



Hillsborough Classroom Teachers Association

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Hillsborough Teachers and Support Staff Reach \$66 Million Tentative Settlement as Rising Healthcare Costs Consume More Than 60% of Package

TAMPA, FL (September 28, 2026) – The Hillsborough Classroom Teachers Association (HCTA) and the School Board of Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) have reached tentative agreements totaling \$66 million in compensation and benefits for more than 16,000 teachers, paraprofessionals, clerical employees and other education professionals. Employee ratification voting opened today and continues through October 8.

The agreements provide salary schedule advancement for eligible employees, longevity compensation for employees at the top of their schedules, and improvements to employee rights and working conditions.

However, \$40.5 million of the \$66 million package, more than 61%, is being used to absorb rising health insurance costs, protecting employees from increases to premiums, copays, and deductibles under their existing plans.

“Sixty-six million dollars sounds enormous, and it is. But when more than \$40 million is needed just to protect employees from higher healthcare costs, that leaves far too little for the salary increases our educators and support staff need and deserve,” said Brittini Wegmann, HCTA Executive Director and Chief Negotiator.

Florida's veteran-teacher funding falls short of the \$3,000 expectation created by the Governor

Florida's 2026-2027 budget appropriated approximately \$201.4 million statewide for eligible teachers with at least 10 years of Florida public-school teaching experience. While the law allows increases of up to \$3,000, it does not provide \$3,000 for every eligible teacher.

Hillsborough received approximately \$12.6 million after the charter-school allocation. As of July, HCPS identified approximately 6,500 eligible employees.

Providing each of those employees a \$3,000 base salary increase would have required \$23.7 million, including employer-paid retirement, Social Security, Medicare and other payroll costs. The State provided barely half that amount.

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Hillsborough Classroom Teachers Association is the certified bargaining agent for over 16,000 teachers, school counselors, nurses, paraprofessionals, secretaries, clerks, and other educational employees of Hillsborough County Public Schools.

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“The public has heard a great deal about \$3,000 raises for veteran teachers. But there is a significant difference between announcing a maximum possible increase and actually funding it,” Wegmann said. “Hillsborough would have needed at least twice the allocation it received.”

HCTA negotiated additional District funding to preserve advancement on the salary schedules for employees excluded from the State's veteran-teacher allocation. The negotiated Instructional salary structure totals approximately \$18 million, exceeding the State allocation by approximately \$5.4 million.

State funding has not kept pace with employee needs

When Florida launched its teacher salary initiative in 2020-2021, the State appropriated \$500 million in new funding statewide, primarily to increase starting teacher salaries. This year's new veteran-teacher allocation totals approximately \$201.4 million statewide to cover the veteran teacher population.

Meanwhile, Florida increased its Base Student Allocation by only approximately 1.58% for 2026-2027, as HCPS faces an 18% healthcare cost increase and other increasing financial pressures.

“Our bargaining teams spent months examining the District's finances, challenging assumptions and negotiating for improvements,” Wegmann said. “We know employees deserve more. But we negotiate with the School Board, not the lawmakers who establish Florida's education budget. We cannot negotiate funding the State has not provided.”

HCTA President Rob Kriete emphasized the importance of the negotiated agreements.

“From protecting affordable healthcare to maintaining experience-based salary schedules and strengthening employee rights, these agreements reflect the importance of collective bargaining for the professionals who serve Hillsborough's students every day.”

Ratification voting opened September 28 at noon and closes October 8 at noon. If ratified by employees and approved by the School Board, negotiated compensation changes will be retroactive to July 1, 2026.

Complete tentative agreements and compensation schedules are available at <https://hillsboroughhcta.org/contracts/>.