



Serving all or part of:
Palatine • Rolling Meadows • Inverness
Arlington Heights • Hoffman Estates
Schaumburg • South Barrington

Joseph M. Kiszka Educational Service Center
580 North First Bank Drive
Palatine, IL 60067

Scott B. Thompson, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools

(847) 963-3205 • Fax (847) 963-3200
www.ccsd15.net

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 9, 2016
TO: Board of Education
FROM: Scott Thompson
RE: CTC Contract Exploratory Committee Update



Background

The Classroom Teachers Council (CTC) Executive Board approached me in the fall to suggest a different way to approach negotiations for a new contract. The members suggested an informal group of representatives of administrators and CTC Executive Board members (three from each group) meet to brainstorm possible components of a new contract. I made it clear on several occasions that I did not have the authority to negotiate a contract with the CTC, but if the Board approved an exploratory committee to discuss possible contract components, the brainstorming conclusions could be shared for consideration with no binding commitments. The School Board agreed to the process.

The Exploratory Committee met on many occasions to craft a non-binding proposal to be shared with the respective boards. If either board determined the proposal was unsatisfactory, the CTC would issue a demand to bargain and the process would revert to traditional negotiations.

The committee has crafted a proposal that will be shared with you on Wednesday. In preparation for our discussion on CTC contract negotiations, I am sending you the highlights that have been discussed as possible agreements for the new contract.

Highlights

Ten-year contract (2016-2026): The length of this contract provides stability on many fronts; foremost is the strong financial position that it would provide for the District. Teachers would find the length of the contract reassuring, encouraging stability in our excellent teaching force. It also avoids protracted negotiations and legal costs multiple times in the next ten years if the contracts were shorter in length. I believe the length of the contract allowed for significant concessions by the CTC that would not have been available for a shorter contract.

Reasonable increases for individual teachers, desirable cost to the District: Individual teachers will receive reasonable raises, while the increase in cost to the District over the 10 years is .9% per year (without factoring in additional savings most likely to be realized).

Resolving the problem of Tier 2 salary schedule: Our Tier 2 salary schedule is creating a growing problem for the District and the Union. (Although this item was raised by the CTC, the administration wanted to address it as well.) Tier 2 employees view their salary schedule as inferior to the Tier 1 counterparts, creating an unhealthy culture in the District. We are finding it increasingly difficult to attract high-quality candidates in our most challenging-to-fill positions. And we are losing experienced teachers in those positions to other districts that pay higher salaries. And eventually, when the majority of teachers are on the Tier 2 salary schedule, there is bound to be tough negotiations and a correction.

We attempted to resolve these issues by creating a path from Tier 2 to Tier 1. After six years of service, teachers would be moved to Tier 1 at the salary just higher than their Tier 2 salary. The year of transition creates usually modest raises, some as low as .5%. And the Tier 1 schedule has salaries decreasing in cells for the first four years and Tier 2 for three years. Consequently, when teachers move from Tier 2 at step 6, they are likely to move to a lower step on Tier 1. This makes the path to higher salaries require more years of service, saving the District money.

Savings through new program assistant (PA) allocation: A long-standing allocation formula has required the District to provide PA hours to every school. The last negotiation allowed the administration to reduce the general education PA hours up to 25% of the formula allocation. This new formula increases the savings to the District, estimated to save more than \$500,000 annually.

Tuition Reimbursement Guidelines: The committee is proposing an increase in the number of on-line graduate credit hours that may be applied for lane advancement. Previously, on-line coursework was limited to 15 semester hours. The committee recognized that on-line courses have developed into quality alternatives to brick-and-mortar classroom experiences. The administration does not feel this increase will be in any way detrimental when compared to the current structure.

Teacher Work Day: The CTC desired to have teachers working together on their instructional practices more frequently than is currently occurring. The group proposed using two Friday Early Release times for the purpose of teamwork. The administration felt that there are enough controls and benefits from this change to agree to the change. In reality, it gives teachers an extra 10 sessions a year to meet together to collectively improve their craft.

Elementary Specials Teachers (art, music and PE) have progressively increased workloads to match their general education colleagues: This will increase the number of students these teachers service and reduce the number of specials teachers the District will need to employ (saving money).

Leaves: Employees are granted 12 sick days per year, with no limit to the number accumulated. After the accumulation of 89 sick days, the annual allotment increases to 15. The CTC requested that the District grant 24 days annually to those who have accumulated 170 days. (Teachers work 183 days annually.) The administration believes this is an incentive for teachers to not use their sick days unless absolutely necessary, decreasing the costs for substitute teachers. Also, the effectiveness of substitute teachers is minimal. The best instruction occurs when the permanent teacher is in the classroom. The administration also calculated the risk of employees using these days (which is a cost to the district), and it felt that the benefits outweighed the risks.

CTC also wanted to modestly change the number of days members could donate to the 'sick leave bank'. It also wanted a slight change in access to these days. The administration felt there were benefits to the District to agree to propose these changes.

Retirement Incentives: In our efforts to decrease the overall cost of the contract, the administration proposed the retirement incentive (RIOP) had to be accessed at the earliest opportunity—four years prior to the year the teacher was eligible for retirement. Encouraging teachers to retire at the earliest occasion positions the District to eliminate the highest paid teachers and replace them with teachers at the lowest paid positions on the salary schedule. It also reverts the offer to an incentive instead of a benefit. We will propose to the CTC to add language to eliminate the risk of paying a penalty if legislation prohibits these kinds of increases.

Increase in number of steps to the end of the schedule: We proposed (and the CTC accepted) to increase the number of steps at the top of the schedule. Consequently, it takes one additional year to attain the highest salary. This was accomplished by removing step 20 on the regular schedule and creating two longevity steps.

Conclusion

Contracts between two parties are never perfect. In fact, most of the time both sides feel a bit dissatisfied given the compromises that move from their ideal to somewhere in the middle. This contract is not perfect, but given all the financial aspects and the organizational aspects, the administration feels it is worth serious consideration. In our efforts to move forward in the next ten years, this contract could position our organization to make some significant strides.