



A Union of Professionals

CONTRACT BULLETIN #6

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Negotiation Meetings.

The Table Team (TT), namely, the President, Vice-President I, Vice-President II, Vice-President III, Treasurer, Secretary, and attorney, have met with the administration six times since the last bulletin, and have had three conference calls. They met on 5/9, 5/15, 5/22, 5/31, 6/11, 6/20 and had conference calls on 6/7, 6/11, and 6/12.

On **June 23** from 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM, the Big Bargaining Team (BBT) (building representatives and volunteers who represent support staff and office staff) and the Table Team had a meeting. The following proposals were discussed. Some were tentatively approved for member vote, and some were sent back to the negotiating table.

- **Article VI: Personnel File** -- The language was changed to state that only one personnel file will be maintained by the district for each employee. Tentatively approved by the BBT for vote by the members.
- **9.1 School Calendar** -- Language changed to remove the mandatory unpaid day for classroom preparation. The union will go back to negotiate for mandated teacher access to classrooms before the contract start date for room setup.
- **9.2.1. Special Education Faculty** -- SPED teachers will have release time to work on I.E.P. preparation. 3 days per year, which may be taken in increments of half days or one whole day, under the condition that not more than two teachers per building per day may have release time. Not approved and going back to the negotiating table seeking to allow for more than two teachers per day.
- **10.4 Formal Observations** -- A formal classroom observation shall be defined as one involving a classroom visitation for the length of one classroom period not less than thirty (30) minutes. Not approved and going back to the negotiating table seeking to clarify "one full classroom period but not more than sixty (60 minutes)."

- **10.8 Informal Observations** -- Informal observations which are used to evaluate the teacher shall be put in writing, with a copy given to the teacher within three (3) days of the observation. Informal observations are limited to three per year, unless additional observations are requested by the employee. Tentatively approved by the BBT for vote by the members.
- **14.2 Tuition Reimbursement** -- The amount available for district staff has increased from \$70,000 to \$225,000. Also, the per credit hour reimbursement has increased to \$200. Applications shall not be unreasonably denied, and there is a right to review any decision to reject an application. Tentatively approved by the BBT for vote by the members, but clarifying language will be added regarding credits for endorsements and other cohorts, and mandating that endorsement credits will not be lost to lane changes if they are acquired prior to the acquisition of a higher degree.
- **Article XVI: Evaluations** -- Support staff. For support staff, there will not be "formal" and "informal" observations. Instead, the administrator will designate in advance which week the observation will be conducted. The employee will be observed only once each semester in their designated work place while doing regular work, e.g., observations will not take place during passing periods. The observation must be greater than 20 minutes and not exceed 50 minutes, or one class period, whichever is greater. Tentatively approved by the BBT for vote by the members.
- **20.6 Vacancies and Transfers** -- Everyone is personally notified of vacancies via email blast for all openings. Transfer list eliminated. Desired transfers do not require approval of current principal. No one should be involuntarily transferred if there is another position available for which the employee is qualified. Tentatively approved by the BBT for vote by the members.
- **Article XXI: Evaluations** -- Office staff. Same changes as Article XVI above. Tentatively approved by the BBT for vote by the members.
- **13.2 Personal and/or Emergency Leave** -- A reason will be required when two consecutive personal days are requested. Union wants to eliminate stipulation of no more than two (2) advance notice personal leave days per week. Still being negotiated and not yet approved for vote by BBT. Negotiations between TT and administration will continue on this proposal.

- **15.2 Seniority** -- The current proposal states that when transferring within the support or office staff classification, you bring your seniority with you; however, if transferring into the certified classification, you do not bring it with you, but if going back in the previous classification (office or support), you regain your seniority. Seniority credit will not accrue during any leave-of-absence/without pay periods in excess of ninety work days (changed from thirty days). Not yet approved for vote by BBT. Negotiations between TT and administration will continue on this proposal.
- **15.5 Involuntary Transfers** -- Support and office staff. The District wants there to be no transfers other than involuntary transfers once the school year begins. Two types of transfers: [1] Your job is eliminated and you need a new position, or [2] Opening with a critical need, and employee is the best qualified. In the event of a job elimination, no appeal. If due to critical need, employee can request to be designated as a "temporary transfer," and, upon the position being filled, the employee shall be returned to original position. Not yet approved for vote by BBT. Negotiations between TT and administration will continue on this proposal.
- **19.3 and 24.5 Interpreter Duties** -- We proposed language that will compensate office and staff members pulled away from their duties to interpret. We want fees that match that of interpreter pay. District wants to pay a flat \$20 per hour. Interpreters get paid \$40 per hour. Not yet approved for vote by BBT. Negotiations between TT and administration will continue on this proposal.

