

Negotiations

Thank you all that have responded with thoughts and questions regarding negotiations. I thought it would be good to respond to everyone because there are probably more of you with the same questions or thoughts, but haven't gotten around to asking me.

Regarding the district's offer: normally, we start the financial portion of negotiations with our team presenting our offer to the district first. We generally go in high because we know that there has to be wiggle room.....that is what negotiations is all about. The district team usually comes back with a much lower bid and we go from there. This year it was a bit different because the district put their offer on the table first. They followed the direction of the board which gave them a parameter of a 5% package which is what the other bargaining groups in the district have been settling for in the last rounds. The district team knew that we would counter offer at a much higher rate, but it is their job to bring that back to the board to have a discussion about our offer and the rationale behind it. No matter who is on the board, who is superintendent or who is on our negotiations team, this scenario is what always happens when financials are discussed in negotiations. It happened that way when I was negotiating back in the mid-90's.

I am empathetic to the worry, anger and tiredness of our members and want to acknowledge that I, too, feel that on many days. Please keep letting me know how you are and how we can be of help. My message here today, is to let you know that negotiations is a long process – but a necessary process. As long as the district and our team are still talking, then we remain hopeful of the outcome.

Also, in regards to negotiations, let's delve into inflation rates. Over the years, we have negotiated contracts and charted the inflation rates. In some instances, we have received higher than the inflation rate and sometimes lower. We don't predicate our financial offer based on the inflation rate because they fluctuate too often. We would not want to be held to that standard of only bargaining to match current rate trends because it would negatively affect us at the table.

Behavior

As you may have seen, behavior has been a hot topic. WC sent a letter to the board and superintendent that received a lot of attention and some positive results. They have had a chance to speak with Dr. Pekel and 2 of the board members were invited out to talk with staff as well. The district is working on a plan that was presented at the board the other night. Hopefully, this plan will help make a course correction within the district. I have heard a lot of optimistic talk and I working on making sure there is action behind it. If/when they start forming focus groups with staff, please plan on being contacted. There are many things happening in the background to address the current issues, but it is going to take time to turn our entire system around after the last 10 – 15 years.

Communication

I have had requests this week that information that comes from me should go directly to every member. In talking with our office staff, Kathy and Karen, to build that mailing list would take many hours. I have asked them to look at what it would take to accomplish this task. I would ask that if we are moving to that type of mailing, then I would like everyone to submit their personal email address and we can shift over to not using the district email system for everything that the REA office sends out.

This request came with the discussion that buildings are not get the communication from Carrie and our office in a timely fashion. Buildings should be expecting their FRs to be forwarding the information that comes from Carrie or the REA office in a timely fashion. They should also be having 10 minute meetings after every monthly FR meeting to recap what was talked about in the monthly meeting. If these two things aren't happening, please talk with the FRs in your building.

Thank you!

Dan

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