

Wood River Education Association, IEA-NEA (Association)
Narrative and Cost Summary of WREA's October 29, 2015 Proposal
to the
Wood River-Hartford School District #15 Board of Education (Board)

The Association and Board have been negotiating a successor agreement to its Collective Bargaining Agreement since June, 2015. While all language items have been tentatively agreed upon, agreement has not been reached on a monetary settlement. The Association proposed its most recent offer on October 29, 2015 before a mediator from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. The Association had requested the assistance of a mediator when the Board previously indicated to the Association that it did not desire to return to the bargaining table.

The next mediation session was scheduled for November 18, 2015; however, at the last moment, the mediator was not able to attend. Nevertheless, in an effort to conclude these very lengthy negotiations, the Association indicated to the Board that it would be willing to meet without the mediator. Unfortunately, the Board, once more, decided it would not meet with the Association; therefore, negotiations will not resume until the mediator's schedule permits it.

The obvious question is, why is there a delay in reaching an agreement? The Association is simply requesting a monetary settlement whereby all of its members receive a fair and equitable settlement. Over the next two years, 24 senior employees who have dedicated their lives to the District would receive no salary increases according to the Board's most recent offer. There are only 94 members in the bargaining unit. This is simply not fair, especially since the District has had the highest financial profile rating in the state – Recognition – for nearly the last decade. The Association has proposed that these impacted employees at least receive a modest longevity increase in their salaries for each of the next two years of the Agreement. This particular monetary proposal would cost the District approximately \$26,000 dollars over two years.

Up until this past year, a bargaining year no less, the District has not had a deficit in its budget. Even then, it was a deficit of less than 5%. That deficit didn't prevent the District from increasing its Executive Administrative Services costs by 5% or continuing to fully pay administrative (both certified and non-certified) individual and family health insurance benefits. That is certainly not the norm among other area school districts. The overall Association salary proposal is quite affordable considering that the District has an estimated positive operating fund balance, as of June 30, 2015, of over \$3 million dollars out of \$7.4 million dollars in annual revenue. Furthermore, the District has been consistently maintaining a \$2 million dollar Working Cash fund balance.

District teachers and support personnel have committed their lives and careers to helping students grow and prosper. Even during this difficult period of negotiations, Association members have continued to fully devote themselves toward the welfare of the students. It's time that the Board put these negotiations to rest and recognizes the contributions made by ALL of its District employees.

Page two of this posting contains the Association's most recent proposal along with the cost summary.