ECONOMIC SECTIONS

The union is seeking to achieve the following in its economic negotiations:

- While very slow, progress has been made.
- The administration stated that they want to wrap up negotiations before June 30; however, they have not provided their final economic offer as anticipated on June 20. On May 9th, we presented our economic proposals, including revised pay tables for certified, clerical, and staff members.
- These proposals are grounded in the state's promise to provide additional and continued funding for low income and underperforming districts. Our district stands to receive \$75 million over the next three years.

- Our treasurer, Jeff Mleczeko, developed a very sound economic proposal that is designed to equalize our salary schedule to those of surrounding districts, specifically, West Aurora. Unfortunately, the other side has not discussed what we have proposed.
- Last year the district received an 13.5 million in new money, and we also stand to receive around 12 million new money next year, with additional estimated funding equaling \$75 million in the next 3 years.
- Unfortunately, the district has not shown a desire to use these new funds to equalize our salary schedules and support staff pay, but rather to spend millions on new district admin offices to replace McKnight center.
- On the 45th day after the contract ends, June 29th, we are required to go to mediation. At end of mediation process, which can go on for a while, both sides have to go public on their final offers (posted online via State Labor Board).
- On May 31, Pete Wilson, attorney for the district, suggested that mediation should be the next step. This view is not shared by Board of Education President Annette Johnson. It has become apparent in the last few sessions that Pete Wilson has been the impediment to forward progress.
- We continue to come to the table to negotiate in good faith, yet the other side has not. We stand committed to collaborative and productive sessions to resolve our differences.
- In conversations with Annette Johnson, we have learned that there has been little work done on the economics by the finance department. We are waiting for a reasonable response to our economic proposals. Ms. Johnson stated that she will be looking into their proposal, because she "wants to make it right for our staff." The BOE has yet to tell us how they intend to bring us up to surrounding districts' pay schedules as promised.
- If we want to fix the economics of the district, THIS is the time. We will never again have this much money coming in that was not expected.

LANGUAGE SECTIONS

- The union is seeking hard caps on class sizes, including additional compensation and mandatory classroom assistants when caps are exceeded. In addition to class sizes, we continue to wait for the district to respond to the union's proposals regarding start times and economics.

- The Illinois State House has introduced a bill that would cap class size. Their proposal is even more stringent than what the union has proposed for our contract.
- In regards to discipline, an employee can appeal an administrative judgement to the school board. If they are unsatisfied with the board's judgement, the next step is union arbitration. Arbitration can be an expensive process, however, and fair share (non-members) would have to reimburse these costs.
- The Board recently stated that it no longer wants to hear disciplinary appeals from its district's members, thus eliminating a layer of review. We strongly encourage the school board to continue serving in this function. We believe that there is internal debate in the board on this matter.
- District wants to set an undefined work day. We want the hours to be fixed in the contract. Next year will keep last year's times, but there will be a change for year two and three.

NEW SUPERINTENDENT

- The new superintendent, Dr. Jennifer Norrell, was approved and introduced on May 29.
- She will be taking over leadership of the district effective July 1st.
- Both Jennifer Gentile and Gerry Mestek have been meeting with Dr. Norrell to discuss district union concerns.
- She has promised to take a serious look at these issues with the intention of helping D131 move in a positive direction.
- It is our current assessment that Dr. Norrell will be a positive influence in the upcoming years. She has stated that she is eager to work with our union through committees and other avenues to open channels of communication between the union and the district.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- Dr. Mark McDonald and Assistant Superintendent of Finance/Chief School Business Official Michael Prombo no longer work in the district. They were both at the table negotiating for the district.
- In the event negotiations are completed and a contract is approved for member ratification, the vote will NOT take place until after school has started and members have had

the opportunity to review and discuss the content of the contract.

NEXT MEETINGS

- The Table Team will meet with administration to continue negotiations on the economic sections of the contract on June 28. These are scheduled to be four-hour sessions.
- Next BBT meeting will not take place until August.

UNION WEBSITE

Visit the East Aurora Council website for previous contract negotiation updates, and other information:
<https://eastauroracounciloftheamericanfederationteacherlocal604.com/>

QUOTE

"The Union is not a fee-for-service organization, it is a family" ~ Sue Carney, APWU Director of Human Relations