

2009-2010 PFT-PUSD Tentative Agreement

An Agreement That Makes Sense For Our Economic Times

Background

Each of us is now critically aware of the unprecedented economic challenges that have seen revenues to school districts plummet in the past year. In our first and second interim budgets (official, periodic reports made by PUSD to the county), Poway Unified's reported revenues turn from an already reduced 260 million dollars in the current year to 250 million dollars next year; all while our annual operating cost continued to rise along with every other school district. Faced with a tremendous amount of uncertainty in next year's forecasted budget, much of which continues to exist, the District increased staffing ratios to levels not seen in recent years. As a result, hundreds of layoff notices were issued so that the number of employees returning for the 2009-10 year would match up to those higher staffing levels. All the while we were waiting to see how much flexibility would be granted districts so that we could transfer categorical dollars into the general fund to support our core programs and reduce the number of noticed employees. Never lost in our discussions were the temporary teachers who were not "noticed," but were just as affected. Below are the staffing levels that were used to determine the number of teacher lay off notices delivered on March 15, 2009.

General Education Staffing Ratios with March 15th Teacher Positions Lost FTE: Full Time Equivalents (1.0 position)

GRADE LEVEL	STAFFING RATIOS	Actual Class Size (district average)	SAVINGS	FTE LOSS
Grades K-1	24:1	24	\$ 730,000	40
Grades 2-3	30:1	30	\$ 2,102,600	80
Grades 4-5	32:1	32	\$ 960,000	16
Grades 6-8	33.2:1	40	\$ 2,400,000	40
Grades 9-12	35:1	42	\$ 2,820,000	47
Abraxas	26:1	31.2	\$ 60,000	1
9 th Grade CSR	gone		\$ 1,260,000	21
TOTALS			\$ 10,332,600	245

The Interest Based Problem Solving Process

It took some number of weeks from the passage of the budget in February for us to know which of the over 50 categorical programs would be held sacred by the legislature and be given no flexibility to transfer to the general fund, and which others would come with the ability to support our core program. When that was known, the work to cobble together as large a sum as possible began. While it was never the intention to scrap all of these programs, many of which teachers hold dear, and many of which currently directly support teachers and school sites (SLIP, GATE, ELL, PPAP, etc.), the IBPS team still needed to know the amount of money that was in play. Sweeping every available penny of categorical money would net us an amount of approximately 7.1 million dollars. When we were confident in our number internally, we were prepared to come to an agreement.

PFT Interests

The PFT as part of the IBPS team holds three interests in making decisions around dollars. Each interest conflicts with the other two as dollars are finite. The work revolves around striking a balance between the three, which you might guess are:

- teacher compensation;
- employment to the largest number of people possible;
- the working conditions or the direct financial support of the effort in the classroom.

We knew that the total "savings" to the District for having so dramatically increased staffing ratios to the March 15 levels was in the neighborhood of 10.3 million. Note that the cut to teachers represented a significantly smaller percentage of the total cut in the budget compared to the percentage that we already represent in the current budget. In other words, the District was somewhat successful in keeping cuts away from the classroom. The initial work, therefore, was to see how much of that figure could be put together to keep class size as reasonable as possible and not add Poway teachers to those unemployed in San Diego County.

A Temporary Rollback in our Work Year

The agreement or decision of the IBPS team **first involves using four million dollars of the swept categorical funds and applying them directly to save teacher jobs.** Secondly, a teacher work year for 2009-10 that will be five days shorter (183days---three days off the front of the current calendar and two off the end) than is in the current contract, with a corresponding temporary rollback of per diem salary for those five days, totaling 2.7%. The 2.7% of the teacher salary schedules equates to slightly over 3.2 million dollars, **all of which will be applied directly to identified teacher jobs and further reduction of class size.** These amounts combined will replace approximately **70%** of the cuts made by the March 15 staffing ratios and will **save nearly 150 teacher jobs.** Below are the 2009-2010 staffing ratios that the tentative agreement would place into the collective bargaining agreement.

General Education Staffing Ratios with 2009-2010 Tentative Agreement FTE: Full Time Equivalents (1.0 position)

GRADE LEVEL	STAFFING RATIOS	Actual Class Size (district average)	SAVINGS	FTE LOSS
Grades K-1	23:1	23	\$ 575,108	32
Grades 2-3	23:1	23	\$ 575,108	32
Grades 4-5	29 ½ :1	29 ½	\$ 180,000	3
Grades 6-8	28.7:1	34.4	\$ 300,000	5
Grades 9-12	30.5:1	36.6	\$ 300,000	5
Abraxas	23.6:1	28.3	\$ 11,700	0.20
9 th Grade CSR	gone	gone	\$ 1,260,000	21
TOTALS			\$ 3,201,916	98.20

As you can see, even with the rollback, we still have work to do in providing employment for nearly 100 teachers on the chart above that remain cut. Continued teacher resignations, retirements, and leave request and leave extensions, which we will discuss in a bit, will only serve to whittle this number down further.

