



# Hillsborough Classroom Teachers Association

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

## **Bargaining Update: HCTA ESP Contract Negotiations Continued Wednesday, July 9th, 2025**

In a quick but packed session, HCTA resumed negotiations with Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) over both ESP contract language and ESP compensation at HCTA headquarters on Wednesday July 9th, 2025. HCTA set the agenda with a myriad of robust proposals and counter proposals, along with proposing a compensation package totaling approximately \$14.9 million.

### **Raises & Pay Proposals:**

- One level/step movement PLUS+ 2% across-the-board added to salary schedule = 4% average increase for all employees
- \$3,000 one-time longevity payment for top-of-scale employees who do not receive level/step movement
- \$2,500 one-time payment to ALL employees (Split \$1,500 in Fall / \$1,000 in Spring)
- Reclassifications (5% pay grade raise) for RNs, LPNs, Parent Liaisons, Head Start Aides/Teachers, Behavior Tech Paras, Network Specialists.
- Advance degree/higher education supplements and license/certification reimbursements
- Bilingual Interpretation/translation supplement – HCTA proposed that employees who provide interpretation or translation would qualify for additional compensation based on proof of bilingual proficiency.
- Continuation of the pay differential for Renaissance school employees.


**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!**



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In addition, HCTA also provided proposals for the following contractual topics. These are not settled yet, and are still in ongoing negotiations:

 **Employee Protections & Workplace Rights:** We tackled a range of topics around drug and alcohol testing in article 3 of the ESP contract, ensuring fairness, clarity, and transparency through language that:

- Provides fair, transparent testing: clear reasons, timely results, and notice on OTC meds that can cause false positives.
- Restricts indefinite testing after incidents.
- Addresses concerns about camera use in investigator vehicles.

## **Licensure, Credentials & Assessments**

- Language to allow the Praxis/ParaPro assessments from other districts apply for experience when coming to HCPS.
- HCTA proposed the Board help cover costs for license and renewal for many ESPs (see above)

## **Job Assignments & Fair Pay**

- Clarified temporary assignment language: If you're covering a long-term vacancy (not just an extended leave), you should be paid the higher rate. Period.
- HCTA proposed clarification language to ensure pathways for ESP employees filling temporary roles to qualify for permanent roles with full pay.

## **Experience Credit**

- Clerical staff: HCTA pushed for more years of credit, for all employees, HCPS is open to expanding the credit awarded.
- Paraprofessionals: Proposed that teaching experience count toward placement on the ESP scale.
- Nurses: We proposed that ALL nursing experience (not just HCPS) be credited.



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## **Leave, Holidays & Breaks**

- Holidays: HCTA proposed defining 6 paid holidays for <12-month ESPs—The School Board opposed this, so HCTA proposed starting with Labor Day.
- Rest Breaks: Advocating for two 15-minute paid breaks for all ESPs during their workday
- Proposed language for a fair process on job abandonment situations
- The school Board has proposed reducing Health Leaves from a maximum extension of 36 to 18 months. HCTA requested data first on how often employees were using more than 2 years of health leave.
- HCTA proposed that ESPs may request a 12-month extension to Education Leaves when continue working on a Bachelor's in education degree
- Language was also proposed to ensure Evaluation Notifications (11.3.1) are provided by Sept. 15 for returning employees; new hires within 30 days of start date

## **NEW: Employee Home Purchase Assistance (MOU Proposal)**

HCTA proposed a first-of-its-kind MOU to help employees become homeowners: Currently state statutes do not allow employees to cash in accumulated sick, personal, or annual leave to assist with a down payment on a primary residence. To make this legally possible, the MOU would ensure the Superintendent would recommend statutory flexibility as part of the School Board's 2025–2026 legislative program. This is a forward-thinking, equity-focused proposal to support recruitment, retention, and financial stability for employees.

## **Professionalism & Expectations**

HCTA and HCPS agreed to work collaboratively to address professional dress expectations for ESPs—ensuring evaluation standards are fair and respectful for all.

## **Attendance at Open House and Other**

HCTA clarified in writing that attendance is voluntary for ESPs. If administrators require attendance, ESPs should receive comp time.

## **Health & Benefits**

- HCTA continues to defend the contractual language that requires the School Board to cover 100% of the premiums for an employee-only health insurance option
- HCTA also proposed strengthening the contractual duties of the Insurance Committee with monthly meetings, actuarial analysis, and fund tracking to support the move to self-funded coverage.
- HCTA also continues to ensure fingerprint monitoring fees will continue to be covered for ESP employees.



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## Tentative Agreements, Wins & Ongoing Discussions

**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.**

### • **HCTA has reached tentative agreements on the following:**

- Article 5.1.10 = Clarification that “school business” shall be granted for an ESP using time during their day for testing, qualifying and interviewing for district positions, so long as the request is made ahead of time and requests are not excessive.
- Article 7.5.1 = Clarification that if an ESP who is holding a concurrent appointment is required to work beyond forty (40) hours per week, the employee will be paid overtime pay.
- Article 11 = Major changes were made and agreed to in the Evaluation Procedure for ESP employees. This includes defining the process is to be done together with the employee (not to the employee) as well as restricting a fellow bargaining unit employee from giving evaluative input into any ESP’s evaluation. The ESP Evaluation form will now be included in the HCTA ESP contract
- Article 12 = An overhaul of Career Observation was agreed to, which starts with retitling this to “Performance Support Plan (PSP)”.
- Article 13.3.1 = An important agreement was reached ensuring that an ESP employee can ONLY be reprimanded, demoted, suspended or terminated for JUST CAUSE.
- 15.1.5 = Clarification to language that ensures existing employees in a department or at the worksite are considered for a job opening prior to advertisement of the position.
- 17.7.1 = Clarification to language for ESPs desiring to attend InService opportunities during their normal work day.
- NEW 18.9.6 = Language to protect time before or after the normal workday for ESPs to participate in voting on election day.

### • **HCTA is having ongoing discussions for the following topics:**

- School Community Professional Learning Committee (18.5.3) – HCTA is pushing to activate this recently established committee to help grow opportunities for ESPs to earn NEA micro credentials towards their continuing professional learning and career development.
- Reclassification of job descriptions/titles (article 4) – HCTA is also pushing to work with HCPS on the reclassification of a handful of positions that have grown and developed over time.