

UPDATED — FEBRUARY 25, 2010

THIS JUST IN:

Late this morning the District sent SDEA a counter to their own proposal from last night. The District appears to have made some movement toward addressing the issues SDEA's bargaining team had with the District's previous offer, which contained severe deficiencies that prevented a settlement last night despite SDEA's willingness to reach a fair and immediate agreement (see below). The SDEA bargaining team will meet this afternoon to analyze the District's most recent proposal to determine whether it adequately addresses SDEA members' reasonable need for assurances (that should the District's financial situation unexpectedly improve that furlough school days would be restored). The bargaining team will continue to communicate promptly with members as new developments occur. Check the SDEA website and your email accounts this evening and tomorrow for updates.

FEBRUARY 24, 2010

DISTRICT GREED HALTS BARGAINING:

After a marathon ten-hour bargaining session, the District's bargaining team (under the direction of its attorney Mark Bresee and School Board President Richard Barrera) slapped San Diego's parents, children, and educators in the face with its refusal to settle the SDEA contract on Wednesday night.

The SDEA bargaining team came prepared to settle the contract. At issue was only one thing: SDEA wanted a promise that 50% of any new, unexpected money coming into the District in the next two years would be used to restore furlough days and to ensure that San Diego schools remain open for the entire school year. This would not be money that the District already has earmarked for other purposes or priorities, or money that it needs to reduce the deficit, but new money that would only materialize if unexpected revenue sources suddenly materialized.

In exchange for this agreement (a very necessary "insurance policy" in the view of SDEA members), the SDEA bargaining team offered the District the following on Wednesday:

- Five furlough days for each of the next two years.
- A change to four areas of our health care benefits, with all the savings going to reduce the District's budget deficit.
- Acceptance of less than ideal caps on elementary class size that only take effect if key legislation passes to restore Class Size Reduction penalties to the District.

DESPITE THE OBSTACLES SOME MOVEMENT WAS MADE:

While we did not get a settlement on Wednesday, some progress was made and there remains an opportunity to settle the contract if the District can get its priorities straight. Both the SDEA and SDUSD proposals now share similar items and terms, including:

- A 7.16% cumulative restoration of the salary schedule by the end of the 3rd year of the contract.
- No more than 5 furlough days over each of the next two years (all student attendance days).
- General agreement on the 5-year evaluation option.
- One extra personal business day per year.
- An agreement that there would be no additional changes to health and welfare benefits for the 3-year term of the contract.

- Visiting teachers would not receive a double-hit by not having the opportunity to work on furlough days and having their daily rate decreased (i.e. visiting teacher salaries would remain the same for the first two years of the contract).
- A strict secondary class size cap of 36 students per academic class (not a per-teacher average), effective in the 3rd year of the contract.

WHAT'S NEXT:

Obviously our fight is not over. Over the last few weeks SDEA members committed to each other that we would not settle for anything less than a fair contract. The SDEA bargaining team was charged with one thing: bring back the best settlement possible. While we readily acknowledge that the District and state are facing tough financial times, we also know that it is within the District's power to promise that, if times do get better and revenue begins to flow back into the District, San Diego's kids and educators would be back in the classrooms.

At the last two School Board meetings, educators, parents, and community members turned out by the thousands to demand a fair contract settlement. Despite our commitment to reaching an agreement, the School Board remains unfocused and unwilling to make the tough choices—even while our students and our schools hang in the balance.

SDEA members said we would be back. We must continue to show our strength, our solidarity and our resolve.

The next School Board meeting takes place on Tuesday, March 9 at 5:00 p.m. Let's continue to show the District that San Diego's educators will step up, organize, and keep coming back until we win a fair contract. Stay tuned for details!

Together we are stronger!