MEA Bargaining 2026-2027
Sesson #3
Wednesday, July 22, 2026

Those present: Pat Barber, Christina Britton, Willie Clark, Valerie Finnegan, Silvana Ianinska, Derek Jensen, Julie Kerber, Helen King, Brian Kirchberg, Rob Lyons, Gina Maliniak, Bruce Proud, Sharon Scarbrough, Rachel Sellers, Jon Syre, Evelyn Townsley, Mark West, and Mercedes Wildman.

Meeting began at 5:13 p.m.

Mark West (MW) – Requested to change previous minutes to reflect the insurance increase range from $5.00 up to $119 per month.

Bruce Proud (BP) – We're ready to begin. I've used the same format, without health insurance. We are not proposing to change the hiring schedule. You'll see 3 percent throughout, and we also included performance pay. We're trying to see what impact that would have not to do performance pay. We've added retention at 10 plus years. That includes carrying forward previous thresholds. For all teachers (2643), we are proposing a 3% increase, as well as for the degrees (800) on performance. The Retention of 16+ at $2,100 (30) and 25+ at $3,600 (40). TSIA includes not taking FES out. TSIA Legislative Fund of 2,317,664 for eligible teachers (1078) We are also including others as an equity issue of those deemed ineligible weren't in "A" Estimated at 351 people. That's the teacher proposal in our initial proposal. We have to modify the schedule for Para's to equalize the steps and I do have some spread sheets to look at that in calculating where people are on the current schedule. The bulk of the changes are in the TAE and TA6 schedule. No changes are needed in the PL1-R schedule as there are no people on that schedule. Should there be people placed on that schedule we will need to adjust that schedule as well. We're proposing a $.50 per hour increase for Paras and are also including a 10+ retention for 190 at $1,000 each.

MW – Quick questions? These totals are without benefits?

BP - Yes they are not including the 22.24% benefit calculation. Distributed Para proposals with a summary document with changing the schedules to reflect more differentiation. This came from conversations with concern at the top of the schedule. Later we added additional steps to reflect employees who have stayed in the district. Someone in PP5 is at 36 years and will need to be calculated in. There wasn't a need for a lot of changes in the (2 schedules) to keep with a 2% increase between steps. The other chart shows the cost per hour . Looking at the average employee and the cost at $0.50 per hour. Any questions?

MW – I think we want to look at them.

BP – We do have language that backs up durations and have been a little more defined. We're trying to come up with language. We received a lot of data from our survey that had to do with their positions and hours worked. It's pretty unusual that we have a lot of different factors hours, duties during their unpaid lunch, subbing and still doing their duties. It may happen with having the need for a substitute and paras feeling pressure to work outside the scope of their contract and the law. We have language that includes sub-rate pay, however most of our paras currently make more than the hourly sub pay. What there isn't is language in the contract to address training for these issues. It could be in violation of contract and overtime provisions. We'd like to hear what management plans to do to address these issues.

MW – First of all we don't want to violate any contract or any law. You mentioned training issues. You did say you could get more details to be able to address them. We can address them by asking for paras schedules.

BP - I just don't want to rule out that any specific examples given would not be ruled out for compensation.

MW – Particularly with the duties. You said that they have the option to get the sub rate of pay…but that that rate is currently not more than their hourly rate.

BP - The issue is that they are being told or asked to do other duties that they're not getting paid for.

MW - If you'd like to give language we'll take that.

BP – I think we'll hold off for later or maybe tomorrow. This is partial contract language to address duration and addresses year replacements. There is a section addressing benefit payments because they are paid in 22 installments. On the back we want to do my best to address the new schedules. This year includes the performance pay amounts. "C" reflects the law for performance pay. The expectation in the hiring schedule will continue to be in the contract of "Appendix "A". The next language we have is Article 12 Section 11, reflecting the retention for 10+ years only modification for this language. We will also have a similar proposal for Para's reflecting 10 years plus.

We will continue to evaluate the Health Insurance committee's proposal and the impact on some individuals. Like you said $119 increase for some individuals and obviously would be coming out of their pockets.

MW – Just to clarify you mentioned about the FES dollars taken Based on the conference report $6178.5 The district lost about $36 million. Using that we calculated 1.06% of that $36,480,207. million is $386.690 That's why that is taken out of that amount.

