September 13, 2023

**Hillsborough Classroom Teachers Association Economic Negotiations**

***For the 2023-2024 School Year***

The HCTA bargaining teams and the Hillsborough County School Board bargaining team met on August 14th, September 6th, and September 13th to specifically negotiate economic proposals. These sessions have been for both our ESP and Instructional salary schedules.

During the August 14th session, our HCTA teams presented an ambitious compensation package that cost over $100 Million *(ESP Salary Scale for $11.4 Million + Instructional Salary Scales for $87 Million + other supplemental pay)*. The proposals for ESPs and Instructional included step movement for all employees, fixing compression of pay, increasing stagnant mid-career and veteran pay, and ensuring all employees got an average of 7% raises along with other increases to supplements and benefits.

*Review our August 17th townhall for more details:* [*www.youtube.com/watch?v=kPMAienqK1o&t=1s*](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kPMAienqK1o&t=1s)

During the September 6th session, the School Board’s team presented their counter-proposal. The good news is that their proposal included funding that we have never seen in negotiations before. **However, the total package of $36 Million put our proposals over $70 Million apart**:

* ESP Counter ($8.3 Million Package) - The School Board’s proposal gives better decompression of the many steps at $15/hour, gives excellent raises for our lowest paid ESPs, and $1000 longevity payments for veterans at the top of the salary schedule. However, the School Board would not reinstate equalized pay *(ensuring employees receive the benefit of a steady paycheck despite work weeks that include non-paid days)* and prohibits ESPs from earning supplement pay for coaching athletics.
* Instructional Counter ($27.4 Million) – The School Board’s proposal included decompressing the steps that remain at $47,500 and raising the top salary to $70,*000 (lower than HCTA's initial proposal of $50,000 starting pay and $80,200 at the top)*. Because their proposal does not raise starting pay, it does not give increases to mid-career and veteran employees in the amount that is desperately needed. In fact, their proposal would give some employees less of a raise than what they would receive on the current scales and gave no consideration to employees on the Grandfather scales. While the Board did agree to move all student services to the “HealthPro” salary schedule, they wanted to take back $500 licensure supplements.

The HCTA team went to work during caucus that evening to formulate and present a counter-proposal to the School Board’s offer, but after a few hours, the teams realized that a more detailed analysis and thorough offer needed to be prepared so that no employee was overlooked.

*Review the September 6th session for more details:* [*www.youtube.com/watch?v=hupj3Cwp5JU*](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hupj3Cwp5JU)

During the September 13th session, our HCTA teams presented a counter that would have accepted the School Board’s proposed ESPs salary increases and longevity supplement but also included eligibility for athletic coaching supplements and an MOU on equalized pay for ESPs. The Instructional counter included raising starting pay to $48,000 and an increase to $74,000 for the top of the instructional scale. HCTA also included longevity supplements for employees on the Grandfather scale, better raises for Student Services employees, maintaining $500 licensure supplement for Student Services, and decreasing the hourly rate difference between 10-month and 12-month employees. Essentially, **HCTA lowered our counter by $30 Million, putting the total package about $43 Million apart**.

After a brief caucus, the School Board’s team returned, offered no counter, and remained in a fixed position of their first and only proposal. HCTA then presented unambiguous evidence of where the money is in the budget now to afford our proposals, and we held our position on our counter. Despite the information based on their reports, the Board’s team responded by saying they did not think our evidence was clear, and they wanted time to come back to present why they believe they cannot afford our proposal.

HCTA remains ready to continue to negotiate in good faith and we are also confident the School Board can afford and sustain our proposals. The budget and annual financial reports indicate the School board is improving their fund balance and saving money off the backs of the employees we represent. Although we have not reached a settlement for compensation it is important employees understand that tentative agreements for BOTH salary and contract language must be ratified together before they can be implemented. Even if we reached a tentative agreement for salaries on September 13th there is still pending contract language that must also be settled. It is illegal to ratify salary and contract language tentative agreements separately

**What happens next?**

Negotiations will continue at the HCTA building for compensation and pending contract language. The upcoming bargaining dates are as follows:

* Monday, September 18, 2023 – Instructional Compensation and Contract 4:00 pm
* Wednesday, September 20, 2023 – ESP Compensation and Contract 3:30 pm

**How can HCTA reach the best settlement?**

**HCTA members are facing the challenges of SB 256, which aims to weaken our ability to bargain our working conditions and pay collectively. Our impasse win last school year taught us that the right to collective bargaining is more important than ever. While negotiations may happen at the table, reaching the best settlement comes through employees collectively influencing the decision-makers to agree to what we want. This can only be accomplished through a solid and well-organized union of employees standing together! To reach the best settlement, all members must be well informed of the facts, engaged in negotiations, and actively showing the School Board we will not accept paltry “raises” again! You will influence our success in the following ways:**

* Stay informed on our progress by watching past sessions here: [www.youtube.com/HillsboroughCTA](http://www.youtube.com/HillsboroughCTA)
* Attend in person or register to watch our following live streams of bargaining!
* Tell School Board members WHY they must agree now!
* **Grow our HCTA membership to 60% so we keep our collective bargaining rights! Get your colleagues to join HCTA today:**

**Thanks to our HCTA bargaining teams:**
**ESP TEAM:** Olivia Ago-Stallworth – Tampa Bay Tech, Girlene Brown – Foster Elementary, Derrick Bullard – Cypress Creek Elementary, Twanda Evans – Orange Grove Middle, Ariel Hughey – Graham Elementary, Chinovia Shedrick – Memorial Middle, Sabrina Wright – Marshall Middle

**INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM**: Malka Arnstein- Manhattan Center, Renee Bowser – Folsom Elementary, Karen Campbell – Headstart Program, Michael Clerico Jr – Youth Services, Kimberly Coleman – Asst Superintendent-Admin, Carly Deegan – Westchase Elementary, Carissa Deneca – Gaither High, Virginia Dickinson – Cypress Creek Elementary, Pearl Ershery – Marshall Middle, Lori Green – Hospital & Homebound, Anita Greenbaum – Pizzo Elementary, Maridea Groves – Riverview Elementary, Erik Hagen – Oak Grove Elementary, Jill Lamb – Kenly Elementary, Roger R. Marcellus – Blake High/Magnet, Cherie Miller – Rogers Middle, Michelle Miller – Hillsborough Virtual, John Mitchell – Erwin Technical Center, Josephine Mongiovi – Manhattan Center, Jody Orlando – Chairamonte Elementary, Mackenzie Roberts – Kingswood Elementary, Delma White – Migrant Education

HCTA President – Rob Kriete, Vice President – Johnny Green, Secretary-Treasurer – Valerie Chuchman
Bargaining Research Associate – Sherry Gunn, Financial Officer – Tamica Thomas Simpson,
Member Service Specialist – David Peacock
Executive Director & Chief Negotiator – Brittni Wegmann, Assistant Executive Director – Paula Haggerty