

FROM THE TABLE

A MBUTA NEGOTIATIONS BULLETIN TO TEACHERS

MANHATTAN BEACH UNIFIED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION • 3551 VOYAGER STREET, SUITE 105 • TORRANCE, CA 90503 • (310) 921-2500

December 4, 2017

Dear MBUTA Members,

We wanted to take a moment to update you on where we are in negotiations and where we are going. Under the terms of the previous Contract, MBUTA and MBUSD were entitled to one reopener each. MBUSD chose to reopen Article IX (Evaluations) and we chose to open Article XI (Leaves). Negotiations began on those reopeners in June, 2017.

The District presented a complete overhaul of our current evaluation system that was, in every respect, unacceptable to us. It had almost no ability for teachers to reflect on their teaching, it empowered administration to cast judgement on members in such vague and subjective areas like “professionalism” and it reduced the evaluation of our teaching to a numbers scale judged solely by an administrator. In piloting the program, administrators were applying the indicators inconsistently even with supposed training. The District’s proposal was obsolete and did not represent the “best practices” of successful districts.

After speaking with our colleagues from Redondo, we became convinced that their two year old evaluation system represented an enormous improvement over the MBUSD proposal and we proposed its adoption. The evaluation process is in the hands of teachers and forces them to deeply reflect on what they do, why they do it and how they know they have succeeded. It is teacher driven and includes detailed narratives, crafted by the instructor, that analyze their professional practices. Any conclusions arrived at must be discussed and agreed to by both the supervising administrator and the teacher. There is no doubt that the process is more involved and is more work than our current system, but it is an instrument that has buy-in from teachers in Redondo and has received almost universal praise from teachers and administrators alike.

MBUSD has agreed to adopt, in general, our proposal. We are still working out some of the details, determining the status of current alternative evaluation tools and looking at job appropriate instruments for counselors and DIS employees. We are optimistic that starting in 2018-19, teachers will have an evaluation system that will work to elevate instruction by allowing teachers to deeply reflect on and address their own instructional practices.

Our proposals on leaves sought to accomplish several goals. First, we wanted to allow teachers the flexibility to take time off for necessary personal issues and family obligations by expanding the number of personal necessity days available and making their use more flexible. Second, we wanted to increase the number of sick days to more closely represent the number of months we work. Third we wanted to bring equity to our elementary colleagues by reducing the impact of time taken on their sick days to more closely represent the actual time taken and to treat elementary teachers who cover classes in a similar manner to their colleagues at the MBMS and MCHS. Fourth, we wanted to update language on “family leave” to reflect current law. Fifth, we felt the need to clarify language in catastrophic leave policies. Sixth, we sought to make the language for jury duty leaves more permissive given the difficulty faced by everyone in avoiding service even for extended trials.

We are happy to report that we have made good progress on these issues. MBUSD and MBUTA have agreed in principle to increase the number of sick days to 11 from the current 10. We have agreed that all of those days should be available for personal necessity and that the requirements for use of personal necessity should reflect actual teacher needs. We have agreed that elementary teachers who take time off from work for appointments and the like should lose sick/pn time on a quarter of a day basis rather than being forced to take a half day.

Additionally, we have agreed that those teachers who cover for teachers at the elementary level, regardless of the reason, should be compensated with our hourly rate or given the appropriate amount of comp time. Finally, we have agreement on language for family leaves, catastrophic leaves and jury duty that accomplish our stated goals. Again, there are details to iron out, but we are optimistic about the prospects.

On June 30, 2017, our collective bargaining agreement (contract) expired. MBUTA desired to open up discussion on the entirety of the Contract, including discussions of evaluation and leaves, as soon as possible. To that end, we “sunshined” the entirety of the contract minus “District Rights.” We made a formal request to the District to begin bargaining on the entire Contract. They have rejected that request insisting, instead, that we continue to negotiate the reopeners to the expired Contract before entering into negotiations for a successor agreement. It is our view that it makes little sense to add substance to an expired contract and that the most appropriate, efficient and sensible path is to negotiate a new collective bargaining agreement in its entirety. The District continues to refuse to do that and seems to prefer not to talk about issues of salary and benefits for as long as possible.

At some point, negotiations will have to open up on a new contract. Although we hope the current atmosphere of identification of interests and substantive discussion will continue, we can't be sure of that. Thanks to your efforts, we have made up a great deal of ground in terms of our compensation over the last 4 years. We believe we will need your efforts to continue on a path that fairly recognizes your professional expertise and efforts. Thanks for your continued support and we wish you the Happiest of Holidays!

Your Negotiating Team and Executive Board,

Bill Fauver

Adam Geczi

Stacey Cooke

Sandra Rumble

Sandra Goins (Executive Director)

Shawn Chen (President, MBUTA)

Lauri Resnikoff (Vice President, MBUTA)

Dina Moll (Vice President, MBUTA)

Diana Sieker (Secretary, MBUTA)