

## **SRCS D and SPRE Negotiations Meeting**

**September 6, 2017**

### **SRCS D Minutes**

#### Santa Rosa County School District and Santa Rosa Professional Educators Negotiations Minutes

SRCS D representatives: David Gunter (Chief Negotiator), Brandon Koger, BJ Price, Stephen Shell

SRPE representatives: Ruth Blackman, Marie Bodi, Rhonda Chavers, David Godwin, Landra McCrary

SRCS D Team arrived at 3:55 PM

SRPE Team Arrived at 4:15 PM

Meeting called to order by SRCS D Chief Negotiator on September 6, 2017 at 4:17 PM.

The meeting began with introductions. Chief Negotiator (CN) opened with a set of proposed ground rules (see artifact). CN read each ground rule aloud and the two parties discussed the rules.

First, Rhonda Chavers requested that each negotiation session last no longer than 2 hours and was opposed to the presented 3-hour limit.

There was also discussion about common labeling practices for the artifacts presented during negotiating sessions. Common labeling was requested by the Chief Negotiator to keep order during the exchange of documents.

There was also discussion about who would open each meeting. Presented was a rotation where each party would alternate opening. SRPE wanted an option to defer the opening which was discussed and will be added to this option and reflected in the final version by the Chief Negotiator.

There was also discussion about the number of copies made of presented artifacts. Chavers was concerned that not enough copies had been made during previous negotiating sessions. The Chief Negotiator assured her that enough copies would be presented.

Chavers also expressed concern regarding the practice of discussing non-economic items first. Chavers wanted to ensure that there would be enough time for both matters to be discussed. Chief Negotiator ensured that both sides would have equal opportunity to discuss both non-economic and economic items.

At this point, Chavers informed the Chief Negotiator that SRPE was recording the meeting with a recording device/pen. The Chief Negotiator questioned this and stated that the district would not agree to the session being recorded. Chavers countered that SRPE has been recording the negotiating sessions for years. The Chief Negotiator asked Chavers if recording the session was a condition of negotiating for SRPE? Chavers countered, if the district wishes to deny this, deny it in writing and provide a rationale why. Chavers also asked if the negotiating sessions could be live streamed. The Chief Negotiator stated he would check on that but did not believe the district could accommodate that request.

At this point, Chavers and SRPE requested a caucus to discuss the proposed ground rules.

When the meeting continued, SRPE requested additional language: if either side requests information, the chief negotiator for the respective side will ensure that information is transferred to the requesting party at least 3 days prior to the next proposed meeting.

Ground rules were adjusted to reflect this. Tentative agreement was reached on the ground rules.

Chief Negotiator continued the meeting. The school district had no economic items to present because the board is awaiting the final budget proposal. Chief Negotiator did have language items to present. Discussed were Santa Rosa County School Board Proposals 1 – 9 (see artifacts). Each proposal removed or amended language. To each proposal, Chavers declared that SRPE would take the item into consideration.

Lengthier discussion occurred regarding Proposal 5 and Proposal 6. The proposed contract amendment in Proposal 5 is a timeliness matter and an attempt to address access issues. Chavers commented that it appeared that the proposal would deter communication. Chavers also commented that it appears that access issues created by an opposing organization were being used against SRPE. Chief Negotiator countered that SRPE has numerous other avenues for communication, which is why this language is being proposed. Chief Negotiator again stressed that the district is trying to work through access issues, many of which occurred the previous school year. Marie Bodi disagreed about the access issues.

Proposal 6 strikes language that is repeated or governed by other policy. For example, School Advisory Council by-laws govern the collection and use of funds. Chavers presented the history of this item, that it was written because of questionable financial activity many years ago.

This concluded the district's presentation. Chavers took the floor. She opened that all articles, from language items to salary concerns to benefits, that all matters were going to be discussed. The 'whole book' is open, as opposed to discussing one or two items individually.

Chavers also made note, on record, that SRPE is also the Educational Support bargaining agent at this time.

Chavers next presented a concern regarding placement of new hires on the salary schedule. Chavers and SRPE claimed that new hires are making more than current employees with the same level of experience are. SRPE is concerned that practice in place to avoid this has not been followed. Chavers stated that this is a dire situation. Chavers presented an e-mail exchange between David Godwin and Conni Carnley (see artifacts) that included a salary schedule, a salary schedule with language discussing a plan to place new hires on the salary schedule. Chavers stated that this practice was not being followed and, in turn, inequity was created. Chavers stated that this conflict has the potential to be an unfair labor practice.

Godwin presented information and gave an example to illustrate SRPE's claim. He chose a current employee, presented that employee's salary, and claimed that a new hire with the same years of experience would end up being hired at a salary greater than what the current employee is earning. Chief Negotiator asked for clarification, for the name of a specific newly hired employee who was making more than the existing hire identified with the same years of experience. Godwin stated that the example was fictional but still illustrated his point. Chief Negotiator clarified that Godwin and SRPE believed this could occur but had not identified any specific case where it had happened.

Chavers again referenced the e-mail exchange between Godwin and Carnley. BJ Price asked if this issue had anything to do with placement on grandfathered pay scales versus placement on performance pay scales. Chavers stated that employees are not on performance pay until they work for the district for a year.

Godwin and Chavers continued the argument that placement practices on the salary scale were unfair because existing employees were making less than new hires with the same level of experience. Chavers asked that 'your side' (referring to the District) make it fair and just.

Chief Negotiator stated that Mr. Wyrosdick and the school board wish to expedite the negotiations so that salary improvements would be made by November at the latest. The desire of both the Board and the Superintendent is to get money into the hands of their employees as soon as possible. Chief Negotiator stated that he also had discussion with Mr. Wyrosdick and made him aware of the possibility of equity issues with the placement schedule and it was being researched.

Chavers stated the desire to level everything. Chavers again stressed this as the highest priority for SRPE.

Chief Negotiator clarified SPRE's desire to address equity issues in salary placement should the research show the conditions truly do exist. Chief Negotiator made clear that addressing the equity issue would have a cost and leave less money available for overall salary improvements. Godwin made an example to illustrate that SRPE understood this.

To further clarify and summarize, Chief Negotiator restated SPRE's desire to address equity issues in salary placement should the research show the conditions truly do exist understanding that in doing so the associated cost would leave less money available for overall salary improvements. Chavers acknowledged this to be the priority of SRPE again.

As discussion of this issue wound down, the Chief Negotiator recommended that the ultimate goal should be for both sides to work toward a single salary schedule. Chief Negotiator stated this would also tie in with the previously stated goal of the Board and Superintendent to expedite negotiations and get money to our employees sooner than later with the goal being no later than November.

Both sides agreed those were good goals for negotiations. Both sides agreed that a uniform pay scale would clarify and simplify many of these issues for contract and annual teachers. Both sides also agreed that if equity is an issue it needs to be addressed and that it can be difficult to see inequity right now, without specific, concrete examples. Payroll is fast approaching and hard numbers can help make existence of this matter more evident.

At the conclusion of the meeting, temporary agreement was reached on Proposal 7. Also, the next meeting date was set for September 13, 2017 4-6 PM in the Canal Street Board Room.

Gunter adjourned the meeting and thanked everyone for his or her participation.