



**Community Consolidated
School District No. 15
Board of Education
Last Offer as of
September 14, 2017**

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ESPA HAS NOT ENGAGED IN GOOD FAITH MEDIATION AND HAS DECLARED IMPASSE PREMATURELY

INTRODUCTION

The Community Consolidated School District 15 Board of Education and the Educational Support Personnel Association, IEA-NEA (ESPA) began collective bargaining negotiations on February 13, 2017, in an effort to reach agreement on terms to a successor contract. The parties met on three occasions prior to the end of the school year, and had only four meetings before ESPA requested mediation on June 29, 2017. The parties' most recent contract, which was for four years, expired on June 30, 2017.

During the four meetings prior to mediation, the parties were able to reach a tentative agreement on many contract terms; however, we remain apart in key areas, including compensation and benefits, leaves, and several more related to working conditions. On June 29, 2017, the Board made a comprehensive proposal. To date, ESPA has failed to respond. Consequently, the newly seated Board of Education has yet to receive a proposal from ESPA.

Two mediation sessions were held, but those sessions were devoted mostly to apprising the federal mediator of the issues and the parties' respective positions. The mediator scheduled three additional meetings for September 18, September 28, and October 5, but ESPA declared impasse in negotiations on September 7, 2017, even though no new proposals had been exchanged between the parties since mediation began. The Board team did not intend for its last offer on June 29, 2017, to be its final offer to ESPA. The Board team also believes that ESPA has room to move from its last offer to the Board. The Board team does not believe the parties are truly at an impasse in these negotiations and looks forward to working with ESPA to reach an agreement that is financially responsible while also recognizing the many contributions the ESPA members make to the District.

This document constitutes the Board's offer, as required by Section 12(a-5)(2) of the *Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act* (115 ILCS 5/12(a-5)(2)). The Board's offer is set forth in full below, but for the most part, does not include matters upon which the parties have previously tentatively agreed.

ESPA'S ECONOMIC PROPOSAL FAR EXCEEDS THE MARKET AND THE TAXPAYER'S ABILITY TO PAY

SUMMARY OF BOARD ECONOMIC PACKAGE

WAGES

Board Offer

The Board offers a 5.9 percent cost increase in wages over a four-year contract, averaging 1.44 percent in yearly cost increases. This financial package includes wage increases for all employees, as well as additional income for specific groups such as nurses, secretaries, and special education program assistants.

Such additional income includes:

- Salary increases of 1 percent annually (note: the Tax Cap revenue coming to the District is only 0.7% for year one).
- Additional salary increases for specific groups such as:
 - A 50 percent special handling rate increase (from \$1.00/hour to \$1.50/hour)
 - New stipend for nurses qualified to complete medical reviews for Individual Education Plans of \$1.00/hour
 - New stipend for PAs required to be CPI trained of \$0.50/hour
 - New pool of overtime pay for secretarial staff of \$20,000
 - Move clerical employees onto the higher salary schedule to match program assistants' salaries

Cost of Board offer: \$43,607,675.71

ESPA Demand

On April 11th, ESPA made an economic proposal that would increase the Board's costs by a total 10.93 percent (\$1,141,671) in the first year of the contract alone. This significant increase to the Board's costs in the first year of the contract would then carry through and compound each subsequent year of the ten-year contract proposed by ESPA.

This proposal included the following:

- Increases to base salaries
- Step movement
- Additional paid sick days
- Retirement incentives
- Increases to stipends and the addition of new stipends

By the end of the proposed ten-year contract, the Board's costs would increase by roughly \$5 million annually, amounting to about \$15 million dollars ESPA's April 11 proposal.

ESPA proposal totaled a 43.83 percent cost increase in wages over a ten-year contract

Cost of ESPA Demand: \$132,345,178.58

INSURANCE

Board Offer

The District already provides generous insurance benefits to its employees. As such, the District did not propose any changes to health, dental or vision benefit levels. These benefits are consistent for all employee groups in the District, including teaching and administrative staff.

