

Greetings ESP colleagues,

12 months ago, the ESP Contract Team embarked on its mission to represent you at the negotiations table with the District to advance our shared interests for the 2019-2021 Collective Bargaining Agreement, commonly known as our contract.

We were keenly guided by the survey responses you provided to us in the spring of 2019, as well as by historically low wages and step increases that have left us further and further financially behind. Our efforts were supported enormously by the multitudes of you who showed up to tell the District and School Board what we need. You organized and came to negotiation sessions brandishing signs along with teacher, other educator, family, and community allies. You walked with Informational Pickets, participated in petitions and sticker-wearing actions that put a face on who we are as ESPs. These efforts directly supported and impacted our negotiations at the table. It was truly a team effort by ESPs.

As we were picking up real steam with our Contract Campaign effort, the COVID-19 pandemic hit us, turning our professional and personal worlds upside down. It didn't do so before we made real contract gains. However, the pandemic has shined a new and devastating spotlight on what as ESPs we endure financially. Last spring's survey told us that 70% of us work second jobs, and are the primary or co-primary financial heads of our households. This pandemic has diminished or wiped out our second jobs, affected the jobs of others in our households, and cast doubt on summer employment.

On May 4th, we received the District's "Best And Final" Contract offer. This presented the ESP Contract Team with limited options. We could accept the District's final proposal, or reject it and then be subject to mediation. We were also mindful that the School Board must approve our contract after our ratification vote, but it does not meet in July, and could cause delays, especially in receiving retroactive payment checks. On May 11th, we met to discuss on how much more we could possibly get out of mediation, and how much longer ESPs could hold out for retro pay. We came away believing that mediation would not get us a better contract, and would prolong getting retro checks into your hands. We voted unanimously to accept the District's Best And Final offer, and also, recommend passage of this contract by our members. On May 13th, the ESP Executive Board also voted to settle the contract, and send it on for a ratification vote with its recommendation. The decision will now be in your hands with the ratification vote scheduled for the week of June 1st. If ESPs approve the proposed contract, then it can be scheduled for approval by the School Board at its June 9th meeting. Assuming passage, District managers are planning for retro checks to start being issued on the July 3rd pay date.

To make informed decisions we've prepared [Info Sheets](#) for you. We've also scheduled [Info Sessions](#) to be held via Zoom with links to be sent out through District e-mail. More details on both are below.

ESP Team Members will also be available to take your questions via e-mail. **Please e-mail us at ESP@mft59.org, and note in the subject line: "ESP Contract Question."** We also will be setting up a Google Link as another way for sending in questions.

We believe we have a contract that goes beyond our current contract, benefits every ESP classification, and gives us tremendous momentum for the next contract. We recommend your approval at the upcoming ratification vote the week of June 1st.

Yours in solidarity,

ESP Executive Board and ESP Contract Team

ESP Chapter Executive Board & Contract Team

ESP Chapter Executive Board

Shaun Laden, ESP Chapter President
Susan Joy Broman, ESP Chapter 1st Vice President
Catina Neal, ESP Chapter 2nd Vice President
Katrinka Zackery, ESP Chapter Recording Secretary
Tequila Laramee, ESP Chapter At-Large Executive Board
Ma-Riah Roberson-Moody, ESP Chapter At-Large Executive Board
James Schmit, ESP Chapter At-Large Executive Board
Mary Webb-Hampton, ESP Chapter At-Large Executive Board

ESP Contract Team

Shaun Laden, ESP Contract Team Lead
Stacy Angerhofer, Dowling ES, SEA
Stacey Gurian-Sherman, Justice Page MS, CCA; ESP Contract Team Recording Secretary
Brionna Harder, Patrick Henry HS, teacher; ESP Contract Teacher Liaison
Chris Pomeroy, Riverbend (K-8), SEA and CCA
Ma-Riah Roberson-Moody, Roosevelt HS, SEA
Liz Thompson, Anwatin MS, SEA
Mary Webb-Hampton, Roosevelt HS, SEA
Karron Willis, Marcy Open School, SEA and CCA
Kim Wolking, Dowling ES, AE and CCA
Katrinka Zackery, Patrick Henry HS, SSPA
Bonita Jones, ESP Chapter Business Agent

Former Members ESP Contract Team

Brittany Blenkush, Roosevelt HS, teacher; ESP Contract Teacher Liaison
Mark Kociemba, Patrick Henry HS, AE
Ma-Tica Roberson-Moody, Roosevelt HS, Intervenor
Malcolm Wells, Patrick Henry HS, AE
Jeremey Swenson, former ESP Chapter Business Agent

Contract Summary

What we achieved in this contract is remarkable both for the particular benefits and the precedence it sets. We did not achieve all of our goals, most notably regaining automatic step increases that was given up some years ago, and which the teachers enjoy. This is a heavy lift and will require the kind of strength we have started to build through the Contract Campaign. Here are the gains we did make.

