

Paraeducator & ESP/Secretary CBA Frequently Asked Questions – Update December 11, 2017

This is a collection of the commonly asked questions and clarifications that we have sent out since the Tentative Agreements were announced. You can see the entire contract with the suggested changes that you will vote on in January 2018 at the PEA website, www.polkea.org under WHAT'S NEW. You can also download a copy of the current contract for a comparison under CONTRACTS.

As a reminder:

- We have worked to move the wages from an initial offer of zero to where we are today
- We had **no** Health Insurance increases in **2017** and will have **no** increases for **2018**
- We will now have two days of Bereavement Leave (this was brought to the table by the district)
- While the School Board did bring their fund balance down and transfer capital money to accomplish these increases, the raises are sustainable

FAQs

- **What happens if the Tentative Agreements are not ratified?** PEA would then go back to the bargaining table and restart the bargaining process.
- **If the Tentative Agreements are not ratified and the bargaining has to start again, does the District have to offer more money?** No, they do not.
- **Could they offer less money if we do not ratify?** Yes, they could offer less, remember they started their bargaining with an offer of a wage freeze for 16-17.
- **So, if we don't ratify the Tentative Agreements and must go back to the bargaining table, could we again be at Impasse?** Yes, we could again be at Impasse and start the lengthy process again.
- **Could voting no on the ratification change the Pay for Performance law implementation?** No, it is the law in the State of Florida, 1012.22. We must comply with the law, even though we disagree with it, feel it is unfair and it interferes with our ability to bargain wages. We believe it is fundamentally unfair to assign wages based on a flawed testing and grading system and we certainly feel VAM is inaccurate. However it is the law. Our state association has attempted to take these issues through the courts to address the inherent unfairness in the law. We will continue to lobby our legislators on this issue. However until they change the law, we must follow what is currently in statute.
- **What would happen if we just ignored the law on Pay for Performance and the Grandfather salary structure?** The state insists that it could withhold funding and impose sanctions on our school district.
- **What can we do to get the law changed?** This is a multi-part answer. 1) Let your lawmakers know how unfair this law is to experienced teachers. We will be alerting you on how to contact them as the session begins in January. We will also set up a Legislative Forum where you can address them directly. 2) To change the laws you need to change the lawmakers. November 2018 is the next major election. We need

candidates at every level that will work for, and not against, public education and public education teachers and employees.

- **How can I tell what my contract type or pay group is?** This is in the staff portal. If you look in the portal where you find your pay stubs you will see a sheet called Salary Information that shows your years of experience in Polk, your salary, your Pay Scale Group, etc. A teacher on the grandfathered scale is a teacher that was on a professional services contract or continuing services contract. You can see the information in the staff portal. If it shows your PAY SCALE GROUP listed as (number) YEARS you are on the grandfather schedule. If it shows a 3-digit number for a level like 022, you are an annual contract teacher. If you have the Pay Scale Group listing a PA or PG that is a pay grade if you are a paraeducator or ESP/secretary. Then the next cell tells you your experience placement. PEA recommends that you take a screen shot of this page or save it to your computer so you can compare it when the new information is loaded in January.
- **Do I get a raise?** All employees covered by the Teacher, Paraeducator, ESP/Secretary contracts are getting raises. You should have received an email from PEA specific to the contract changes that affect your employee group. If you did not receive an email, please check your junk mail and spam and then send us an email so we can forward you the correct document.
- **Since the monetary raises are retroactive is any of the language retroactive too like bereavement?** Language goes into effect upon ratification unless otherwise noted, such as making the salaries retroactive to January 1 2017.
- **I know someone that worked for the school board, but has left employment prior to January 16, 2018. Will they get the raises?** The district only pays active employees at the time that ratification is finalized. This is long standing and they had their attorney review this a few years ago.

Paraeducator & ESP Example:

- A Paraeducator or ESP/Secretary will move an experience level in 2016-2017 and an experience level in 2017-2018. If the average step cost is approximately \$500 that means the total base increases by \$1000, or \$83.33 per month. The retro pay amount would be approximately \$750 (\$250 for 16-17 retro to January 1 and \$500 for 17-18 retro to July 1) . Since the salary schedules in the current contract will not change other than to update the years of experience and add another step you can use the current schedule to see how moving two steps in your pay grade will affect your total salary.
- A Paraeducator of ESP/Secretary that is **on step 5, 6, 7 or 8** will need to read each year's salary schedule carefully. These combo step years also move during the 2 year agreement. If you were on step 5 in 2016-2016 you move to step 6 during 2016-2017 and step 6 during 2017-2018. You are moving 2 steps and receiving a raise in each year.
- A Paraeducator or ESP/Secretary that is an **outlier or at the top of the scale** will have their salary increased by \$500 in 2016-2017. This amount is paid retro to January 1, 2017 for the 2016-2017 school year. This is their new base pay for 2017-2018. That means in

January they would receive a full year of retro pay of \$500 and also start seeing the monthly increase to their salary of approximately \$41.

Comparison Chart—Settlement versus District’s last offer

- The blue column is the total change to your base salary for the 2 years of the contract. The pink column is the total retro pay for 16-17 back to January 1, and 17-18 back to July 1. The green column is the total increase that each type of employee in the Teacher CBA can see in their salary for 16-17 and 17-18.
- The white column labeled ‘District Offer’ is the total salary offered for 17-18 only. The yellow is the difference the PEA settlement offer garnered for each employee.

Unit	Scale	16-17 add to base	retro Jan 1, 2017	17-18 add to base	retro Jul 1, 2017	Total New Base	Total Retro	Total w/ Retro	District Offer	Difference
Para		step	1/2 step	step	step	2 step	1-1/2 step	2 step + retro	1%	2 steps
Para - top or outlier		500	250		250	500	500	750	nothing	750
ESP		step	1/2 step	step	step	2 step	1-1/2 step	2 step + retro	1%	2 steps
ESP - top or outlier		500	250		250	500	500	750	nothing	750

Miscellaneous Ratification Questions

- **What is the timeline for ratification?** You will receive your ballots in the courier on January 4th. They are due back to PEA on January 16th. The counting will begin at 5 pm on Tuesday, January 16th. We will announce the results on the PEA website after the ballots are tallied.
- **I started after the 2015-2016 school year. How will I know if I am getting credit for a year?** You had to work one day more than 50% of the contract year to be counted as having worked to gain a year of experience.
- **When will we see the money?** Upon ratification, you will receive the money in your January paycheck.