The Board intends to continue to provide these benefits for the life of the contract with no changes to eligibility or benefit levels. Accordingly, the Board intends to continue to pay the following amounts toward qualified ESPA members' insurance premiums:

Health

- 100% Board paid single coverage - \$683.24 monthly premium payment per member
- 50% Board paid family coverage - \$1,243.50 monthly premium payment per member

Dental

- 100% Board-paid single coverage
- 50% Board-paid family coverage

Vision

- 100% Board-paid vision care

Life Insurance

- 100% Board-paid group term life insurance

Cost of Board Offer: \$4,439,224

ESPA Demand

ESPA initially demanded that employees only be required to work 4 hours per day to receive full-time insurance benefits. ESPA has since withdrawn that demand.

RETIREMENT

Board Offer

During the negotiations of the 2012-2016 contract, the parties agreed to phase out the retirement incentive offered to qualified ESPA members by the end of the prior contract as part of the negotiations of a comprehensive compensation package. The Board intends to honor that agreement.

ESPA Demand

ESPA proposes to go back on its agreement. Despite agreeing that the retirement incentive would be eliminated at the end of the last contract, ESPA has proposed to reinsert the retirement incentive into the successor contract. ESPA is proposing that employees who provide a notice of retirement have their salary increased each year by \$3000 for each of their final three years of employment in addition to generous retirement benefits already received under their public pension system. The purpose of this demand is to inflate pension benefits.

Cost: of ESPA Demand: \$107,091 per year

LEAVES, VACATION AND HOLIDAYS

Board Offer

The Board already provides generous paid leave benefits to its employees. The Board intends to continue to provide ESPA members with the sick and personal leave, holiday, and vacation benefits they enjoyed under the prior contract. Those benefits include:

Sick Leave

- 12 sick days per year to 12-month employees;
- 11 sick days per year to 11-month employees;
- 10 sick days per year to 10-month employees; and
- 15 sick days per year to those employees who accumulate at least 89 sick days.

Personal Leave

- 3 personal days per year.

Holidays

- 9 paid holidays for 10 and 11-month employees
- 10 paid holidays for 12-month employees

Vacation Days (12-month employees only)

- 10 – 20 vacation days per year (dependent upon years of service)

12-month ESPA employees are afforded a minimum of 35 paid days off per year.

These negotiations present two significant leave issues. The first issue involves the unwillingness of ESPA to allow the District to properly document leaves as is the practice with teachers and the vast majority of other public school districts. This is a concern to the District because of absenteeism and its impact on the students, other employees who are required to internally substitute and the shortage of external substitutes. The second issue involves a demand by ESPA to significantly increase the number of paid leave days beyond the generous number of days already provided.

With respect to documentation, the Board fully supports the use of leave days for appropriate purposes as is demonstrated by its generous leave provisions. However, an employee's use of sick days is intended to provide time for employees to address medical concerns for themselves and their family members. Requesting documentation for illnesses of 3 or more consecutive days is consistent with the practice used with the teaching staff as well as outlined in the Illinois School Code. The Board seeks to clarify the documentation required.

For years, the District has routinely requested documentation from employees to substantiate the use of consecutive sick days, and the District desires to clarify that it may determine the type of documentation that is required. Personal days are intended for legitimate obligations which cannot be done outside of the school day. The Board seeks to confirm that the use of personal days used in conjunction with non-attendance days are for appropriate leave reasons.

Cost of Board Offer: \$1,285,552.23

ESPA Demand

With respect to the second issue involving the number of leave days, and despite the significant amount of paid time off already provided to ESPA members, ESPA proposed on April 11th to increase the number of sick days ESPA members receive. In particular, ESPA proposed that all full-time employees, regardless of whether they are 12, 11, or 10-month employees receive 12 paid sick days per year. ESPA also proposed that once an employee accumulates 170 or more unused sick days, that employee's sick leave be increased from 12 paid sick days per year to 24 paid sick days per year. ESPA's proposal is designed to inflate the pension earnings of employees upon retirement without making the requisite contributions to the pension system.

