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September 23, 2015

Bargaining Brief

We didn't settle last Thursday, but we're close!

Your HEA Team had high hopes of ending contract negotiations which started as a limited financial re-opener in February and turned into an expanded bargain to address workload, safety and financial make-up over a 3 year period. We are very close and will keep up the hope for a Tentative Agreement at our next session – scheduled for October 13.

Recap on this bargain...

Your current contract is in effect from July 1, 2013-June 30, 2016. However, when we settled this contract, we could not reach agreement on financials in the 3rd year (2015-16) so we settled with a “re-opener” for financials only in that final year.

When we came to the table in February, after 5 years of concessions and little to no salary schedule increases, we had high expectations from the District for salary and insurance. While the top of our schedule is competitive, the bottom is not. Further, our insurance cap has fallen far behind that of neighboring Washington County districts. The District agrees, but shared that they did not have the ability to make up your financial losses all at once. For that reason it made sense to both parties to negotiate a multiple year contract to make up the financial losses over time. Along-side that we had/have a desperate need for workload relief for all of members.

In the end we agreed it would be a win/win to open just Article 4 (Work Year, Workday); Article 12 (Salary); Article 13 (Insurance); Article 17 (Working Conditions – including safety); limited Article 19 (Extra duty only where TBD). Regarding Extra-Duty – the sides have also agreed to establish a committee to address all of the positions and stipend amounts in Article 19, with that work to commence this school year – 2015-16.

(If you are interested in serving on this extra-duty committee please contact Maureen Barnhart.)

Because HEA and HSD took this unexpected path, the traditional lead-in to bargaining with a full survey was not done. That said, your HEA has been very involved in and aware of your various workload and safety concerns through monthly building rep reports, concerns shared by email, in person, and by phone, frequent building visits and MANY informal grievances on workload related issues that we've tackled in the last two years of the contract. We always welcome feedback and input!

Where are we now?

HEA approached this bargain with these main objectives:

1. Significantly improve your salary schedule ; make real gains on the District paid insurance cap
2. Negotiate some relief for the workload of all members / bring more workload equity for elementary teachers
3. Address widespread concerns about staff safety and student conduct and the classroom environment
4. Address the growing workload needs of all staff in relationship to the inclusion of high needs students in general education classes.



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We've made progress on salary, insurance and workload; we are awaiting the District response on our latest safety, discipline and caseload proposal. Specifically, we have conceptual agreement on these workload issues:

- 385 elementary prep minutes, up from 325
- Elementary specials guaranteed as prep
- Access to 6 hours for assessment related work; will be 8 hours in 2016-17 for elementary staff
- Finals schedule in 2016-17 for secondary
- For secondary, access to 12 hours for assessment related work in the 2015-16 school year, and eight hours once the finals schedule is in place.
- ONE NO MANDATORY MEETING day declared by district for all buildings
- Flex time can be used to create longer uninterrupted periods of prep time (at start or end of day, e.g.)
- Two more workdays for elementary (formerly report card days)
- No more mandated progress reports between grade report periods

Regarding financials: Both sides believe we are so close we should be able to settle soon!

Are there sticking points?

The District originally wanted to increase secondary student contact time from 288 minutes to 315 minutes with the objective of flexibility to change schedules when desired. We told the District team that was a non-starter since our goal is to reduce workload, and this would increase secondary student contact by approximately 70 hours (after secondary gets 12 new hours). However, HEA has long had a process in place for contract waivers with 80% building support. We are open to reviewing such a proposal when and if a specific schedule change is proposed by a building staff.

And of course, we are very clear that the salary must be a significant improvement, so that has been a critical piece.

Next Session October 13, all day. When we do have a tentative agreement, watch for scheduled ratification meetings. The contract is not finished until you, the members, have an opportunity to ask questions and to vote on it.

Stay tuned and please contact any member of the team or Maureen or Sarah any time at (503) 645-6776.

Next Session: Tuesday, October 13, 8 am until 4 pm

Your HEA Bargaining Team:

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Angel Gonzalez, WL Henry
Christine Estep, Ladd Acres
Elizabeth Nahl, Butternut Creek
Sarah Moskoff, OEA Staff

Maureen Barnhart, HEA President
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Observing Team Members: Bonnie Wakeman, Evergreen and Joseph Vermeire, Miller Education Center