

BARGAINING UPDATE

We began this school year with about 65 less support staff in our schools and 135 members working less hours. We know more than any other bargaining unit in our district what “do more with less” means to our schools, our staff, and our students. Despite the reduction in our workforce and increase in our workload, we go to work everyday and give 110% for our students and schools.

On August 28th your bargaining team met with the District. The District requested this meeting and we anticipated having a productive conversation about how we could reach a compromise. Unfortunately, that is not what happened. It was a short conversation where the district spokesperson requested our health claims information and ended the meeting.

TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Please mark your calendar and plan to attend one of the following town hall meetings where you can get the latest bargaining updates from your team and ask any questions you might have.

Monday, October 30th @ 5pm
Mat-Su Central School
(note location change)

Wednesday, November 1st @ 5pm
Palmer High School Theater

Thursday, November 2nd @ 5pm
Willow Elementary Library

UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICE

The district has filed an unfair labor practice (ULP) against CEA to force us to give them detailed health claims data from the Public Education Health Trust (our insurance broker). Yes, we are more than hesitant to release our health claims data for the sole purpose of moving toward district-controlled health insurance. Throughout this bargaining cycle the district has claimed they “just want to be able to shop” for better insurance options to district employees. At the Glacier View school board meeting on September 20th they made clear the real intention. They want a self-insured plan so that the district controls our health plan options, control of the cash flow, and control of our private claims data.

We have explored this option in the past and we have done some current cost comparisons of other self-insured districts. What we find is not encouraging. Districts utilizing self-insured plans have less

coverage and higher costs. The district has paid tens of thousands of dollars “exploring options” that can be better used in our classrooms. Our last proposal puts a cap on the district monthly payment for our health care costs - the rest of the money comes from our pockets. No matter what the cost of our chosen healthcare plan, the district would only pay the agreed amount. Apparently their interest goes beyond cost-control.

DISTRICT REQUESTS IMPASSE

We received notice the district is requesting our agreement to declare “impasse” (i.e. bargaining deadlock). Our team does not believe it’s time to stop the conversation. We get that we are having financial difficulties (understatement of the year!) but maybe, just maybe, some of those fiscal savings from cutting back on the “newest, fastest, shiniest” purchases, making equivalent personnel cuts to the top, or not spending thousand and thousands of dollars to simply sit down and have a conversation about negotiations.

I believe a reminder of some basic kindergarten rules are in order. From the words of Robert Fulghum “share, be kind to one another, clean up your own mess ”.

CEA Bargaining Team:

Ernie Kirby, Spokesperson

Vicky Hill

Amanda Johnson

Isaac Menache

Rick Morgan

David Theriault, NEA-Alaska

Kimberly Beam, Recorder

