



A Report from the Long Beach Unified School District Negotiating Team ■ May 26, 2006

Meetings of May 15 and 24

Special Education, CDC/Head Start

After an agreed upon hiatus, Long Beach Unified School District and Teachers Association of Long Beach bargaining teams met on Monday, May 15 and again on Wednesday, May 24. The negotiators focused on Special Education and CDC/Head Start issues.

To facilitate next year's hiring in difficult-to-staff speech pathologist positions, the district proposed to implement immediately the tentative agreement (5 percent stipend for current speech pathologists; additional step placement for newly hired speech pathologists). TALB rejected this proposal.

TALB also argued that three Mild to Moderate Communications (MMC) specialists should have been included in the tentative agreement. The district disagreed but suggested they could be included in return for immediate implementation. Again, TALB rejected this idea. In fact, TALB is now withdrawing from the tentative agreement. District representatives then informed TALB of a present intention to proceed with implementing these improvements in order to fill speech/pathologist/specialist positions in time for next year. Currently there are approximately ten such vacancies.

Frequently Asked Questions

Teachers have asked a number of questions during the break in negotiations, and we shall try to answer some of them here:

Q. Why did the district propose language which permits suspending teachers for up to 15 days?

A. TALB specifically asked for such a proposal. TALB proposed "the right to a negotiated and written progressive discipline process including disciplinary conferences and suspension procedures." In response, the district's proposal contains "for cause" language, endorses progressive discipline, guarantees both the right to representation and access to the grievance procedure.

Q. Has the district proposed a cap on health insurance benefits?

A. No. Despite the rapid and dramatic increases in the cost of health insurance nationwide, the district has not proposed a cap. The district language which TALB rejects, reads: "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..."

Q. How does the district's proposal to withhold incremental movement for an unsatisfactory evaluation affect me?

A. The proposal does not affect current employees; only those hired on or after July 1, 2006. An overall rating of Unsatisfactory would be the reason for withholding. A Needs Improvement rating does not result in failing to move a step. The district views such a proposal as another remedial tool short of dismissal; and, of course, such an evaluation is subject to the contractual grievance procedure, including arbitration, if it results in denial of incremental movement.

Future Meetings

- May 30 (Teacher Resource Center)
- June 2, 13 & 28 (District Office)

Facts from the Table

and other collective bargaining updates
are available online at

www.lbusd.k12.ca.us

under Employee Relations Services.