Cost of ESPA's Demand: Although it is difficult to estimate the cost of leaves, the District is required to budget an amount equal to the use of all leave days. The increased cost of ESPA's demand over and above the cost of paid time off already provided to ESPA members is estimated at \$497,263.65 per year.

SUBSTITUTING FOR TEACHERS

Board Offer

Almost every school district in Illinois is dealing with a serious shortage of substitute teachers and District 15 is not immune to this problem. When a teacher is absent, the District often seeks teacher-qualified ESPA members to voluntarily substitute for the absent teacher. On several recent occasions, ESPA members were unwilling to substitute voluntarily. As a result, the District has had to pull other teachers, such as a Library/Media Specialist and Reading Specialist, from their assigned duties to substitute for absent teachers. This has resulted in the library being closed and the cancellation of reading services for students. The District desires the ability to require teacher-qualified ESPA members to serve as substitute teachers. When an ESPA member substitutes for a teacher, the member receives the greater of his/her regular rate of pay or substitute teacher pay.

Cost of Board Offer: unknown – ESPA members have various rates of pay. When the rate of pay is lower than the substitute rate the employee's rate will be raised when he/she is substitute teaching. There is no way to estimate this cost.

ESPA Demand

While Teachers can be assigned to internally substitute, ESPA has rejected the Board's proposal that would give it the additional flexibility it needs to assign ESPA members to substitute for absent teachers to ensure services are provided to students.

Cost of ESPA Demand: unknown – since the proposal provides ESPA members the ability to accept or deny the opportunity to substitute, we cannot estimate the cost.

MISCELLANEOUS

In addition to the Board's economic package described above, several other contractual items remain open between the parties. These miscellaneous issues are set forth below.

Conditions Related to Nursing

The Board intends to continue to offer an annual pool of \$5,200 to nurses for additional paid work time outside their normal workday to complete mandatory state documentation related to the state immunization survey. The Board's proposal, however, requires the nurses to get pre-approval prior to performing additional work that may be eligible for payment from the pool and further provides that each nurse will received approval for a maximum of twenty (20) hours of additional paid work sourced from this fund.

Cost of Board Offer: \$5,200 per year

Cost of ESPA Demand: Unknown

Bereavement Leave

The Board permits employees to use sick leave for bereavement within the immediate family. The Board permits employees to use personal leave for any bereavement. In addition to sick and personal leave, the Board offers employees up to four (4) additional days of paid bereavement leave for a death in the immediate family, or of any designated person sharing the employee's residence on a permanent basis.

Previously, the Board granted bereavement leave for extended family members but encountered abuses, coupled with the generous paid leaves already offered for this purpose. Consequently, the Board's current proposal narrows the scope of bereavement leave, but still allows for employees to use personal or sick days for funerals and other related services, and bereavement leave as defined above.

Cost of Board Offer: Unknown as historical data on bereavement leave has not been tracked

ESPA has rejected this proposal

Cost of ESPA Demand: Unknown

SUMMARY OF TOTAL COSTS

COST OF CURRENT 2016-2017 ESPA CONTRACT YEAR = \$10,443,844.23

COST OF ESPA'S DEMAND FOR YEAR ONE = \$11,585,515.86

First year percentage increase of 10.93 %

COST OF ESPA'S DEMAND FOR FOUR YEARS = \$48,407,921.76

Four year percentage increase of 20.92%

COST OF ESPA'S DEMAND FOR FULL CONTRACT (10 YEARS) = \$132,345,178.58

Ten year percentage increase of 43.83% (full term of ESPA's demand)

COST OF BOARD'S PROPOAL FOR YEAR ONE = \$10,745,357.84

First year percentage increase of 2.89%

COST OF BOARD'S PROPOSAL FOR FULL CONTRACT (4 YEARS) = \$43,607,675.71

Four year percentage increase of 5.90% (full term of District's offer)