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CHAMPAIGN COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #4
BOARD OF EDUCATION
OFFER TO CHAMPAIGN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (CFT),
LOCAL 1925, IFT/AFT/AFL-CIO
February 25, 2022

INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY

Throughout negotiations, the Board of Education has been guided by the findings of the District Needs Assessment, which found that Black and Latinx students and students with special needs persistently lag behind their peers in academic achievement. The Board is firmly committed to addressing and closing these opportunity gaps. Throughout negotiations with CFT, we have had a single priority: provide all students additional high quality instruction to improve educational outcomes.

For many years, parents, teachers, administrators, and others in the community have shared concerns about how short the District's elementary school day is in comparison to other school districts in our region. This means Unit 4 students have less instructional time, shorter recess and lunch periods, and less time to connect with their friends than students elsewhere.

Every time the length of the elementary student day has been raised in the past, previous Boards and Superintendents have been told, "Now isn't the right time to change this." If the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced anything, it's that every minute students are with their teachers and friends is essential. The Board believes there is no better time than now to "right size" the District's elementary school day. Our taxpayers affirmed the need to have updated learning facilities by approving the most recent referendum to replace and modernize our aging buildings. Our current elementary schedule is also outdated and **now is the time to ensure our students are getting what they need inside the classroom as well.** The infusion of federal money we have received specifically designated for combatting "unfinished learning" makes this possible.

The Board understands that a longer school day alone will not solve all challenges—it is one piece of a much larger puzzle. Our Strategic Plan outlines a number of other areas to which we are also devoting extensive time and resources. **Even with adjustments to the elementary day, we will continue to focus on improvement in all aspects of the District's operations.** Our current work to revamp the Schools of Choice process is one example of our commitment to address multiple challenges at the same time.

It is very important to the Board that those engaging in this difficult but important work are adequately rewarded and that we continue to fairly compensate our employees. Unit 4 pays teachers at a higher rate than almost all others in the region and many across the State, including some Chicago suburbs. This is perhaps the most generous contract ever offered to Unit 4 teachers and the Board believes it is worthwhile. When we invest in our teachers, we invest in our students.

Since May 5, 2021, the Board and CFT have been engaged in negotiations for a new Collective Bargaining Agreement. Although the previous Agreement states it expires on June 30, 2021, the terms of the existing contract remain in effect until a new contract is negotiated. Teachers continue to be paid at the rate they were paid under the existing contract and the language of the existing contract continues to guide teachers' daily work. The Board's current proposal would ensure that changes resulting from a new Agreement (including salary) will be applied retroactively to July 1, 2021.

The pages that follow contain additional detail about the individual items being negotiated as well as projected costs of the Board's proposals. The Board will continue to bargain in good faith and work diligently to reach a resolution with CFT that honors the work of our valuable educators while also meeting our students' needs.

PROPOSALS OVERVIEW

Board Proposal for a Longer Instructional Day and Additional Professional Development

The Board and CFT have not reached agreement on two important issues: additional high-quality professional development for staff and a longer school day for elementary school students. **It is critical to note that these are the only items in either side's initial proposals specifically targeted to improve outcomes for students. Other proposals may have some positive impact on student achievement but none have been specifically designed for that purpose. If the Board withdraws its proposal as CFT is requesting, the items that remain will have minimal impact on student success.** The Board believes this is irresponsible to our students, families, and community.

The key elements of the Board's proposal regarding the elementary school day are as follows:

- Beginning in the 2023-2024 school year, elementary students' day will increase by 50 minutes, allowing for additional lunch/recess time and increasing student learning time by 30 minutes.
- Some of the increased student learning time will be in Library and "Specials" (Music, Art, PE); the time will also support students' social-emotional learning.
- Elementary Teachers' workday will extend by 35 minutes, effective in the 2023-2024 school year. During this 35 minutes, teachers will receive 5 additional minutes of lunch and 5 additional minutes of planning time each day. The Board's proposal converts 15 minutes of arrival/dismissal supervision time to instructional time, which is how the students' day extends by 50 minutes while the teachers' day only increases by 35 minutes.
- All school start times will be between 7:45 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.
- During the remainder of this school year and most of the 2022-2023 school year, a task force of administrators, teachers, support staff, and other stakeholders—including parents and community members—will work to determine the bell schedule and other logistics (transportation, food service, etc.) at all schools. The District will announce the start and end times for each campus no later than May 1, 2023.

