

BOARD PRESIDENT STATEMENT
CONCERNING STATUS OF 2018 TEACHER NEGOTIATIONS

June 13, 2018

Since early April, our team and members of the Faculty Association have been negotiating a new collective bargaining agreement that will replace the current teachers' contract, which expires on July 31, 2018. The two sides have reached several tentative agreements regarding contract language, but finances as well as other language items still remain unresolved. The last bargaining meeting between the parties was held on May 31, 2018. And for reasons that are not entirely clear, the Faculty Association has suspended negotiations until mid-August, when the 2018-2019 school year begins.

On behalf of our team, I can say that we are disappointed in the Faculty Association's decision. We have negotiated in good faith to this point in hopes of reaching a fair agreement with our teachers before school begins this fall. We strongly believe that doing so is not only in the best interests of teachers, but also students, parents, community members and other school stakeholders as well. Beginning the school year on a positive note with teachers is critical to student success, which is this Board's primary mission. Given that today is June 13th, there is absolutely no reason why this goal cannot be obtained. These are not just words. The Board's good faith actions at the bargaining table have been entirely consistent with reaching its goal and doing what is best for students.

For example, the first financial offer made by the Board is significantly above the final financial settlements of at least the prior three contracts. The current offer on the table to the Faculty Association would result in the following salary increases to teachers "on" a new salary schedule:

2018-19 average increase of 5.24% (4% minimum)
2019-20 average increase per cell of 3.62%
2020-21 average increase per cell of 3.12%
2021-22 average increase per cell of 2.62%
2022-23 average increase per cell of 2.62%

This equates to an average annual increase of 3.4% for those teachers "on" the new salary schedule. Meanwhile, teachers "off" the new salary schedule would receive a 2% annual salary increase over the next five years, which is the proposed term of the new agreement. Keep in mind, too, a specific condition to this financial offer would be the creation of a new salary schedule. One of the major reasons for creating a new schedule is to increase the starting salary for new teachers to a competitive level in order to attract and retain quality teachers for our students. The new schedule would increase the starting salary from \$45,467 to \$49,000.

At our last meeting, on May 31st, the Faculty Association did express concerns with the proposed new salary schedule, including the fact that percentage increases in year one were too varied and that there would be approximately 50 teachers who would receive less pay as compared to the existing salary schedule. However, in a sidebar discussion, members of our team, including Dr. Cunningham and Mr. Grossi, informally suggested ideas and concepts that could potentially address these concerns. The meeting then ended, however. That was the last time the two sides met.

On June 1st, the very next day, the Board's attorney wrote a letter to the Faculty Association's President and Executive Director urging them to reconsider suspending negotiations until August. To date, the Faculty Association has expressed no interest in meeting over the remainder of the summer. Our team, however, will remain ready and willing to meet in hopes of reaching an agreement before the 2018-2019 school year begins. Many critical issues remain unresolved and the two sides must also address the impact on teachers' salaries brought about by the new state budget that was signed into law on June 4th.