

MEA Bargaining 2025-2026
Session #5
Thursday, September 18, 2025

Those present: Pat Barber, Christina Britton, Willie Clark, Valerie Finnegan, Silvana Ianinska, Derek Jensen, Joanna Keovilay, Helen King, Brian Kirchberg, Rob Lyons, Gina Maliniak, Bruce Proud, Sharon Scarbrough, Rachel Sellers, Jon Syre, Evelyn Townsley, Dawn Walker and Mark West.

Meeting began at 5:09 p.m.

BP – Any issues with the minutes?

MW – No issues. Had an opportunity to meet with the Board to discuss proposal. Discussed your and our proposal and the differential. The Board told us clearly what their desire is. We have an offer today that takes into account areas we've been discussing back and forth. Management handouts – SDMC offer #2 and health insurance change for 2026 calendar year.

Starting with decompressed placement schedule. 0.2% between each level.

People who were eligible for pay increase with our proposal . . . we wanted to make sure anyone currently with us that got max credit coming in would not be paid less.

\$50,071 is the highest amount and receives 3.5% increase which is what we're proposing.

(Management handout of placement schedule provided to BP.)

Kept steps as is now. Would change to years of experience from 1 to 21. 8b would equate to 21 years of experience. \$51,728 would be a little bit less. Wanted to decompress but didn't want to hurt employees currently here who would receive a raise.

Teacher increase – 3.5% for every eligible teacher excluding new hires. Pay for performance - numbers proposed prior.

Degree supplements – 3.5% increase there.

Retention – number has been updated so it's a higher cost than last time.

Paras – step and proposed COLA of 40 cents per step. Total cost amounts to \$8M.

BP – Do you have the number of paras that you calculated for step and increase?

CB – We can get that.

RS – Believe that was 808.

MW – Will look and confirm.

CB – On the insurance side the table isn't that much different. No changes to copays, prescription copays. The only thing would be 5.5% increase to premium. District bears increase as well. Heard questions about 5.5%; it's 5.5% increase of premium. Board bears higher brunt on their share. 5.5% does increase for gold family the most. That's across 22 pays. Bronze employee only is \$1 increase per pay period. No real way to quantify what increased copays would be but we're going to look at it next year.

BP – The numbers on the left – is that MEA enrollment – teachers & paras?

CB – Yes.

BP - Total on plan is 4140 – all employees participating.

CB – Yes – that includes AFSCME and non-bargaining.

BP – No other questions. We will obviously discuss it. If we have questions we will ask following a caucus.

Caucus at 5:23 p.m. Reconvened at 6:32 p.m.

BP – Additional questions about your proposal and some numbers and calculations. Decompressed placement schedule is a little more than double what I've calculated for our proposal. What would the difference be? That would require a whole lot of people getting placed above 1st level. There were 299 at first level last year that were not eligible last year. Would be unusual to hire those not at level 1 for this year. Don't know what you used to come up with \$120,000 cost.

MW – On your proposal – bumped up number to 0.2%. You had a cost of \$105,896.

BP – That was before we went down to \$49,702.

I get that would be a cost. That's why I'm questioning because we're so close but the numbers are different. Just need to know what numbers you used to get to \$120,000.

RS – 293 hired this school year. 109 open allocations. I don't know if that's going to assist anymore. That's what we worked with to get compression cost. You had 202 out of 293 new hires. Same step 1. 30 out of 109 open allocations.

BP – But there's no cost.

RS – No decompression cost. Out of 109 open allocations you have 30 that are not part of that.

BP – So it's not much different than my calculations. Trying to figure out how you got to \$120,000. Did you do it in some calculation way or a projection?

RS - Already had them projected. You had 11 on steps 2,3 and 4. Sprinkled down to people on step 5 – 13. Step 12 a lot of people with a lot of experience.

BP – Teacher increase at 3.5%. 293 new hires? How many people are you talking about getting increases at 3.5% to get that \$5.1M?

RS – It might be 2894. 2894.

BP – If you add up it's . . .

RS – It's 402 in total in decompressed. Yes. Looking at 3296.

BP – Performance degree supplements – how many people?

RS – 774

BP – Does that include the new hire schedule?

SI – They have been included.

