



NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

An informed membership is a powerful membership!



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May 8, 2015

BFT's Bargaining Team: Cathy Campbell, John Becker, Dale Long, Cynthia Allman, Aaron Glimme, Denise Milner, Dana Blanchard, Ed Wang

Compensation Discussions

At the May 5th negotiations session BFT presented a structure that could provide a multi-year agreement with increases in salary and benefits in at least the first year. The information from the Governor's May Revise budget is needed in order to begin to fill in actual numbers. BFT and BUSD will meet again on May 27th and compensation will be the focus of the session.

BUSD Proposes Increased Instructional Minutes in K-5

BUSD has proposed to do away with maximum instructional minutes guaranteed by the contract and to put this decision into the hands of principals and district staff. In their proposal the contract would specify only the minimum number of instructional minutes per day.

BUSD has proposed that Grades 1-5 teachers teach at least an additional 10 minutes per day and that Kindergarten teachers teach an additional 40 minutes per day. BFT has responded to these proposals with a robust discussion about why these ideas are not good for students or teachers.

BFT President Cathy Campbell pointed out that simply adding time to the school day flies in the face of data from high-achieving countries, where teachers have far more time to plan and prepare lessons and to collaborate with their colleagues. Campbell noted that the rigorous Common Core standards require a huge amount of teacher analysis, planning and work to make lessons valuable and appropriate. A decrease in the amount of time to prepare would make these lessons less effective, even if there were more

time to complete them. She reminded BUSD of the critical things that teachers do outside of the student day, such as planning and preparation, contacting parents, analyzing student work, serving on school committees and school leadership teams, mentoring new teachers and much more. All of which would be impacted or even abandoned if prep time were decreased.

In a previous session, team member and Kindergarten teacher Cynthia Allman also spoke about how a significantly longer day is fundamentally incompatible with the developmental needs of the youngest students. In keeping with our consistent attempts to provide positive solutions to shared challenges, BFT offered several ideas that we believe will more likely help our most struggling students.

BFT Members Turn Out in Force on May 6th!

More than 200 members turned out to the May 6th School Board meeting to demonstrate the need for a strong contract for Berkeley teachers. Giant sunflowers and painted shovels illustrated our theme that "teachers dig deep so students can grow" and that BUSD needs to dig deep to compensate teachers according to their value. Members spoke passionately about their need for economic security and ended the action with lively chants. You can see pictures and video of this action on the BFT website soon.

These include hiring more teachers to increase the student day; creating staggered shifts for certain specialty teachers (such as Special Ed and Rtl) so they are available during the after school hours; having a real conversation about how schedules could be made more effective; and modifying the traditional calendar to shorten the “summer slide”. BFT emphasized that by far the most practical approach is to raise the hourly pay rate paid for after-school intervention and to create supportive systems that facilitate classroom teachers providing extra support for their own students after the bell rings.

BUSD Proposes Increase to Speech Therapist Caseload

At the May 5th session, BUSD also proposed to increase the Speech Therapist caseload from 40 students to 55 students, a 37% increase. With the additional caseload for students without an IEP, this would put the total caseload at 62 students. As the proposal was made right at the

end of the day, it will be discussed at the May 27th session.

BFT Emphasizes Need for an Agreement This Spring

At the end of the day on May 5th, BFT emphasized the need for the two parties to come to an agreement before the end of this school year. We emphasized that starting off the school year next year with contract uncertainty will be distracting and disruptive, whereas a strong agreement will energize and enable teachers to focus solely on a great start to the new school year.

Some Progress on Leaves

BFT and BUSD have made some progress on improving bereavement leave and personal leave related to educational events for a child or dependent. BUSD has rejected BFT’s proposals for truly private personal leave days.



“It’s the sprinkler system, sir... employee burnout keeps setting it off.”