



Hillsborough Classroom Teachers Association

3102 N. Habana Avenue, Tampa, FL 33607 | 813-238-7902 (T) 813-237-4541 (F) | www.hillsboroughcta.org

ESP contract negotiations for Clerical & Paraprofessional unit employees resumed between HCTA and HCPS at the Sam Horton Instructional Services Center (ISC) yesterday, July 23, 2025. Unlike the previous quick session, this was a full day of bargaining, ending with growing tension and frustration between the parties focused on compensation. At the center of the disagreement: The School Board's continued refusal to move on meaningful base salary increases for ESPs, who remain among the district's lowest paid yet most essential employees!

Raises & Pay Proposals:

The School Board brought their counter proposal to HCTA's previously presented compensation package. Their proposal totaled \$3.7 million (compared to HCTA's \$14.9 million), and only included one level/step movement, a \$1,000 longevity payment for top level/step employees, regrading of some of the employee positions HCTA proposed, and the continuation of fingerprint monitoring fees and a no-premium insurance option for employees.

HCTA again brought forward a full compensation proposal and adjusted our previous \$14.9 million proposal down to approximately \$10.2 million to find agreement. In response, the School Board countered with only a \$70,000 increase, bringing their original offer from \$3.7 million to \$3.77 million. This glaring gap, and minor adjustment in their position, says everything about their priorities for our ESP employees.

Here's a side-by-side comparison of what each side currently has on the table:

HCTA Proposal:

- Level/Step movement
- 2% improvement to the overall salary schedule
- \$2,500 longevity pay for top of scale employees
- Regrading of 6 employee areas
- \$1,250 one-time payment on August 8th paycheck
- Continuation of the Renaissance differential
- Fingerprint monitoring fees covered
- Continuation of a no-premium health insurance plan option

School Board's Proposal:

- Level/Step movement
- **NO IMPROVEMENT** to the overall salary schedule
- \$1,500 longevity pay for top of scale employees
- Regrading of 6 employee areas
- **NO One-time payment** on August 8th paycheck
- **NO Continuation of the Renaissance** differential
- Fingerprint monitoring fees covered
- Continuation of a no-premium health insurance plan option



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NOTE: These compensation proposals ARE NOT FINAL. HCTA has proposed these showing the cost and needs associated. It is now up to the School Board to agree or provide a counter proposal. We encourage our members to contact School Board members and the Superintendent NOW to tell them why these pay raises are needed and how they will impact your life as employee of HCPS!

The School Board flatly rejected the one-time payment on the first paycheck, which was a major morale booster and help to our ESPs last year. Also, the School Board encouraged HCTA to include the renaissance differential in our compensation proposal only to then reject it themselves in their counter.

Meanwhile, the School Board continues to sit on a \$290 million unrestricted fund balance. Their excuse? uncertainty from Tallahassee. But as HCTA chief negotiator, Brittnei Wegmann, reminded the room, "Uncertainty from Tallahassee is nothing new". We bargain based on what is available now, and there is plenty available now to do what's right by employees.

The School Board's chief negotiator even stated the union's proposal was "out of reach" and that employees would prefer a one level/step movement now over improvements to base pay and an additional \$1,250 payment, while simultaneously claiming they were "committed to reaching the finish line" that evening. HCTA's bargaining team position is that if the commitment doesn't come with real movement, it's just empty talk.



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Tentative Agreements

Despite frustration on economics, HCTA did secure meaningful agreements on the remaining contractual issues:

- **Article 3.2** – Improved and clarified drug and alcohol testing procedures
- **Article 5.1.2** – Allows ParaPro Assessment certification from other districts to qualify
- **Article 8** – Experience credit increased from 2 to 7 years for clerical, paraprofessional, and nursing employees
 - **8.1.2** – Rehired retirees will now be granted all years of experience (no cap at level 16)
 - **25.1.1** – Clarified eligibility for terminal pay
- **Article 9.1.2 & 9.1.3** – Labor Day added as a paid holiday for ESPs
- **9.2.11** – All ESPs may now use comp time on non-student days
- **Article 11.3.1** – ESP evaluation form added to contract; clarified timelines
- **Article 15.3.8** – Allows permanent ESPs to transfer between pool classifications during transfer window
- **Article 17.2.3** – Clearer rules for “no call–no show” job abandonment with added protections
- **Article 17.16.1** – Allows 12-month education leave extension for Bachelor’s in Education candidates
- **Article 18.2.2** – Student & parent engagement activities eligible for comp time with admin approval

NOTE: A Tentative Agreement (TA) means that our union and the School Board have reached an agreement on a specific issue, and have initially signed off, but it is not final yet. In Florida public sector bargaining, a TA must go out for a ratification vote by employees in the bargaining unit and voted on by the School Board before it becomes part of your contract. Simply put: Your bargaining team and the district agree, but you get the final say by voting.

 **Missed the session? Watch and listen to the recording here:**

<https://youtu.be/HkuNnFAqSAE?si=1nwRLVX7gywgA3iZ>