



Negotiations Update

A report on the status of negotiations with the Sacramento City Teachers Association

September 18, 2003

Negotiations with the Sacramento City Teachers Association have not produced an agreement. All of the impasse procedures of the collective bargaining process under the Educational Employment Relations Act have been exhausted.

For months, the district has met in good faith bargaining trying to work out a mutually acceptable agreement with SCTA. Throughout this process, the union has consistently told us “No.” SCTA has repeatedly indicated that they want our district to maintain the status quo. Their only offer was to seek a salary increase, but to do nothing to upgrade our educational programs. District leaders firmly believe that status quo is not good enough given the harsh economic and educational realities we must face as an educational family.

It is time for SCTA to say “Yes” for a change.

- ✓ Yes, to joining all the other employee groups to help rein in runaway medical premium costs.
- ✓ Yes, to flexibility in using the existing minutes in the workday so our teachers spend more time teaching students and planning with their colleagues on strategies to improve instruction.
- ✓ Yes, to a realistic salary request that keeps our teacher pay competitive without causing deep cuts in programs and employee layoffs.

District to implement last, best offer

Absent an agreement and faced with no other recourse, the school board unanimously decided on September 15 to direct district management to unilaterally implement its last, best offer to SCTA’s bargaining team. It is time to move forward for the sake of our students, parents, employees and the community.

Detailed below are the elements of the district’s last, best offer for a two-year contract (2002-03 and 2003-04). Non-economic items will be phased in effective October 1. Economic items (salaries and benefits) take effect November 1.

Change in medical insurance coverage to require small co-pays for doctor visits and prescriptions

Like most other school districts, local governments and state agencies in our area, Sac City has found it necessary to institute a nominal co-payment requirement for employees. The impartial chairman of the state fact finding panel said that it was time for Sac City to implement caps and co-pays in its health benefits plans. In its last, best offer the district dropped a proposal to cap district contributions. Individual teachers will only have to make small co-payments of \$10 for doctor visits and \$10 for prescriptions (\$15 for non-generic brands). This will save the district \$1.7 million during the rest of this year that will be used to fund a one percent salary hike for teachers.

1% increase to the certificated salary schedule effective 6/30/03

With a one percent increase on the salary schedule, the average Sac City teacher will receive an additional \$520 per year. We made this salary adjustment in consideration for any additional co-pays teachers might have for doctor visits and prescriptions. The average teacher would have to visit a doctor once a week to spend more out-of-pocket than the one percent pay raise. A salary increase for 2003-04 will be the subject of re-openers in future negotiations.

Re-direct 15 minutes from each teacher's existing work day to focus more of their time on student instruction

Increasing instructional minutes is a proven strategy for improving student performance. This plan provides principals at each school site with greater flexibility to use existing minutes in the work day to enhance time devoted to student learning and teacher collaboration. Teachers will not be required to work a longer day. Teachers will not be asked to work more hours for the same money. Teachers will not lose prep time or lunch time. Teachers will be able to spend more time teaching students and collaborating with their colleagues.

On other items -

- Sac City's 30-year old teacher performance evaluation instrument will be sent to a joint committee for further study and development. The district was seeking a new evaluation process that was tied more closely to state standards.
- The Peer Assistance & Review (PAR) program will continue as is.

The leadership of the Sacramento City Unified School District believes this is a fair and realistic proposal that accomplishes three primary objectives. It will:

- Shield our teachers from the full impact of skyrocketing medical insurance premiums by NOT imposing a cap on the district's contribution toward health insurance,
- Give a 1% salary increase to keep our teacher compensation competitive in the Sacramento area and buffer the cost of insurance co-pays, and
- Provide flexibility in managing minutes during the workday to enable teachers to spend more of their day teaching students and planning strategies with their colleagues to improve student achievement.

Fifteen minutes, fifteen dollars in co-pays, and some badly needed flexibility will help Sac City achieve its goals and expectations for improving student achievement.

Unfortunately, these negotiations have been plagued by rumors, speculation, and a lack of accurate and complete information to people in the field. We encourage everyone who is a part of the Sac City educational community to stay informed about the issues at stake in these contract talks. The future of our schools is riding on how we can resolve our differences and move forward for the benefit of our students, parents and community. To assist you in better understanding the issues and the basis for the district's decisions we urge you to access the district's Web Page (www.scusd.edu) for the latest information. We will continuously update this site during the weeks ahead.



NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

What's at stake for teachers in a work stoppage

It is critical that teachers in the Sacramento City Unified School District fully understand what is at stake for them as individuals in the event SCTA calls for a work stoppage. Here are the facts:

For each day that a teacher fails to report during a strike, they will be docked one day's pay at their per diem rate. You can calculate this for yourself by using the following formula:

$$\text{Your annual salary} \div 184 \text{ work days} = \text{Your per diem pay}$$

	Annual Salary	1% salary increase	Per Diem Pay Rate
Beginning teacher (Step 1, Col. 1)	\$35,782	\$357.82	\$194.47
Mid-range teacher (Step 10, BA + 60 units)	\$47,026	\$470.26	\$255.58
Veteran teacher (maximum)	\$76,036	\$760.36	\$413.24

If a strike lasts more than two days, individual teachers will lose more income than the one percent salary increase proposed by the district for 2002-03. Any per diem deductions will be reflected on the next pay check the employee receives.

Teachers also stand to lose STRS retirement credits for each day they are on strike. This means they will not have completed this full work year. To make up that lost credit, teachers will either have to work an entire summer school session (six weeks) or another school year. The district hires teachers for the entire duration of the summer or regular work years, not for individual days. Some teachers who participated in the 1989 strike found it necessary to work the full summer school session this year in order to qualify for retirement at the level they wanted.

Finally, the district may assess striking teachers for the cost of their health benefits and retirement contributions for each day they are off the job.