The Agreement is a Temporary Rollback

It becomes more and more clear that as economic forecasts predict a yet more dismal year in 2010 in California, we have more than a one year problem in education. We have therefore agreed that the rollback will be for a period of no more than two years (2009-10 & 2010-11) counting on estimates that the 2011-2012 school year will see an economic turnaround. On the chance however that the economy *does* improve dramatically in the next few months, the agreement will contain a provision that will **automatically end the rollback** if total PUSD revenues *at any time* for the 2010-11 school year reach 275 million. This figure was determined by using the projected revenue for the district in October of 2009 (first interim budget) and only adding our increased annual operating costs (workload budget) for the succeeding two years. In other words, if money somehow comes back in a hurry, the rollback is over after the first year. Should Federal Stimulus (one time money) become available, it would be set aside and used to protect core programming in the event of further economic downturns and a resultant “June Revise” with further budget cuts.

Other Provisions of the Agreement

- Step and Column movement as normal
- The agreement renews for a two year period, the memorandum of understanding on transfer. Added to this MOU are protections for any teacher who remains laid off and is returning to the district as a teacher. This agreement, first signed in 2002, maintains district seniority as a key component in determining which teacher(s) would exit a site that was overstaffed and in a downloading situation.
- In an effort to minimize job loss, IBPS team has agreed to have notices sent to any teacher currently on leave who has not resigned making a blanket offer to those teachers, to extend their leave for an additional year. This offer, which represents a departure from district policy, is good through April 30, 2009 and again represents a good faith effort to avoid the issuance of as many May 15 layoff notices as is possible. Each teacher that extends their leave saves a job and allows for another year of retirements to hopefully bring everyone back on board.
- Again, with the interest of keeping our noticed teachers and our high performing temporary teachers in the PUSD fold, the IBPS team is working on an preferred sub pool that would guarantee employment at substitute compensation rates for a set number of student days and/or give first call to this group for all of the days of the student calendar year. We are exploring the possibility of adding health benefits to this group in an effort to show how we value our high performing staff.
- An extension of the Reduced Workload Program (Willie Brown Act) deadline from March 31 to April 30, 2009. Every teacher that takes advantage of this program creates employment for those affected by the budget.
- The **Special Education Problem Solving Committee** was formed with an MOU which was set to expire in June of this year. This memorandum of understanding has been renewed and the problem solving group will continue with a focus on its work to be the development of caseloads for succeeding years.
- The agreement is silent on health and welfare as we have yet to see an initial 2010 proposal from either Kaiser or Health Net. We do have in place a 12% rate cap for 2010 from Health Net.

We called this “an agreement that makes sense” at the top of this communication because we believe that it is just that. It is an agreement that reflects an economic reality that none of us would have ever dreamed could happen in our working lifetime. It is an agreement inside a district budget that will see cuts in management employment that I also thought I would never see. Teachers will see cuts to management next year that will begin at the assistant principal level and extend to the superintendent’s cabinet. Those cuts will not be limited to certificated managers, but classified managers as well. In short, I can assure membership that everyone will feel the pain and that everyone who remains will work in an environment with a belt yet tightened another notch.

This is an agreement that deserves the support of membership for all of the reasons stated above. Tradition tells me that we will engage in the most heartfelt and spirited of discussions on the agreement itself and the hope that it provides for the Federation and our hard working members.

Ratification

We are currently planning to hold a ratification vote for this agreement on Thursday and Friday, the 16th and 17th of April. Though the timeline is a bit abbreviated, ratification would allow our personnel folks to “walk in” to the board meeting rescissions to dozens of layoff notices, thereby avoiding many of the layoff hearings which are currently scheduled for April 23 & 24. The members of your IBPS team and your PFT staff below urges your ratification of this agreement.

Marc Houle, President

Sharon Rosenthal, IBPS Member

Bob Ruark, Middle School Vice President & IBPS Member

Karen Wusthoff, PFT Director & IBPS Member

David Thompson, PFT IBPS Member

Candy Smiley, PFT Director & IBPS Member

