



YCEA BEST

YCEA Bargaining Emergency Support Team
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The YCEA Negotiations Team met with the District today to continue its work on next year's contract. The District was, as usual, full of surprises!

In the area of health benefits:

YCEA's team came in expecting to find updated proposals for health benefits costs that would allow them to put together a settlement proposal that would address health benefits as well as protect jobs. However, The District (or its consultant) used a significantly degraded version of our prescription coverage plan when they shopped around for proposals. This change was in direct opposition to the directions given by the Health Benefit Committee. Because of this change, our team was unable to work with the numbers, and no progress could be made. Prior to this surprise, our team felt confident that they could have come to some agreement. Now we are forced to wait for new proposals which delays the entire negotiation process.

The District is already benefiting from our participation in a larger insurance pool. REEP (our vision and dental broker) provided the District with a \$45,000 rebate. This money should have been put back into the health benefits fund to mitigate cost increases. Instead, Assistant Superintendent of

Business Services George Velarde chose to put that money into the general fund.

In the area of our early retirement incentive:

The District is holding the Supplemental Early Retirement Program (SERP) hostage! They claim that they will not approve the SERP until we agree to five furlough days by April 24. These are unrelated issues in our negotiations. During the recent RIF hearing, CTA attorney Ron Skipper asked Ms. Moore if the SERP would save jobs. Ms. Moore responded that, "if a teacher retires, and if we need the position, then we'd hire them back." We have been lead to believe if, for example, a secondary English teacher retires, then a secondary English teacher who had been RIFed would be rehired. According to Ms. Moore, this is no longer true. This is what happened last year to our counselors. The District laid off a counselor, then 2 counselors retired, and the District refused to rescind the first counselor's layoff. We lost 3 counselors last year!"

There is no reason for the SERP and furlough days to be tied together. Neither has anything to do with the other, except to maybe make our Board feel a little better about laying off 65 people. Without the assurance that each retirement will equal a job saved, the District should stop attempting to strong-arm us into commitments that are not in the best interests of our members. It is fiscally irresponsible for the district to use a program that could save the district substantial money and lessen the number of layoffs as a bargaining chip.

In the area of class sizes:

According to the latest negotiations update, the District is proposing that we staff schools at our current ratios, but allow them to pack more students into our classrooms. They are also pushing to increase class sizes in elementary PE. We fought had to limit class sizes in elementary PE and now the District is working to undo efforts. This way they do not need to hire additional teachers when student enrollment increases. Apparently, they believe that "the more, the merrier" is the key to successful

Here's what we can do to help our team

Last month, the Board was urged not to play games and allow us to work with their team to get through these tough economic times in a way that would cost as few jobs as possible impact programs as little as necessary. However, they continue to play the same games we have seen in the past.

Take a minute to email our Board members and remind them that the only way we are going to get through this is by working together.

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We would also encourage individuals to write letters to the editors of our local papers voicing concern over decisions which will impact the quality of education in our community.

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