- Beginning in 2022-2023, all teachers will receive one hour of professional development weekly through Wednesday “early out” days, replacing “late start” days currently at our high schools. The focus will be on student achievement and equity initiatives aligned with the District’s Strategic Plan. Teachers will help develop and implement the professional development to ensure it meets both their students’ and their own learning needs.
- Elementary teachers employed prior to June 30, 2022, will receive an additional **\$3,000 per year** for the longer school day, **in addition to the regular salary increase** outlined below.

Board Rationale

Comparison With Our Peers

Unit 4 has one of the shortest elementary school days in the region. The Board believes that all families, regardless of their ability to pay, have the right to a free, appropriate, public education. Unit 4 often sets the standard for those around us and we are not currently meeting the mark when it comes to the amount of time we directly serve our students each day.

Elementary Student Bell Times	
District	Total (Hours:Minutes)
Next Generation (Private)	7:30
St. John Lutheran (Private)	7:15
St. Matthew's (Private)	7:00
Monticello	7:00
Judah Christian (Private)	6:55
Countryside (Private)	6:50
Urbana	6:45
Normal	6:45
Holy Cross (Private)	6:35
Mahomet	6:30
Tolono	6:30
Rantoul	6:30
Springfield	6:30
Decatur	6:20
Bloomington	6:15
Danville	6:15
Champaign	6:15

How Will The Time Be Used?

In addition to standardizing lunch and recess blocks across campuses and grade levels, the instructional time added to the day will be used in a variety of ways. Because the needs in each school are distinct, the Board is committed to working with principals, teachers, and other stakeholders to determine what might be best for their students.

Possibilities include:

- Time during the regular school day for all students to focus on “unfinished learning” due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- More time to focus on students’ social-emotional needs, which are even more important now than ever.
- More time for science, social studies, fine arts, and technology, which often get neglected because our current day is so short.
- More time for students to focus on cooperative and project-based learning instead of rushing through material.
- Additional small group time for high quality instruction in the classroom, Intervention/Acceleration blocks, Special Education, and Multilingual Learners programs.
- Additional time for students to process and ask questions or receive feedback from teachers prior to leaving school.
- More opportunity for teachers to integrate core subjects into an instructional unit.
- Additional time for community-based educational partners to provide mentorship and support.

Impact On The Teacher Workday

Teachers are currently required to report 30 minutes before student learning begins and stay for 30 minutes after learning ends, in part to supervise students during arrival and dismissal. The Board’s proposal converts 15 of these minutes to instructional time, which is how the students’ day extends by 50 minutes while the teachers’ day only increases by 35 minutes.

As part of the added 35 minutes, teachers will receive an additional 5 minutes of lunch and an additional 5 minutes of planning time every day. While this may seem small, this is the equivalent of nearly one additional plan and lunch period every week.

The remaining 25 minutes added to the work day will be used to expand on what is already happening, not to necessitate a large amount of additional planning for teachers or add new initiatives. For this reason, the “new” schedule will look very much like the current schedule, only with slightly increased times in certain areas.

Professional Development Needs

When developing the District's Strategic Plan, the Board learned that Unit 4 teachers have less access to high quality professional development time focused on important topics including social-emotional learning and health, instructional strategies, and culturally responsive practices than educators in other districts. The Board understands that adding more time to the student day without giving teachers the tools they need to make it successful is unwise and for this reason, expanding professional development opportunities is another key element of the Board’s proposal.

Teachers spend a considerable amount of time outside of school hours growing their professional capacity. Under our proposal, all Unit 4 teachers will receive one hour of professional development weekly through Wednesday “early out” days, replacing “late start” days currently at our high schools. Teachers will help develop and implement the professional development to ensure it meets both their students’ and their own learning needs.

Broader District Impact

The Board’s proposal may also positively affect some staffing challenges the District faces. Lengthening the work day for certain support staff groups (Teacher Aides, Interpreters, Nurses, Food Service staff, et al.), will likely provide opportunities for higher take-home pay and better benefits coverage. **This may also increase our ability to recruit and retain quality support staff.** Additionally, parents in our community are seeking safe spaces for their students to learn and play. A longer school day allows for students to learn from highly qualified staff in a safe and dynamic environment.

