



A Union of Education, Technical Support, Charter School and Education Support Professionals

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Broward teachers approve new contract**

**FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Sept. 14, 2011** – On the same day Broward school board members selected a new superintendent, 5,740 Broward teachers or 41% of those eligible to vote, cast 4,535 (79%) yes votes and 1,205 (21%) no votes to approve a historic contract tentative agreement that will remain in effect until August 15, 2014.

BTU President Pat Santeramo said this is the first year that Broward Teachers Union and school board negotiators reached an agreement after contract talks for the district's 14,000 teachers went to impasse during the last three school years. Unlike virtually all school districts in the state, the agreement provides teachers a salary increase of a \$500 bonus. While Broward teachers will be furloughed like all other district employees during the two days of the Thanksgiving Holiday week, the teachers will have the opportunity to recoup the lost two days of pay in exchange for completing supplemental training about the state's new evaluation system that is mandated by the Florida Student Success Act. With the contract agreement comes \$38 million in Race to the Top federal funding, which will be used in part to pay for the teachers' evaluation training.

**“While neither side believes this agreement is perfect, considering the current economic downturn and the state’s tragic underfunding of public schools, this was the best contract that could be reached at this time,” Santeramo said. “I would like to thank the union’s negotiators who worked on this agreement for over a year.”**

School board members will vote on the agreement during their next regularly scheduled meeting this Friday, September 16 at the K.C. Wright Building in downtown Fort Lauderdale. The board's vote, which follows the teachers' approval, is traditionally considered a formality. The two sides reached the tentative contract agreement about four weeks ago on August 18.

Teachers agreed to temporarily give up for one year their Teacher Directed Improvement Fund (TDIF), which pays for educators to attend workshops and conferences, valued at about \$1.5 million per year. At the same time, the contract agreement, which ends on August 15, 2014, provides Broward teachers with the following:

A \$500 bonus while virtually no other districts in Florida are providing teachers with raises

A two day furlough on Monday, November 21 and Tuesday, November 22 or two additional days off during the Thanksgiving Holiday week when Broward schools will be closed

The opportunity to complete supplemental training on a new state evaluation system in exchange for recouping wages lost during the two day Thanksgiving Holiday week furlough

Teachers will continue to receive 100% of their health insurance paid for by the district

Formation of a committee to explore and make recommendations to the BTU's president and the district's superintendent concerning the implementation of a Retirement Assistance Program

A voice via joint committees that will study important public education issues such as performance and merit pay

Contract negotiations re-openers for the next two school years to negotiate additional salary increases, health insurance benefits and limited contract language changes

As well as, numerous improvements to the contract that can be read at [www.BTUonline.com](http://www.BTUonline.com)

Contract negotiations between the Broward Teachers Union Technical Support Professionals and Education Support Professionals units continue.

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Founded in 1969, the Broward Teachers Union organizes and represents about 12,000 members who work for the School Board of Broward County and City of Pembroke Pines as education, technical support, charter school, and education support professionals. It is the second largest local teachers union in Florida and the sixth largest in the nation. The union's affiliates include the Florida Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association and the AFL-CIO.