August 29, 2019

PSEA and the District met Monday (August 26) for Unit I negotiations. Going in to this negotiation session, PSEA hoped that the District’s recent Tentative Agreement (“TA”) with PFT signaled that the District was taking a more constructive approach to negotiations. Unfortunately, this did not turn out to be the case.

The District delayed our start time by an hour and arrived late back from lunch late, which cut into our time at the bargaining table. As a result, the District only presented one proposal (Article 14, Wages) to PSEA, despite having committed to also presenting a proposal on Article 16 (PSEA Organizational Rights). In addition, PSEA did not have enough time to present our latest proposal regarding Article 9 (Leaves).

**PUSD PROPOSES TO SHORTCHANGE CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES ON WAGES**

As many classified employees have heard, the District recently reached a TA with PFT, which included raises for certificated personnel. Historically, the District has offered PSEA the same raises as PFT, and our negotiating team expected the District would do so again this time.

Unfortunately, the District has instead proposed giving PSEA smaller raises than PFT. When challenged on this, the District conceded that its proposal to PSEA did not match what it agreed to give the teachers in compensation increases.

Classified employees will remember that, just last year, the District also proposed to give PSEA smaller raises than it gave PFT – and as a result of the District’s bad faith tactics at the time, negotiations broke down and classified employees almost voted to authorize a strike (a strike vote that was averted by the District remedying its bad faith conduct and reaching agreement with PSEA). It is disheartening to hear that the District is repeating this tactic.

**DISTRICT PROPOSES TO GUT THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROGRAM**

To add insult to injury, the District’s wage proposal once again included the District’s proposal to slash the funds for the Professional Learning Program (PLP). This program is currently funded by a redirection of a 0.44% salary increase for classified employees, to match a comparable increase from 2014 in the Prime Column for teachers participating in PFT’s Teaching and Learning Collaborative (TLC). The District’s proposal would cut these funds by more than half, which the District itself admitted would create an ongoing structural deficit for the Professional Learning Program.

To make things worse, the District admitted that the TA with PFT did not include a similar cut to the PFT’s professional learning program, nor is the District proposing to increase the PSEA salary schedule by the amount of funds it is proposing to pull from the Professional Learning Program.

PSEA has fought for too long to achieve equity with our brothers and sisters in the certificated ranks to allow the District to roll back these gains. When the District first proposed, in June, to slash the PLP budget, PSEA told the District the proposal was a non-starter. The District’s continued insistence therefore appears calculated to derail negotiations.

**WHAT’S NEXT?**

Monday was our last scheduled negotiation date for Unit I. PSEA and the District have since scheduled two more negotiation dates for Unit I in the next two weeks (a full day on September 5 and a half day on September 10).

Meanwhile, PSEA and the District are scheduled to meet for Unit II negotiations today (August 29), which is the last scheduled negotiation date for Unit II.

Despite having been in Unit I negotiations for five months, PSEA and the District have only reached tentative agreement on one article (Article 5, Work Year – Work Week – Work Day). To make matters worse, the only reason PSEA and the District have been able to reach a tentative agreement on Article 5 is because PSEA opted not to propose any changes to that article. In short, after five months of negotiations, the District has failed to reach a tentative agreement with PSEA on any substantive updates to the Unit I Agreement.

PSEA will continue to work toward an agreement with the District, and will make every reasonable effort to avoid an escalation of conflict in these negotiations, but as we learned last year, sometimes the only way to persuade the District to bargain in good faith with PSEA is to let the District see and feel our members’ frustration.

We will keep you updated with any developments, and how you can most effectively support PSEA’s efforts at the negotiating table. We also ask that members report to PSEA any changes in working conditions or violations of the status quo. For those of you that are new to PSEA or don’t yet have a green PSEA tshirt, please email your name, size and location to KarenBurns@PowaySEA.org.

Our next regularly scheduled PSEA Membership meeting will take place on September 25, 2019 at 4:45pm. Our focus at that meeting will be on unionism and how we can grow stronger together.

As always, our ability to win improvements for classified employees depends on having an active and engaged membership. If you have not yet signed a PSEA membership card, please complete the attached Membership Application and send to the PSEA office.

In unity,

Your PSEA Negotiations Team

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