

Dear Members:

Dr. Pedicone's most recent email to TUSD employees (sent at 9 am Thursday June 16th) dealing with the imposed language for the 2011-2012 employee agreements presents misleading and inaccurate information. Dr. Pedicone blames TEA for not meeting deadlines that were never established and misrepresents both TEA's and the District's proposals. As a result, TEA Leadership is obligated to respond. Additionally, when Dr. Pedicone uses negative and inflammatory words and phrases, it appears he intends to put TEA in an adversarial role. With this in mind, TEA Leadership knows it is imperative that its members and the TUSD community learn the correct facts about proposals and the negotiations process.

It is ironic that Dr. Pedicone would expect employee groups to believe that he is now interested in collaboration and inclusion when he and the Board majority have just violated years of negotiations and a trust has been broken.

However, it's not too late to turn around this decision, correct the misinformation and direct the negotiations team back to the table.

Now is the time to stand united in our voice, and strong through our membership. If you have not already completed a form to authorize an electronic fund transfer (EFT) of your TEA/AEA/NEA dues, please visit the home page on our TEA Website or call and request a form.

Sincerely,

Frances Banales
TEA Vice President

Below are Dr. Pedicone's emailed comments followed by TEA's clarification in bold italics.

(Dr. Pedicone) The first area of disagreement was a proposal to require the District to evaluate probationary teachers in the same manner as continuing teachers.

False: TEA wanted to establish a reasonable time frame for recommendations of improvement. The District proposed to eliminate them entirely. The District's imposed language is that recommendations for improvement are verbal and do not include any time frame for employees to make improvements.

TEA proposed that School Council members should be elected and not allowed to volunteer to serve. This was felt to prevent objective membership and weaken the councils.

Misleading: TEA never proposed that volunteers could not serve on the school council. Consistent with state statute TEA proposed to make clear that school council members be elected by their constituencies and not appointed.

However, this was not seen as an area of contention and TEA proposed to return to current language.

TEA proposed language requiring that, should the District charter a school, employees would be treated as employees in traditional schools. This was felt to erode the power of the charter concept and minimize the intent of the law.

Completely False: TEA never proposed language on charter schools this year. The District proposed to eliminate existing language in the agreement that provided charter school employees with the same rights as all TUSD employees.

The following items were approved by the Governing Board:

1. Medical insurance premiums are capped at the current rate with a guarantee of no more than a 9.5% increase.

Misleading: This statement does not clarify that the increase to medical insurance will be paid by the employee. The 9.5% could be as much as \$475 for each employee, which is obviously disproportionate depending on an employee's annual salary.

2. Wage and layoff protection is aligned for all bargaining units. This creates consistency for implementation purposes.

Misleading: 3% for administrators is not the same for MBUs and ESP; but combined with the increase to medical premiums, it creates a disparate offset to those making lower salaries.

The imposed RIF policy allows for arbitrary and capricious decisions by administration. By eliminating ranking criteria it allows the principal sole discretion on who maintains a position at a site.

3. A consolidated teaching contract can be issued instead of multiple versions.

TEA did not have an issue with a combined contract pending clarification on items the District had proposed within the contract.

4. Modifications were approved to the hiring process that will allow for more efficiency and flexibility. This includes some revisions to the RIF policy that allow for ties to be broken by the principal when all conditions are equal. This replaces the provision that the social security numbers be used to break ties between or among equally ranked employees.

Misleading: The District eliminated the right for the most senior teachers who were Highly Qualified and Appropriately Certified to be granted an interview.

The District unilaterally eliminated any objective criteria for ranking teachers when a RIF is necessary.

5. All employees will receive a 3% salary increase.

TEA absolutely supported an increase. However, employees need to know that the ASRS increase will be about 1.5 % in addition to employees paying a medical benefit contribution, which may be as much as 9.5% or \$475 no matter what their annual salary is. Employees receiving higher salaries may see some increase in salary while others at the lower end will be receiving less. TEA was negotiating a more equitable distribution that would truly benefit ALL employees.