

FROM THE TABLE

A MBUTA NEGOTIATIONS BULLETIN TO TEACHERS

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Once again it is time to update you on negotiations, and once again we have nothing positive to bring to you. We have made zero progress despite our best efforts to collaborate with the District while still protecting your interests. Negotiating with the District is much like eating soup with a fork; a lot goes on but nothing's happening.

The district's strategy has shifted from the publicly unsustainable outright adversarial to one of cooperative obstructionism. While seeming to "offer" increases in benefits and significant resources toward "professional development"; in fact, their offers are carefully crafted to put the onus on teachers. Their most recent offer makes sure that health costs and the real work of professional development remains the work of teachers. In recent meetings, we have spent nearly eight hours attempting to reach an agreement on language that would guarantee voluntary (as opposed to mandatory) professional development time paid at your professional daily rate (as opposed to your hourly rate) between now and the end of 2015.

We know that every single one of us needs to become familiar with Common Core and this has to be part of a trusted and broader District effort. Thus, we surveyed our membership and presented data along with an offer of cooperation to develop a meaningful professional development plan with a built-in contingency for failure. We insisted that if the district does not provide proper and adequate opportunities, inevitably each member will use his or her own valuable time to make the transition and they must be compensated. We have attempted to ensure that you receive sufficient **quality** training at your per diem rate, however, the district has remained disagreeable in the language that would guarantee this outcome. While the District admittedly does not disagree with MBUTA in principle, they are unwilling to commit to any proposed language brought forth by the association, even as they have provisionally committed funding.

This is clearly a strategy to stall the process and tire our efforts. By seeming to offer a large amount of money "committed" to professional development, they hope to convince the public that there is a good faith offer on the table. Those of us who have been "trained" in Powerschool recognize the hallmarks of poor quality professional development—slipshod, last-minute, poorly designed instruction is not good enough for our students, it is not something we should accept from our administrators.

The fact that we cannot get an agreement on the simplest, most obviously and easily agreeable item on the agenda shows that the District has no interest in moving on to the more challenging issues. Once again the power of MBUTA lies within our membership. We appreciate the support you have offered thus far. Your patience with the process and willingness to stand firm in your resolve to value the contributions you make to this district will send a message—we will not accept less than we deserve.

The MBUTA Bargaining Team