

Bargaining Update: meA & MESPA

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Salaries & Benefits Settled

Salaries. All salary schedules will remain as they were for 2008-09, and employees will not advance on step. This is a salary freeze for 2009-10. The only exception is for teachers who have earned the necessary college credit to advance to the next column or to advance to the New Teacher Salary Schedule. The total amount for educational advancement is not very large for the District, but the affected teachers have invested considerable time and tuition fees for these credits.

Insurance. The cost for health insurance has increased by only 2.14%, and the District will pay for that increase. The total amount paid by the District for the insurance package for each full-time employee will increase from \$4,988 to \$5,135 each year.

Teacher Substitutes. Because of budget cuts last spring, schools were required to cover for a certain number of teacher absences during 4th quarter. We will begin the new school year with full substitute coverage.

Furlough Days. The Association and District jointly worked out language to define the possibility of unpaid furlough days in case additional budget cuts must be made:

A furlough day is a temporary unpaid, non-work day designated by the Superintendent, at the direction of the Governing Board, that would otherwise be a paid work day. Furlough days will be designated in full workday increments. Representatives of the Superintendent shall consult with the MEA prior to declaring the dates of furlough days. Employees may not use paid sick leave or other paid leave time on a furlough day.

Insurance benefits and other employee benefits shall be maintained for eligible employees during an unpaid day that the Superintendent, at the direction of the Governing Board, has designated as a furlough day. If more than one furlough day is designated, the District will attempt to schedule the days on an intermittent basis. There shall be no expectation that an employee shall provide any service to the District while on an unpaid furlough day. A Superintendent-designated furlough day shall not be considered an interruption of employment.

Reduction in Available District Funds. Throughout the new Meet-and-Confer agreements, you will find language such as: “Salary schedules and movement for education and/or experience may be impacted by a reduction in available District funds,” or “...providing funding is available.” Why is this kind of contingency language in there? The reason is simple: **the State Legislature still has not resolved the budget crisis.** They passed a bill in July which funds public schools, but they did not come up with the necessary revenue to pay for that funding.

Will more Cuts happen? The Legislature lurches from day to day. More cuts are still possible for 2009-10. That’s why we have the possibility of furlough days and other reductions. That is also why we continue to maintain a strong daily AEA presence at the Capitol.

Are you Angry about this? MEA and MESPA representatives aren’t happy with this package, but given the terrible financial circumstances that we are facing, this isn’t too bad. If you are angry about this – and you should be – tell your legislators all about it!

Not a member? Support the Association that represents you. An enrollment form is on the back.