BP – Retention surprises me more than any. Never had numbers in that way of having 28 in lower level and 40 in upper.

SI – Ready with file to give supplement. I was also surprised. That is what it is right now. Have more 25+ compared to 16+. Will be more who will come afterward because they had a break in service. Probably 10 – 12. 4 to 6 will not get second level.

BP – Wouldn't they all be stacked?

SI – Some got it by salary schedule. Only 4 are not going to get it because it's built into their schedule.

BP – Alright. Differential – adding nothing in your proposals?

MW – Correct.

BP – Para increase is more than double what I've calculated. Only come back with \$162,229 for para step advancement. Majority getting a nickel for step advancement. Anybody at beginning which is majority of those in TA6 and TAE – their step increase is a nickel. How did you get to \$398,000? About 500 of them are getting a nickel. Nowhere near \$400,000. I'm lost as to that number.

SI – Percent is 0.3% from step to step. For some it's a lot more than that up to 2%. Used average across all schedules.

BP – Average of all amounts?

SI – The number is based on FTE and current salary and step increase was estimated to be 2% for everyone.

BP – That's far from reality in that schedule. The bulk are on the 2 lower schedules. Bulk of them will get 5 cents. Doing averages really doesn't work. Such a drastic difference.

MW and SI – We will look at that.

BP – Concern about health insurance is partially because of that. That doesn't even cover insurance cost you proposed. More than half will be gone in their paycheck. Increase negligible based on your proposal. I believe I understand your health insurance proposal. Some concerns with the health plan in general is reducing the amount of money going in to the plan. We do have a proposal. MEA handout. Changed our proposals. Performance hiring schedule. Very close. Real issue is how much does it really cost and whether or not we have the right number of people. 0.21 or 0.20 isn't significant. If there are more in the schedule, I can be persuaded that the number is more than \$50,000. Added 5.5% increase that was calculated based on data I received in April. Some people will not be moving in this category or other. Can work to find out the real cost. Assume 150 out of 299 would not move because of when they were hired. Performance degree at 5.5%. encouraged to see that in your proposal. I had 743 of the people on the performance schedule previously that got degrees. If you have a different number that would be a different cost. Highly Effective (HE) and Effective (E) - not going to dispute numbers being different. Can calculate out. Believe that differentiated schedule should be impacted. Went many years without any increases at all. Manatee is behind other places. Been moving closer because of movement

in the last couple of years. People who do those duties talk and compare. They are well aware of what that is, and it's important such as speech language pathologists (SLPs) that receive a supplement when they have a CCC credential. Added that in at \$1000 for each of them. Bottom level of other counties looked at. Have some supplement in other places. That's a place to start. Visual and performing arts in elementary schools. Standardized expectation of an art show and musical productions. Expectation of doing something beyond normal day. These individuals are feeling left out of the process. There are a number of people in those positions. The numbers are guesstimates. Couldn't tell you how many do those performances. In data I received there was 31 music and 31 art at elementary schools. If there is a better way of calculating who has those expectations as part of their duties it would be good to know.

CB – What would you call that?

BP – Visual and Performing Arts Supplement

RS – How many SLPs?

BP – 33 I believe. That is how many were in the data I have.

MW – 33 at \$1000 for SLP and then VPA supplement at \$500. At elementary only?

BP – 62 for elementary. Already covered in supplement schedule for middle and high schools.

Paras – my calculation is \$162,00 for para step advancement. That was based on actual placement on the schedule. 65 cents per hour. That's a real concern. These individuals are struggling on a day to day basis. Those at top are higher paid than the bulk. Vast majority are at the bottom of TA6 or TAE schedule. Still in \$20,000/year range. It's mid 20s at best for them. Real struggle and with health insurance being a bigger issue. Retention is still an issue. It was brought to us. 214 have been here 10 years or more and should be recognized for staying here. Another issue is health insurance. Talked about having district assume all cost for employees for this year. Looking at numbers - \$493,680 is what the cost is for these 2 bargaining units. If you look at your sheet it's taken from bottom of your sheet. At 7.2% it was higher. I appreciate progress that we can see. Hopefully we can make more progress to get to an agreement quickly.

MW – We will be back in a few minutes.

Caucus at 7:01 p.m. Reconvened at 7:50 p.m.