BP – Once you look at what the TSIA is and take it out first and having less amount for teachers. Couldn't it be done in the opposite way.

MW – Tell me what you mean

BP - You subtracted the FES funds first.

MW – If that never comes into the district.

BP – It does come to the district. It's still part of the FEFP. We have other districts that have agreements to pay the full amount without taking out the FES dollars.

BP – You haven't proposed anything for teacher salaries.

MW – We have proposed teacher salaries for a total of $3,901,703.

BP – Budgets can be modified, you modify them all the time.

MW – If we had to look at any budget and see that we've spent 25% of your budget you definitely make adjustments.

BP – You have last year's numbers.

MW – Yes, we do.

BP – It's down to $19 million

MW - That's better then. What we proposed was a $3.9 million What you're proposing is $10,169,390.

BP – Right that's our proposal.

Caucus 6:03 p.m.

Reconvened at 6:57 p.m.

MW – First, we want to address the very important issues you discussed regarding training concerning issues of paras. We want examples to better understand the need for training. With current language addressing these issues and laws in place, we need to know if it is elementary, middle, or high school and if it's a particular category. We feel this it is important and want to make sure we are making this right for these employees.

The second thing. The proposals that you gave us in writing. Pretty much everything you gave us had to do with compensation, so we are going to address that now. In regard to our proposal. You mentioned that you wanted to add a 10+ retention bonus. We are only including what we had. Excluding the TSIA funds. The net benefit is $650 to $794. We've incorporated Paraprofessionals into that total budget. Unfortunately, what we have set up for Para's does not allow for a schedule change and what we are including is $.10 increase. The net is currently $4,565,289. The proposal included the Referendum funds of $9,537 for teachers and $3,598 for paras. Health Insurance premium increase ranging from $5 to $119 and plan changes estimated at $.06M

BP – Did you say what the difference between this proposal and the last one.

MW – I think is $500,000.

BP – Pat gave me your last proposal.

MW – I think it was approximately $515,400

BP – Including Benefits

MW - Yes

BP – I need to look at and discuss your proposal with my team.

Caucus: 7:10 p.m.

Reconvened at 8:35 p.m.

BP – We have a spreadsheet that serves as our proposal. It differs from the previous proposal in several ways: we eliminated performance pay and the 10-year retention payment for teachers, and we reduced the paraprofessional retention payment to $500. There were errors in our last proposal, and the corrected figures are now being calculated. I also want to address your proposal, particularly your comments about budgets and employee benefit costs, which I do not include in my proposals. Each time a dollar amount is added, employees are affected by taxes, and many will pay more out of pocket than they receive through the benefit increase. For example, if contributions increase by $108 per year and an employee has children, their take-home pay could decrease by $300. That means they are moving backward financially. Many of these employees work for the benefits, so we need to consider the full impact of your proposal.

MW – Along those lines with the benefits.

BP – I don't think I said it doesn't. I'm just wanting to make it part of the record that your proposal will have a negative effect of many individuals.

MW – If your looking at those funds it comes from the employer. Even if it's a small increase, what I said earlier about the spending piece. We agreed last year to give a pretty big increase to employees. We can't with the spending this year.

BP – There are a significant number of employees who are not on the plan and that effects the plan negatively. Generally, those are younger-healthier people who take a chance of not having coverage. Management doesn't have to pay anything into the plan for those individuals which hurts the plan.

MW – Agreed

BP - If you want me to put the impact amounts on the paper I will. I can show those numbers because when you say $650 it's really $535 If there are things that the district added additional things to the budget that they didn't plan for then shame on them. If you want to talk budgets I can.

MW – It's a projection and there is a process. We spend 75 to 80% of our budget on people. When we take a look at our budget we have to keep an eye on dollars.

BP – When you add people those dollars have to increase.

MW – We don’t have to create any reduction in workforce. We’ve never been talking about that.

BP – What programs are you implementing that have not been budgeted for.

MW – Frankly salaries are a big part of it.

BP – What have you added to your budget that wasn’t in there last year. It seems that if you’re using that as the reason for not improving pay, then we should know what these programs are.

MW – Your proposal is not within the budget that we have. So, reconvene tomorrow 5:00 here.

BP – Good.

Adjourned 8:50 p.m.