

LETTER TO THE REDBANK VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMUNITY

The Redbank Valley School Board's bargaining committee ("District Committee") would like to provide the community with a status update with respect to the ongoing teacher negotiations.

On September 23, 2021, the District Committee and Teacher Committee met. At the meeting the District Committee presented a **Best and Final** comprehensive counterproposal in response to the proposal presented by the Teacher Committee on August 30, 2021. The District's proposal represented a compromise and was made in an attempt to find middle ground between the District's and Teachers' prior proposals. To this end, the District's proposal increased recurring costs associated with the five-year proposal by approximately \$110,000.00 as compared to its prior proposal. Additionally, the District proposal demonstrated a willingness by the District to use a significant amount of its remaining fund balance to help pay for the salary proposals in order to maintain a balanced budget.

As part of the proposal, the District provided the teachers with five (5) options for wage increases, giving the teachers the ability to select the option which works best for them. The options were:

Option 1:

- Step movement in all 5 years of CBA
- Each employee receiving step movement (those in their first 15 years of employment) will receive an average raise of \$1,700 more in salary in each year of the CBA
- Increase each step by \$285 in each year of the CBA
- No lump sum payment due to retroactive raises
- District pays approx. \$177,000 in retroactive raises despite not receiving any health insurance concessions during the first two years of the contract, which averages approx. \$2,150.00 per teacher

Option 2:

- Increase each step by \$1,425 in Year 1 of CBA plus step
- Step movement only in years 2 through 5 of CBA (no additional raises beyond step movement)
- Each employee receiving step movement (those in their first 15 years of employment) will receive an average raise of \$1,700 more in salary in each year of the CBA
- No lump sum payment due to retroactive raises
- District pays approx. \$433,000 in retroactive raises despite not receiving any health insurance concessions during the first two years of the contract, which averages approx. \$5,286 per teacher

Option 3:

- Step and wage freeze in years 1 and 2 of CBA
- Increase each step by \$810 in Year 3 of CBA plus step movement
- Increase each step by \$825 in Year 4 of CBA plus step movement
- Increase each step by \$855 in Year 5 of CBA plus step movement
- Each employee receiving step movement (those in their first 15 years of employment) will receive an average raise of \$1,700 more in salary in years 3-5
- One-time signing bonus paid to all teachers in the amount of \$2,000 to be paid within 30 days of ratification of the contract.
- District pays approx. \$164,000 in signing bonuses.

Option 4:

- Step movement only in years 1 and 2 of CBA (no additional raises beyond step movement)
- Increase each step by \$475 in Years 3 through 5 of CBA plus step movement in years 3 through 5
- Each employee receiving step movement (those in their first 15 years of employment) will receive an average raise of \$1,700 more in salary in each year of the CBA
- No lump sum payment due to retroactive raises
- District pays approx. \$199,787 in retroactive raises despite not receiving any health insurance concessions during the first two years of the contract, which averages approx. \$2,435 per teacher

Option 5:

- Increase each step by \$1,240 in year 1 and year 2 of CBA.
- No step-movement in years 1 and 2 of CBA (no additional raises beyond step movement)
- Step movement only in years 3 through 5 (no raises)
- Each employee receiving step movement (those in their first 15 years of employment) will receive an average raise of \$1,700 more in salary in years 3-5 of the CBA
- No lump sum payment during to retroactive raises
- District pays approx. \$305,000 in retroactive raises despite not receiving any health insurance concessions during the first two years of the contract, which averages approx. \$3,720 per teacher

As part of the proposal, the District also asked the teachers to accept co-pays on some medical services they receive. Currently, the teachers do not pay any co-pays. The co-pays included in District's proposal are as follows:

2021-22 School Year

1. Emergency Room - \$125
2. Urgent Care - \$10
3. Office Visit - \$10
4. Specialist Visit - \$15
5. Brand Name Medicine - \$20 (generic \$0)
6. Mandatory Mail Order Medicine

2022-23 School Year

1. Emergency Room - \$125
2. Urgent Care - \$20
3. Office Visit - \$20
4. Specialist Visit - \$30
5. Brand Name Medicine - \$20 (generic \$0)
6. Mandatory Mail Order Medicine
7. Spinal Manipulation - \$20

2023-24 School Year

1. Emergency Room - \$125
2. Urgent Care - \$20
3. Office Visit - \$20
4. Specialist Visit - \$30
5. Brand Name Medicine - \$20 (generic \$0)
6. Mandatory Mail Order Medicine
7. Spinal Manipulation - \$20
8. PT/OT - \$10

The Teacher Committee rejected the District's Best and Final proposal and presented a counterproposal of its own. The District Committee was greatly disappointed to learn that the Teacher Committee counterproposal actually moved the parties further apart. More specifically, the Teacher Committee's proposal sought approximately **\$130,000.00 more** in recurring costs over the five-year contract than the teachers sought in their August 30, 2021 proposal.

The District Committee is hopeful that the Teacher Committee will reconsider its Best and Final proposal so the District can get back to fulfilling its obligation to the community – educating our children.

Respectfully and Sincerely,

Robert D. Zaruta

Chief Negotiator for the Redbank Valley School Board Bargaining Committee