



San Juan Teachers Association
"Union of Professionals"

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Dear Colleagues and Members,

We hope that you have had a restful and regenerative summer. As we turn our eyes to the start of a new school year, we wanted to take a moment to: review how we have bargained in the past, detail where we are in the bargaining process now, explain how this year may look different than in years past, and share how we are advocating on your behalf.

Past Bargaining Approach:

As many of you know, a central benefit of having a union is the ability to collectively bargain fair and reasonable salaries, high quality benefits, and quality working conditions. Many of the job 'rights' that we enjoy today - including prep time, a 30 minute duty free lunch, permanent status, class size, parental leave, etc... come from our hard fought battles in the past. Typically, salary and benefit improvements are applied to all members equally while working conditions may vary to fit specific roles or student age groups.

It has not always been the case. In the late 90's, we compressed the salary schedule from a 26-year salary schedule to a 20-year salary schedule, which resulted in the bulk of the increases at the middle of our schedule. Later in the mid 2000's there was an additional 2% added to the 20-year anniversary increment. Each time one of these moves was made, it was to address a structural challenge that arose over time with the salary schedule.

Current Bargaining Status

This round of negotiations we have salary, benefits, and Article 7 (Class Size and Caseloads) on the table.

As we head into negotiations, your SJTA Executive Board is keenly aware of the recent strikes in education. While we unwaveringly support our colleagues in their endeavors, we are proud to share that many of the strikes other locals waged were to address issues that we have already secured. Most notably, Los Angeles and Oakland both fought to get class sizes down to under 40 for their secondary schools and down to 30 for their elementary. Sac City went on strike to force the district to honor their complete 2017 salary agreement. As these events unfold around us, rest assured that we are monitoring the progress of other districts to ensure our benefits and salary remain competitive.

As part of our efforts to provide you the best representation, the SJTA bargaining team undertook an initial analysis of salary schedules from across the region. Based on the findings of that analysis, we asked the district to conduct a "Comparability Study" looking at our total compensation, compared with our regional colleagues.

The term "total compensation" is used to signify costs that the district incurs beyond salary - including medical and retirement related costs.

The District contracted out with a third party to ensure a "neutral" process. School Services of California was selected to conduct the study comparing SJUSD with 12 of the surrounding unified school districts.

Potential Areas Identified for Bargaining

The comparability findings revealed that our members lead the way in several areas, and face challenges in a few others.

Among the strengths of our contract, the study clearly showed that maximum medical benefits in San Juan exceed those in all other districts with the exception of Sacramento City. When specifically looking at employee, plus family - SJTA members have the second best rates in the region. And when looking at the average out-of-pocket expenses for employee only coverage, our members have the lowest deductibles.

This is due in large part to the Joint Health Benefits committee and the union leadership present at those discussions.

The comparability study further revealed that the current rates of compensation for mid-career earnings in San Juan are the most competitive in the region. Specifically, practitioners on steps 5-14 are among the top salaries regionally in each of those years. This is largely due to the successes referred to earlier.

A few challenges that the study revealed related primarily to the beginning and ending of the schedule. When examining the first years of a practitioners career, new practitioners in San Juan ranked 8th in salary regionally. And despite getting to the top of our salary schedule earlier than most districts, when looking at only salary, veteran members were among the lowest maximum salaries earners in the region, coming in 10th out of 12 districts.

Given the findings of the comparability study, the bargaining team may use different strategies to tackle salary than we have in the recent past. In addition to maintaining our health benefits, and opening up article 7 (class size and caseloads), we have expressed to the district the following interests:

- Address the challenges at the beginning and end of the salary schedule
- Remove the Masters' Block, while establishing ways to maintain the value of a Masters degree
- Create an easy to understand and straightforward salary schedule that minimizes confusion

Advocating on Your Behalf

Your SJTA Bargaining Team and Executive Board are advocates for all our members and are committed to ensuring that salaries, benefits, and working conditions in San Juan are competitive so that the district can continue to attract and retain high quality professionals like you.

Negotiations resume on August 6, 2019. You should anticipate another update on negotiations after our August Rep Council meeting from your faculty representative and on our website.

In Unity,



Bill Simmons
President, SITA