

PSEA NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE – SEPTEMBER 2, 2021

Site Representatives – please post on your PSEA bulletin board

Thank you to everyone who came to the PSEA meeting last week, and to all the Members who took the Health and Welfare Survey! This topic has sparked a lot of discussion and debate in the PSEA Membership. To-date, we have received responses from about 30% of our benefited PSEA classified employees. While the survey was scheduled to close yesterday, we are extending the deadline through Monday, September 6 to make sure everybody has an opportunity to participate. Click on the link below to provide your feedback in this very important survey so we can represent the voice of all our Members:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/F88CJ69>

While the survey is not yet over, your PSEA Negotiations Team heard loud and clear the voice of the Members who have spoken. Many of you expressed an interest in moving to the new Health and Welfare model we have been discussing with Management (where the District would pay 100% of the premiums for employees who ensure themselves and pay 80% of the premiums for employees who insure their dependents) rather than the current model (in which the District pays a flat dollar amount toward benefits which is insufficient to insure dependents, and which places the burden of paying premium increases solely on the backs of employees). At the same time, just as many Members expressed concerns about the impact that moving away from a “Fixed District Contribution” model to a “80/20” model would have on cash to warrant for employees who ensure themselves, and also expressed concern over Management’s desire to implement further cuts to opt-out funds as part of the move to a new model. Virtually nobody, however, expressed support for preserving the status quo, in which the District contributes an insufficient amount of money for insurance premiums for current employees while setting aside an excessive amount of money (consisting of the “opt out savings” from employees who opt out of insurance) for post-retirement benefits.

Due to the feedback that PSEA received from the Membership, we informed Management that we did not believe there was enough time to reach an agreement on moving to a new model in time to get it ratified before the September 13 deadline that Management gave us to provide Keenan with the new rates in time for Open Enrollment. We are therefore fervently negotiating with Management over the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) for Plan Year 2022 that would secure additional one-time “premium supplement” funds for one final year, to come from the “opt out savings” that would otherwise fund post-retirement benefits. This would allow us more time to carefully negotiate the transition to a new model for Plan Year 2023 in a way that our Members can support. We spent seven hours in negotiations yesterday and have scheduled another three hours this afternoon in an effort to wrap up these MOU negotiations. We know how important this topic is for Members and we will keep you informed of any developments, in addition to sharing the survey results with you in the coming weeks.

We also want to let you know that we hear, and we share, our Members’ deep frustration at our sub-par wages, our chronic understaffing, and our Members’ very real health and safety concerns as we appear to be entering a new wave in this pandemic. Those issues have not been forgotten and we are committed to addressing them with Management as we approach the conclusion of

these Health and Welfare negotiations for Plan Year 2022. Our ability to win improvements in the pay, benefits, and working conditions of 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 via email to KarenBurns@PowaySEA.org or via District mail to “PSEA.”

In unity,

Your PSEA Negotiations Team

Doug Crooks
Sandie Garrett
Courtney Martin
Diane Zimmermann