



A Report from the Long Beach Unified School District Negotiating Team ■ February 1, 2006

Meeting of January 30, 2006

District Presents Counter Offer On Health and Welfare Benefits

The Teachers Association of Long Beach submitted a brief response to the school district's January 23 Health and Welfare Proposal during Monday's negotiating session. The district countered with a comprehensive proposal, stating that Blue Shield PPO and HMO, along with Kaiser, will remain available plans and be reopened upon dropping CCN. The district proposal contained the following key provisions:

- Dropping CCN effective no later than January 1, 2007.
- Raising the Blue Shield lifetime benefit cap to \$2 million once CCN is closed.
- Adding chiropractic care; reducing mail order prescription co-payments by \$5; and increasing non-formulary co-payment to \$35; retail supply would go from 34 to 30 days.

The school district agreed with TALB's request that it seek proposals for providing Wellness Programs and an alternative Employee Assistance Program. The district also agreed to work with TALB on reviews of health benefit usage and seeking timely reports on claims and expenditures.

Shared Responsibility on Health Benefits

The district has *not* proposed a cap on health benefits. Below is the full text of the district's proposal for shared responsibility in this critical area:

"With declining enrollment the parties agree that we are and will be facing serious financial challenges at the local, state and federal levels; such shortages have resulted and will continue to result in a shortfall in financial resources dedicated to public education now and in the future. Therefore, the District and TALB agree to assume a shared responsibility to preserve and protect the fiscal solvency of the District for the benefit of the students served and the employees who rely on the availability of group medical plans. For the self-insured plans the District shall provide TALB on a periodic basis (monthly, if available) a report of bargaining

unit claims and expenditures in order to better analyze costs for the TALB bargaining unit. The District will request such reports from its outside carriers and, if received, will share such reports with TALB.

"The parties agree that the priority of providing high quality education for all students is best supported when the District is able to provide salaries and benefits that attract and retain excellent employees. Accordingly, the parties agree to share responsibility for maintaining quality benefits while reining in the increasing cost of such benefits. Therefore, the parties will work aggressively to keep expenditures for Health and Welfare Programs as close to 2005-06 levels as possible (allowing for fluctuations in the number of District employees). In the self-insured plans, the District will continue to work with TALB to implement utilization review controls over high-risk treatments. The parties acknowledge that financial imperatives may require changes in the benefits structure. The parties further acknowledge and agree that the purpose of the Health Benefits Committee is hereby modified to fulfill the commitments contained herein."

Immediate 4% Raise Rejected Again

The district explained that its proposal, if accepted Monday, would have resulted in a 4 percent raise implemented effective at the halfway point of the teacher work year for all bargaining unit members. This translates to a continuing 4 percent which costs 2 percent this year but will cost 4 percent in all future years. TALB rejected the district's offer, insisting on a package costing more than 8 percent.

Library Media Teachers

The parties reached a tentative agreement on provisions specifically impacting Library Media Teachers. This represented the first tentative agreement of this year's bargaining process, leaving the number of TALB's continuing proposals at approximately 237.

Future Meetings: February 8 (District Office), February 24 (TALB Office), March 7 (TALB Office), March 16 (District Office).