

CBLT Bargaining Minutes

5/20/21

Virtual: ZOOM

Some Participants In-Person: CTA Office (*at District Request*)

I. OPENING

District introduced Judith Padres, Senior Director for the Office of Management and Budget. She will be replacing Doreen Concolino who now Chief financial Officer.

CTA President made an opening statement describing discussions that occurred during the May 11th School Board meeting that included increasing teacher planning time and extending the school day and school year. CTA was concerned that they learned about proposals such as these through the school board meetings. CTA was not opposed to new initiatives that benefitted students, but they must protect teacher rights and working conditions. These must be brought to the bargaining table at the planning and brainstorming stage. The District has repeatedly made unilateral decisions and attempted to force new plans on employees, while failing to bargain the impacts.

- Furthermore, CTA wanted to go on record that they opposed the extension of LaunchED or any other form of hybrid teaching after the pandemic has ended. No teacher should be expected or forced to teach two classes at once. It was unreasonable and cruel this school year and teachers were not reimbursed for the extra hours they spent planning for and teaching two classes simultaneously. CTA has continued to wait for a response to their stipend proposal (passed across the table two months ago) for teachers who were forced to teach hybrid courses during the 2020-21 school year.
- In regard to ESSER Funds, CTA emphasized that DOE guidance required the District to “engage in meaningful consultation with students; families; school and district administrators (including special education administrators); and teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions.” CTA requested the District’s plan to reach stakeholders. CTA was looking forward to meaningful discussions at the bargaining table. Additionally, CTA requested a copy of the District’s plan that will be submitted to the state, delineating how they intended to spend the federal funding, before it was sent, so that CTA had the opportunity to discuss, make suggestions and ask questions. It was CTA’s understanding that OPCS will have over \$860 M in federal funds. Our educators have great insight on how these funds could be used to address the needs arising from COVID-19, including maintaining a healthy environment and targeting student’s social, emotional, and economic needs. This money was in addition to the OPCS \$1.8 billion budget. This huge pot of money could be used through 2024 to address the needs of all of its stakeholders.

District responded that the School Board discussions reflected examples of possible initiatives, but no definitive decisions had been reached. Therefore, District relayed that there was no need to impact bargain until a firm plan was in place. Additionally, the District voiced that they already attained stakeholder input for ESSER funds, including CTA, during multiple brain storming sessions that they hosted. They were currently waiting for additional state guidance and once they make their formal decisions, they will be open to impact bargaining.

- CTA responded that they knew of community stakeholders that did not have an opportunity to provide input, such as the Community Alliance, and inquired how such individuals could be heard.
- District stated that they would determine who the appropriate contact person would be for that and would let CTA know.

II. ESSER Funds

- a. CTA read a letter they submitted to Dr. Jenkins and Mr. Preusser on April 26, 2021 outlining CTA's priorities for spending ESSER dollars (see document). Bargaining team members then elaborated on the rationale of some of their suggestions:
- Hiring additional staff to address student mental health concerns. Counselor to student ratios are extremely high and inadequate to address the mental health challenges that are projected for the years ahead. Students have not experienced a normal school year and many students have not been in a classroom in a year and a half. Additional social workers, psychologists and behavior specialists will also be critical.
 - Similarly, additional teachers are needed to reduce class size and optimally address student learning loss. Increasing the number of intervention teachers is also recommended so that individual students have improved quality of intervention.
 - Establishing an adequate substitute pool as required by the contract by hiring permanent substitutes for schools.
 - The state is raising the testing stakes and no one can expect that students will be able to just walk right in to the upcoming school year like the last year and a half did not happen.
 - Current teachers will require more planning time and be permitted to work together from the "ground up." Instead of the District directing what to do with the planning time, teachers need to have the flexibility to plan for the unique needs of their populations.
 - Additional stipends for more instructional resources. Teachers will need more hands on materials. Students have spent too much time on virtual learning and physical materials such as books and workbooks will be important.
 - Supplemental monies for more afterschool tutoring opportunities.
 - Air quality improvements to have cleaner, healthier buildings, including upgrades to HVAC systems in all buildings where needed. Fewer sick teachers and students moving forward will increase engagement and student learning.
 - Also a need for an increase in counselor summer work days. 20 guaranteed days would be optimal for scheduling and planning so that counselors will be ready for action when the school year begins. These staff members are stretched thin.
 - Retention bonuses for teachers. Numerous teachers are burnt out from this past year and a bonus would go a long way to say thank you for coming back.
 - School pants for students so that children are more secure, less distracted by their lack of basic needs which will improve their readiness to learn.
 - Funding for community mentorship programs for students at risk. Guidance and support from a trusting adult goes a long way to improve engagement.
- b. District asked for additional information about substitutes.
- CTA responded that even before the pandemic there was a substitute shortage which also existed at the national level.
 - Other states have been creative in using CARES Act monies and other funds to do things like hire teachers to be floating substitutes, or permanent substitutes.
 - In mind that in addition to class coverage when teachers are absent, we need quality instructional coverage for classrooms. What Kelly subs looks for in their employees may not be exactly what OCPS looks for in their employees.
 - District responded that the District did in fact work very closely with Kelly subs and looked for the very best quality individual to fill in. They recognized that there might be more qualified substitutes out there, but their goal was always to acquire the best substitute coverage.

