

CEA BARGAINING UPDATE
DECEMBER 17, 2019

900 DAYS OF STANDING UNITED

We've made our voices heard! I've never seen a bigger crowd at a School Board meeting than on Wednesday, December 4th. CEA and MSEA joined together with a clear unified message -- we want a fair contract and the time to settle is now!

We have received the arbitrator's decision and our CEA bargaining team will be sitting down for our next bargaining session with the District in January. Our message will remain the same: CEA members deserve a fair contract and we will not give away our floating holidays, drastically reduce our longevity pay, or take on the whole burden of rising health insurance costs. As I was quoted on Channel 2 News that evening "we aren't asking for anything extreme -- we are asking for fair terms".

The arbitrator's decision contained several recommendations. On the "big 3" he had this to say:

- **HEALTH INSURANCE:** *The Association proposes to maintain the status quo 50/50 cost sharing formula for FY 19 and FY20. In my judgment, I cannot see a basis for recommending a change in the status quo for FY19 when that year has already passed. Consequently, I recommend maintaining the status quo in the NA (negotiated agreement) on premium payments and cost sharing for FY19. I have the same recommendation for FY20. As the Association points out, MSBSD has budgeted and planned for maintaining the status quo of the NA in FY20.*
- **LEAVE:** *MSBSD proposes to delete or reduce the floating holiday provision in Article VII.C.2. (D2, p. 17) CEA proposes to retain the provision. (A2, p. 27). The above chart (pg 16) shows that MSBSD is at the high end of the scale among the Big Five. Nevertheless, the Employer has not made a compelling case for modifying the status quo concerning floating holidays in Article VII.C.2. Therefore, the Employer's proposal is not recommended.*
- **LONGEVITY:** *The Employer modified its position and suggested that the first sentence of B.2 be revised to read as follows: All employees who remain at Step 10 on the salary schedule shall receive an amount equal to 5% of their prior fiscal year wages earned at Step 10 of their permanent position. (Employer's Brief, p. 31). This change deletes the minimum of "not less than \$1,500." The remaining sentences that follow concerning the timing of the payment would remain as they are in the NA. I recommend the Employer's revised proposal, as quoted immediately above.*

As you can see, it has clear intent through this school year but quickly gets cloudy because our negotiations are based on initial proposals. We began bargaining in February 2017 where we proposed a 2 year contract (FY18, FY19). Since none of the counter proposals we've exchanged since then extend past this current school year, the arbitrator was limited in making recommendations beyond then.

There were many other proposed language changes from both teams, and for the most part, the arbitrator recommended no change to the current language. You can read the document at: <http://www.matsucea.org/bargaining.html>

What now?? We are all looking forward to reaching a Tentative Agreement (TA) and moving forward. **Yes, we could have settled before now with an agreement which forces us to move backwards, but our unity, dedication to our schools, and commitment to our profession prevents us from being that “go-to” group for cuts any longer.** We are all feeling the stress and frustration of this bargain. It has been a long road for CEA... from our first session at the bargaining table on 2/23/17, through many bargaining sessions, mediation last January, arbitration in August, until today - 900 days of standing united. We need to keep holding the line!

What's next?? Best case scenario: The January bargaining session is successful and your team signs off on a tentative agreement. CEA members will then have an opportunity to review the TA through emails, hard copies of the document, and face-to-face informational meetings. If this does not happen, CEA will have the legal right to take a strike vote. Nobody ever wants to strike, but we would have the right to make that choice. Our goal is to get a fair deal, avoid a strike, and keep our focus where it needs to be -- supporting our schools, staff, and students.

If you were unable to make it to the December 4th Rally you can listen to the livestream at [:https://livestream.com/MSBSD/events/8918711/videos/199572094](https://livestream.com/MSBSD/events/8918711/videos/199572094)

Here is a portion of my testimony and what I asked of School Board members:

We are asking for you to acknowledge the work that we do and the ever changing challenges we adapt to everyday for our schools, for our students, and for our staff. We are asking for you to respect our profession and our dedication. We are asking you to recognize the commitment we have to providing an excellent public education in the Mat-Su. We are more than ready to Move forward... we are asking for a fair contract... we are asking for a fair contract.

In Solidarity,
Karen

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