The Board's Financial Proposal

From the onset of negotiations, the Board has been clear that the generous financial package outlined below was conditioned on CFT's agreement to the Board's proposals on the length of the elementary student day and additional high-quality professional development time for staff. The Board's financial package to CFT members includes:

- The entry level net salary for a first-year teacher with a Bachelor's Degree during the first year of the contract is **\$44,598** (plus a **100%** Board-paid retirement contribution).
- **17.5%** salary increases over 4 years for most teachers (without taking into account the additional \$3,000 per year for elementary teachers described below)
 - **4.25%** salary increases each year for the first three years of the Agreement. (Teachers on the salary schedule will receive a base raise of 2.5% and a step increase that averages 1.75%; those not on the salary schedule will receive a flat 4.25% increase)
 - **4.75%** salary increases for teachers on the salary schedule (base raise of 3% and a step increase that averages 1.75%) and **4.5%** salary increases for teachers not on the salary schedule in the fourth year of the Agreement.
- Elementary teachers employed prior to June 30, 2022, will receive an additional **\$3,000 per year** for the longer school day, in addition to the regular salary increase outlined above. For a current first year elementary teacher with a Bachelor's Degree, this will result in a **10.4% raise** between the 2022-2023 school year and the 2023-2024 school year. (Over the life of the contract, this elementary teacher will earn a **22.6%** overall increase!)
- The Board is paying **100%** of each teacher's individual health insurance premium in 2021-2022 and has proposed future years' payments that, based on historical usage trends, will continue to cover **100%** of each teacher's individual health insurance premium for the duration of the Agreement.
- Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, the Board contribution toward a teacher's family insurance will increase by **\$25 per month** for the duration of the Agreement (a **25% increase**).
- Increasing extra duty pay from \$32.50 per hour to **\$35.00** per hour (a **7.7% increase**).

- A student loan assistance program for teachers in hard-to-fill positions or employed at campuses serving low-income students. Eligible teachers will receive up to **\$5,000** of student loan assistance.
- A **25% discount** on Kids Plus for all teachers with children who attend Unit 4 Schools (a yearly value of **\$500+** for each student enrolled in the full weekly program).

The Board estimates the total cost of these proposals over the proposed term of the Agreement would be approximately **\$16,767,215**.

Formal Tentative Agreements

The Board and CFT reached tentative agreement on several items, including:

- Updates regarding Board-paid tuition for teachers
- Updates reducing the posting time for vacancies
- Updates regarding the payroll deadline for timesheets
- The addition of a \$1,500 Board-Certified Behavioral Analyst (BCBA) stipend
- Guarantees that some after-hours professional development opportunities for teachers will be offered virtually
- Updates regarding the provision of requested information to CFT
- Updates regarding CFT dues deduction and revocation
- Updates clarifying and expanding FMLA/Maternity/Paternity leave
- The dollar amount of Board-paid insurance premiums for 2021-2022 (which have already taken effect)
- Language updates to outdated/duplicative language
- Updates and additions to the differential schedule

The Board estimates the total cost of these Tentative Agreements to be minimal over the four-year term of the Agreement, except for the cost of insurance (which is included in the previous section's total cost).

CONCLUSION

The Board understands the vital importance of accelerating achievement of students from historically marginalized and underperforming groups while increasing the professional capacity of its valuable educators. Our proposal addresses both of these important needs at the same time.

The Board has committed to raising salaries and enhancing benefits at a rate above other districts in the area (and many districts across the State) for those who fundamentally change the structure of their workday for the betterment of Unit 4 students. Meaningful professional development is another way we invest in our educators. When we invest in our teachers, we invest in our students.

As a Board, we are advocating for increased instructional time for students because we trust and know that our highly qualified teachers, administrators, and other staff will develop and use those critical minutes wisely. We understand that a modified school day alone will not solve all challenges—it is one piece of a much larger puzzle. We believe this path will lead our staff to better outcomes for students.

“It’s a new day in Unit 4” is more than a slogan. The Board is fully committed to continuing to update policies, structures, and systems for the 21st century to ensure support for all students. Our proposal is another example of this commitment to students and the community.