- c. District reminded CTA that ESSER funds could only be spent on items related to school closures and the disruption of student learning. Teacher pay and bonus requests from CTA would require the district to prove to the state with extensive documentation that it met this ESSER fund criteria.
- CTA relayed that they have been participating in state and national level trainings about these funds and other school districts have been able to spend money on retention and teaching hybrid bonuses, so CTA adamantly disagreed with the district's position. CTA's state and national unions will help them to respond to disagreements if necessary and CTA will also reach out to the department of education directly. As another example, even our own state governor was using federal ESSER monies to give teachers \$1000 bonuses.
 - District understood and just wanted to make sure they were following the expected tenets of the law. They were open to more discussion. They appreciated the ideas brought forward today, as well as during the brainstorming sessions. They would like to have copies of these examples.

III. Budgeting Priorities (see document)

- a. CTA expressed that the listed priorities are usually shared with the Budgeting Committee. District asked for a copy. CTA wanted the District to have them in advance of upcoming bargaining sessions. Once the governor's budget is passed, CTA hoped that good faith bargaining could occur.
- Salaries: Raise the salaries of teachers and instructional personnel to at least 3%, longevity supplement, and compensate employees with alternative post graduate degree with supplements
 - Retirement: Allow all members of the bargaining unit to opt for up to three years of DROP per state law FL Statute 1012.01 (2) (a)-(d).
 - Insurance Benefits: No increase in costs to members of the bargaining unit.
 - Leave: Allow members of bargaining unit to donate sick leave to other bargaining unit members
 - Professional Development: Make trainings optional and at discretion of teachers (relevant to subject matter) with pay at a teacher's hourly rate of pay and PD points for recertification during summer, after school and weekends
 - Supplements: Ensure all supplements are fully funded
 - Guidance counselors: Additional summer days
- b. CTA voiced that these were their initial thoughts and that they might alter them once the governor's budget came out. CTA suspected that there would be more general revenue funds available for salaries since some of the district expenses could be paid for with ESSER funds.
- c. District thanked CTA and emphasized that they always bargained in good faith and were always willing and ready for discussions. They also asked for additional information about what CTA was thinking in terms of longevity supplements.
- CTA stated that they passed an example proposal last year.
 - Districts responded that if CTA was suggesting the same concept as last year they could review the document that was shared then.

IV. Evaluation

- a. CTA addressed the Growth Plan rating, noticing that there has been changes to the configuration. Since this rating will become a public document, there is a need to protect teachers who might leave the district with an incomplete rating. CTA recognized that there were plans to fix this document in the future but there was a need to know what could be done this school year. Some type of sentence was needed on the document to alert the next employer.
- District asked for clarification that the concern was that a teacher might receive an unsatisfactory score which might not be the final outcome once student learning scores were calculated.

- CTA confirmed that this was the concern.
 - District will research options with the vendor and get back to CTA.
- b. CTA also shared that the Appeals Committee needed guidance as this issue was not a procedural error.

V. Stipend for Hybrid Teachers:

- a. CTA was still waiting for an answer to this proposal from March.
- b. District was ready to respond and stated that they could not accept this proposal. Legislation was currently sitting on the governor's desk asking for \$1000 teacher and principal bonus. They hoped it would be signed but the District was in a holding pattern waiting this decision.
- District also pointed out that CTA was proposing a \$500 hybrid bonus per quarter and doing the rough math might equate to \$2000 a teacher. It could be north of \$20M expense. The District would have to reject this and hoped that the governor would give them \$1000 for teachers and principals.

VI. Closing Remarks:

- a. CTA voiced that this team needed to be ahead of the game and ready to get to work once the governor signed the budget into law.
- When dates are set for upcoming bargaining sessions, full days will be needed to get the work done and no less than half days.
 - Salary and benefits will be huge issues.
- b. District agreed, but stressed that they had to first have conversations with the superintendent and School Board.