Management handout.

MW – Big thing – teacher increase to 3.75% bring up to \$5.5M. Performance pay. Want majority to go to actual increases for teachers. Performance degree 3.75% retention same. Acknowledge SLP supplements should be acknowledged. \$1000 supplement for 33 SLPs. Visual performing arts – currently money budgeted any time teacher has responsibility to work after hours that's budgeted for schools through referendum or NCH. That's why it was not included there. Since you brought the differential supplement our proposal is to increase it at 3.75% also. Went back and looked at para step increase. When itemized \$203,287 we feel is more accurate. Based on what we have currently. Looking to add a 50 cent COLA to para salary schedule. With benefits that's an increase of \$8.5M.

BP – Health insurance?

MW – Stays the same.

BP – Ok. No other questions. We will caucus.

Caucus at 7:55 p.m. Reconvened at 8:59 p.m.

MEA proposal.

BP – Performance hiring schedule is ok with us understanding that our proposal the degree impact is based on other proposals based on 5.25% increase to degree supplements for new hires. Included in performance degree supplement calculation. Calculated at 5.25% increase in salaries for teachers. Basing that on data I have that tells me how many people there are in the bargaining units based on data received. Performance pay (PP) – don't want to seem petty but it's kind of an odd number. Put it as \$125. That seems to make a little more sense than \$50 and \$63. Not a huge difference in what's there. It's a cost. Didn't calculate it for people on the grandfathered schedule (GF) because we haven't paid PP on GF. They received pay increases but not PP. We haven't had any conversations about PP for GF schedule. Retention – just used your numbers for that provision. Fine with that to continue. Differentiated supp 5.25% and includes SLPs. Does not include VPA. Will communicate with those individuals and ask that they communicate with their school about receiving compensation for their time. Para step based on the number of people on the schedule, where they were and are for advancement. Whether 5 cents or \$1.92. Paras at 60 cents for those there. Modified longevity for 15+. Every other bargaining unit (BU) has longevity or retention. So, paras should be eligible as well since it's included in other employee groups. Total cost listed along with calculation with benefits. Health insurance remains the same that the district picks up the whole cost for these 2 BU. That's \$493,680. Aware of budget. History of how this district has managed health plan has been sketchy at best. Overall budget has sufficient funds. District has funds to afford what we've asked for and more. Unassigned reserves are sufficient to cover for a number of years. Over and above. Don't think you can argue that. It's up to priorities as to what you want to do. No way to talk about affordability that this.

MW – That are nonrecurring dollars.

BP – They used \$30-\$40 million this year. They moved money from unassigned into budget for recurring expenses.

MW – So we've been able to do that. We have budgeted for this. We have budgeted what we have budgeted for. Increased pretty significantly. We will look at this.

Caucus at 9:09 p.m. Reconvened at 9:46 p.m.

Management handout.

MW – Like to acknowledge we have come a long way tonight with some areas. Pretty much agree on decompressed placement schedule. Number is a projection. Agreed to retention of \$202,000 and para step increase. Also, for paras look to what to add to salary schedule. Agree to 60 cents per hour. Would like to do retention bonus next year but at this time we want to put as much money in the salary schedule as possible. With teachers we recognize the hard work that goes in. Would love to do more with supplements. Want to focus as much on all teachers. Looking at 4% raise overall for teachers.

Recognize that PP bumped up to \$100 and \$125. GF has to get same as effective. That's why it's \$100. Can look at statute. PP supplement to match 4% as well. That brings us to \$9.37M with benefits. Looked at insurance piece. HIC met a number of times. Looked specifically on not making plan changes. 5.5% is minimum to get down to and to do what we need to do to carry forward. That remains as part of the deal as well. At this time this is our offer. We've gotten to a maximum of what we can spend and what we have budget and to keep it in requests that have been made. Any questions?

BP – No. No questions about proposal. Are we at a point where it makes sense for us to make a proposal?

MW - This is the max number to meet needs. This is the amount we have to work with.

BP – That puts us in a position of accepting, moving things around or going to impasse.

MW – Pretty much.

BP – That's more of a conversation than what we can do tonight. Happy to schedule another meeting.

Next session - Monday, 9/29. 4:45 p.m.

Adjourned at 9:56 p.m.