



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

PRESS RELEASE

Negotiators for teachers reach first contract agreement in three years

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Aug. 18, 2011 – Officials with the Broward Teachers Union and the School Board of Broward County announced the first teacher tentative contract agreement in three years today during a joint press conference. With the tentative agreement comes \$60 million in federal Race to the Top and School Improvement funds for Broward schools to implement new state and federal program requirements; \$500 bonuses and no furloughs for the district's 14,470 teachers.

“We are pleased to announce this tentative agreement was reached just three days before our members’ students arrive for the new school year,” BTU President Pat Santeramo said. **“Negotiators had to consider that districts throughout the state are offering no pay increases for education professionals and many are asking teachers to take salary cuts through furloughs. This is the best possible agreement – albeit far from perfect -- considering that we are in the worst economic downturn the State of Florida and the United States has experienced in decades.”**

All members of the Broward Teachers Union Education Professionals Bargaining Unit will have the opportunity to review the tentative agreement, which is provided in outline form below, and vote electronically online in the coming weeks to approve or disapprove it.

Prior to his resignation, Superintendent Jim Notter had declared an impasse in contract negotiations for the second year in a row. The BTU had declared impasse the year prior to that. However, with the cooperation of his temporary replacement, Acting Superintendent Donnie Carter, the School Board named Employee Relations Specialist Dorothy Davis as the district's new chief negotiator. BTU President Pat Santeramo, in turn, named the union's Director of Field Services George Segna as the union's new chief negotiator.

The two chief negotiators along with their teams were able to reach an agreement that closely approximates those offered in Miami-Dade and West Palm Beach schools and betters most other agreements reached by districts in the state. Miami-Dade teachers agreed to no raise, but also no furloughs or layoffs. West Palm Beach teachers agreed

to a \$500 bonus as well as no furloughs or layoffs. Nearly all school districts in the state have experienced disappointing increases in class sizes and horrific cuts to programs such as art, music, physical education, library media and guidance counseling among many others.

In exchange for no furloughs that will affect all other district employees, Broward teachers must agree to exchange two days off with pay during the Thanksgiving Holiday Week for completing a training checklist of new evaluation requirements stipulated by the federal Race to the Top program and the state's new Senate Bill 736. Teachers are the only district staff members required by the state and federal government to complete the additional training.

Riding on the ability of the two sides to reach an agreement was \$37 million in federal Race to the Top education funding and \$23 million School Improvement Grant funds. The union must sign off on the district's RT3 plan by Sept. 30 or the district would have likely not received the money, but due to Florida Senate Bill 736 would still have been required to implement many of its provisions. According to the district's plan, the federal funds will be used to pay for the grant program's requirements. As part of the contract agreement, committees consisting of district and union members will study the program's plan as well as other important district issues.

Again, many of the Race to the Top Program's requirements are included in Florida's new Student Success Act (SB 736), which must be implemented per law, but state legislators provided no state funding for districts to do so. The state's unfunded mandate would have drained millions of dollars from the district's budget.

Many teachers have expressed interest in a Retirement Assistance Program (RAP) because they would like to leave the district through retirement, but cannot afford to do so. Negotiators agreed to form a committee to research the feasibility of a Retirement Assistance Program and to propose recommendations for implementing modifications for contract provisions that are required. The research and recommendations of the committee shall be rendered to the Superintendent and BTU's President no later than January 31, 2012.

The following is a basic and preliminary BTU only outline of the agreement:

I. 2010 – 2011 School Year

1. No salary increase for the 2010-2011 school year.
2. SBBC will withdraw the Impasse declaration on the 2010-2011 contract and, upon ratification and School Board approval of the Agreement, the parties can mutually agree to cancel the Impasse Hearing.
3. The parties will honor the Tentative Agreements (TAs) reached during the 2010-2011 EP Negotiations sessions.

4. The parties agree to sign off on an MOU authorizing committees to address:

- a. Senate Bill 736 (Student Success Act)
- b. The components of Race to the Top (RTTT)
- c. Student Improvement Grant (SIG)
- d. Differentiated Accountability (DA)

The committee makeup for the above mentioned committees will consist of an equal number from each party including current bargaining unit members and access to other experts in their respective fields. The committee members shall be charged with reviewing issues related to their committees' respective subjects and proposing recommendations for implementing modifications of contract revisions that are required by legislative mandates. The recommendations of the committees shall be returned to the parties for negotiations no later than December 15, 2011. The BTU agrees to enter into a signed agreement for the RTTT and SIG prior to September 15, 2011.

5. Suspend the provisions of Article 23(D)(17), Teacher Directed Improvement Funds, for the 2011-2012 school year.

6. The parties agree to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to conclude the 2010-2011 EP Negotiations with no changes in the contract language. Tentative Agreements reached during these negotiations will roll over to the 2011-2012 school year.

II. 2011- 2012 School Year

1. All teachers will receive a one-time \$500 bonus payment for the 2011-2012 school year.

2. All teachers will be required to take two (2) days off during the 2011-2012 school year (to be taken the Monday and Tuesday during the Thanksgiving week.)

3. Due to new evaluation requirements in the Student Success Act (SB 736), teachers may participate in two (2) paid days of training as a Race to the Top (RTTT) initiative. For participating in training / study / activities related to the new evaluation system developed jointly with BTU, teachers shall be compensated at their hourly rate for the aforementioned training. Failure to submit documentation of completion of the training/study/activities by May 14, 2012 shall result in the docking of salary for those days. Such docking of salary shall not be subject to the overpayment provisions contained in Article 19, Section Q.

4. An employee may be employed in a teaching position outside of the District while on a Board approved leave of absence.
5. The District agrees to continue to pay 100% of the cost for HMO and Consumer Driven Plans (employee only) and to follow the funding formula in the contract for health insurance premiums for the 2011-2012 school year.
6. The contract term will be three years (August 13, 2011 through August 15, 2014) with reopeners for the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years limited to recommendations of committees, two articles, insurance, and salary. For the 2011-2012 school year reopeners will be limited to any articles needed to comply with recommendations of committees to comply with legislative mandates.
7. The parties agree to form a committee to research the feasibility of a Retirement Assistance Program (RAP) and proposing recommendations for implementing modifications for contract provisions that are required. The research and recommendations of the committee shall be rendered to the Superintendent and the President of the BTU no later than January 31, 2012.
8. The parties agree to conduct a Joint Training for Principals and one (1) Steward from each school on the new evaluation process at a mutually agreeable date, time and location.
9. The parties agree to extend the MOU regarding Article 25 and Article 26 through 2011-2012 with an expansion of the participants and the revision of the deadline.
10. The parties agree to an MOU to develop Appendix Q (which may be renumbered) regarding requirements for seclusion and restraint of students required by Florida Statute.

As additional information becomes available about the upcoming electronic online contract ratification and related documents, it will be provided and posted online at www.BTUonline.com.

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.