.

Get preliminary details, if possible, without answering questions.

Retain letters, documents, notes, etc... related to the matter at hand. Keep notes.

Don't:



DON'T make statements.

DON'T attend meetings without your Worksite Leader or other union representation.

DON'T agree to any change in job status. Do not resign your employment.

Here is some additional practical advice, which you should use to protect your rights until help arrives. If confronted with an allegation:

- Remain calm and courteous.
- Ask for your Worksite Leader to be present. If they are not available, ask to reschedule the meeting.
- Listen carefully to the allegation. Do not tell "your side" without first speaking to your Worksite Leader.
- Make written notes of the events which occur in any meeting. Take down every detail including the names of witnesses and other involved. Do this while details are fresh in your mind. Keep this for yourself.
- Do not resign or sign any agreements.
- Immediately contact your Worksite Leader or the Education Association office.

Your Right to Representation

Being called into a meeting with your supervisor or an administrator can seem daunting. It is important to stay calm and remember your right to representation, also known as your "Weingarten Rights". ***YOU DECIDE IF YOU FEEL THE MEETING COULD LEAD TO DISCIPLINE, not your supervisor!***

Remember: If a reasonable person would believe that discipline could result from the meeting, you have the right to representation.

Ask: "What is the purpose of the meeting?" Could discipline result from the meeting? If so...

State: "I want union representation." You can ask for representation at any time during the meeting.

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Local 3616**

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Let's Talk Benefits with
Lucy Bravo, Organizing and Member Advocacy Specialist
This month's focus will be on



Union savings sent right to your phone!

Text & save. INSTANTLY!

Sign up for Union Plus text alerts to find out about the latest savings, deals and limited time offers!!

Text "PLUS" to 22555 to sign up now!

