

Beach Park Educators Association

IEA/NEA

The teacher-members of the Beach Park Education Association take great pride in our schools and in the work we do to maintain educational excellence. We are 165 career teachers, pre-K-8, who devote our professional lives to children. Education is our chosen profession. It's our passion and our commitment. We are fully engaged in creating and maintaining high quality public schools that will serve students well, help them grow, and enable them to reach their full potential throughout their lives.

We are proud of our work. We are proud of our community. Our diverse school district is recognized as being among the very best in this area and throughout Lake County. That didn't happen by accident. The quality of our school district has been a collaborative effort of the community, parents, previous school boards, administrators, professional educators and school support professionals.

We believe the quality of the school district and its ability to attract and retain excellent teachers is in jeopardy.

For many years, Beach Park has been a place in which "fairness" has governed the negotiations process and guided both the school board and the association to fair agreements for all school stakeholders. Yes, we've had disagreements. But those disagreements have always been worked out in fairness and with integrity at the negotiations table.

That type of fairness is not governing the process this time. As a result, the possibility of the first strike in our school district's history is real.

School districts and communities throughout Illinois are operating under challenging financial conditions. As educators and citizens, we are well aware of that. Throughout our negotiations, we never asked for exorbitant raises – nor are we doing so now. In the beginning, the school board insisted that we address "non-salary compensation issues" *first*, with the intent of later using dollars saved in insurance, tuition reimbursement, lane movements, reduction of teacher prep time, etc. to fund reasonable increases to the professional salary schedule.

We participated in these discussions and changes in good faith, only to be told later that the school board had never made such a commitment.

That's not fair. With full understanding that "big raises" are not affordable or appropriate at this time, our negotiations team and school board made adjustments in the contract that saved over \$200,000, with the committed expectation that these savings could be used elsewhere in compensation and salaries.

The school board refused to honor its commitment.

Our association has proposed a fair salary adjustment (2%) that is affordable to the school district with no new taxes. We found the money (\$200,000) to fund the salary adjustment (\$180,000) by trimming other areas of compensation. Yet the school board still says, "No."

As teachers, we walk the walk of our promise and our word every day. We expect the school board to do the same.

Our excellent school district in the past has been a "destination school district" of professional teachers who spent their entire careers here. But even with the challenging economy and job insecurity today, we've lost talented young teachers to other school districts because other places offer better compensation and more promising career opportunities.

That should not be happening here. This is not a training ground. Quality career educators are the professionals who are closest to the children, who provide direct services and make a difference every day. Our goal is to make sure that Beach Park is a place that attracts and retains the best.

With this in mind, we offer the following proposals:

Salary:

Salary for the 2013-2014 school year will be calculated as a 2.00% increase on each cell of the 2012-2013 salary schedule. Teachers would not move to the next step on the salary schedule; however, teachers may move laterally across the salary schedule for continuing education. Salary for the 2014-2015 school year will be calculated as a 2.00% increase on each cell of the 2013-2014 salary schedule. Teachers would not move to the next step on the salary schedule; however, teachers may move laterally across the salary schedule for continuing education.

Cost Estimate: \$180,000 of which is fully funded by concessions and cuts made by the association in other areas of the language and benefits of the contract.

Rationale: During previous negotiations, it was a joint goal of both negotiating teams to increase the starting salary of Beach Park teachers in order to attract highly qualified and motivated professionals. It is our desire to remain competitive with surrounding districts by continuing to offer modest increases.

The increase we are asking for is 0.2% above the cost of living increase (1.8%) for 2013. In addition, we have agreed to pay more in insurance co-pays, prescriptions, office visits and the deductible has also been increased. Further, tuition reimbursement for continuing education will be limited, impacting the amount of money that teachers will be required to pay out of pocket.. The 2% we are asking for will not even off set these increases.

Finally, our administration received 2% raises this year. We wish to be shown the same consideration, regard, and respect as the other professionals in the district.

Retirement:

Six - Percent (6%) Limitation

If a Teacher who has served in the district **for at least 10 years** gives irrevocable notice of retirement prior to May 15 of the fifth year before retirement, that Teacher shall be guaranteed a salary increase of six percent (6%) per year for each of their final four years of service, using as the initial basis for calculation his/her salary in the fifth year prior to retirement.

If a teacher has TRS creditable earnings in addition to the teacher's base salary (i.e. his/her placement on the salary schedule), the teacher shall receive a six percent (6%) increase per year on those additional TRS creditable earnings as long as the teacher continues to perform the same or similar extra duties.

If however, a teacher had TRS creditable earnings in addition to the teacher's base (e.g., a coaching or extra-curricular stipend or monetarily equivalent stipend) and the teacher does not continue to perform the same extra duties for the following school year, the teacher shall receive a salary increase that is six percent (6%) above the teacher's earnings based only on the teacher's placement on the salary schedule in the upcoming school year and any extra duties and extra curricular assignments that the Teacher continues to perform.

No Teacher will earn in excess of six percent (6%) over last year's creditable earnings during the last four (4) years prior to retirement.

The Board will pay the District's contribution of the TRS Early Retirement Option. The employee will be responsible to pay the employee's contribution of the TRS Early Retirement Option.

Sick Leave bonus: A Teacher who will be retiring may elect to redeem excess sick leave days over one hundred seventy (170) days at the rate of Sixty Dollars (\$60.00) per unused sick day up to one hundred (100) sick days. Said excess sick days must have been earned while working for School District # 3 (days in excess of 170 days). The bonus will be paid after the last work day and after the teacher has received his/her final regular paycheck.

Any Teacher providing irrevocable notice of retirement prior to May 15 of the fifth year before retirement shall be granted 200 sick days.

Retirement Health Insurance

Upon retirement the Board shall pay seventeen hundred fifty dollars (\$1750.00) to each individual teacher per year for health insurance until Medicare eligible.

Cost Estimate: Unknown, though it will be much less than the previous contract in which 14 highly-compensated teachers retired at higher salaries at the end of the 2012-2013 school year. Most eligible teachers have retired or put in for retirement under the previous contract.

Rationale: We believe that teachers who have dedicated their lives to educating children in this district should receive this benefit. We, however, did agree to the board's suggestion that a teacher be employed within the district for a minimum of ten years.

The state will direct future language changes in retirement. We do not wish to be premature in limiting benefits to our members.