- **PARITY** - Special Education Assistants (SEA), Bilingual Program Assistants (BPA), and Educational Assistants (EA) by January 19, 2021 will earn the same hourly wages as Associate Educators (AE) and AVID Assistants. This marks the first time in a long time that 5 ESP classifications with different job responsibilities will share higher wages. This came in steady and hard won increments, as you will see in the *Proposals Detailed Summary*. This gives us momentum for further parity consolidations.
- **RAISED “FINANCIAL AUTHORITY”** – The District is given a financial spending limit by the School Board. Over the course of negotiations, the “Financial Authority” was raised specifically to fund parity. The District’s original Financial Authority was \$3,122,040.61 in new money (\$4,658,940 compounded). The District’s final offer provided an increase of \$569,818 in new money (\$969,017 compounded) above the original Financial Authority. This increase is unprecedented.
- **HIGHER WAGES FOR EVERYONE** – Every ESP, in every classification, on every step, will receive increases. ESPs in parity classifications will see an approximately \$2.00 per hour wage increase. ESPs in steps 1 through 5 in the non-parity classifications will receive an approximately \$1.00 per hour - or more – wage increase through a 1 step increase retroactive to July 1, 2019, and a 3% wage increase starting January 1, 2021. Those on Step 6 in non-parity ESP classifications will receive a \$1,000 lump sum retro pay check, and a 3% wage increase starting January 1, 2021.
- **LARGER NUMBER OF ESP WITH GREATEST BENEFITS** – In our last contract, approximately 115 ESPs benefitted by minimum wage parity with base pay increasing for all ESPs to \$15.00 per hour. In this proposed contract, 695 ESP will benefit by classification parity, or 6 times as many ESPs. This is a model for us to keep building on.
- **BEST PRACTICES FURTHER DISCUSSIONS** – The District has agreed to discuss additional classification and class consolidations in the Labor Management Best Practices Committee. Another issue on the table is access to BIP, 504 and IEP plans for ESPs who work with students with special needs.
- **NON-FINANCIAL GAINS** – In addition to comprehensive discussions that will continue in Best Practices, ESPs will benefit from other non-financial gains. This includes 2-hours of mandated special education training for every ESP who works with students with special or other needs. These trainings will be differentiated, so that a Special Education Assistant (SEA) veteran of 10 years would have a higher level of training than a new Child Care Assistant (CCA) in Minneapolis Kids who works with students with special needs but without the benefit of any school-day resources or staff. We also had victories in remaining steady to defeat District proposals, including a one-sided overhaul of the grievance process, curtailing of breaks, and increasing staff to student ratios.

We will continue to use contract negotiations to improve our financial positions and our working conditions. The Union will also use other avenues to pursue our interests, including robust advocacy with our grievances on behalf of individuals and groups of ESPs. For instance, a grievance filed on behalf of Family And Community Liaisons, who the District refused to include in parity, will be pursued vigorously. If we remain committed to building on our successful Contract Campaign, we can continue to press for a contract that raises our wages and gives us the respect we’ve earned as valuable educators.

Info Sessions

Zoom links will be sent out in your District E-mail accounts.

Week BEFORE Ratification Vote

- Tuesday, May 26th / 12:00 pm to 1 pm
- Wednesday, May 27th / 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm
- Thursday, May 28th / 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm
- Friday, May 29th 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Week OF Ratification Vote

- Monday, June 2nd / 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm
- Thursday, June 4th / 6:30 to 7:30 pm

Info Sheets Provided

1. **RETRO PAY** (*see below*) – Includes the 3 retroactive payments that will go out, and when they will go out.
2. **COMPARISON OF CONTRACTS** (*see below*) – A side-by-side comparison of financials between the former contract and this proposed contract.
3. **PROPOSALS DETAILED SUMMARY** (*separate document*) – ALL initial proposals, negotiations, and what was agreed to or withdrawn without agreement.
4. **WAGE TABLES - YEAR 1 AND YEAR 2 INCREASES** (*separate document*) – Wage increases for Year 1 and Year 2 provided in the proposed contract for every ESP classification and every step.
5. **SALARY SCHEDULES** (*separate document*)

Send Your Contract Questions

ESP Team Members will also be available to take your questions 2 ways.

E-MAIL

Please e-mail us at ESP@mft59.org, and note in the subject line: “ESP Contract Question.”

GOOGLE LINK

The Google Link will be sent through your District E-mail accounts.

Retro Pay

If ESPs approve the proposed contract with our ratification vote the week of June 1st, and the School Board approves it at their June 9th meeting, the District plans to start issuing retro checks with the July 3rd pay date.

There will be 3 payouts of retroactive pay, which is pay that we have earned through hours already worked. Our former contract expired last June 30, 2019. We have been operating without a contract for 10 months. Year 1 of the proposed contract begins on July 1, 2019. Provisions in the new contract allow step, wage, and other benefits to accrue for work done thus far in this school year.

1. PARITY RETRO PAY

SEA, BPA, and EA will receive 2 “even increases” for the difference between wages they have earned and what they are now entitled to through parity. For example, a Step 2 Special Education Assistant (SEA) currently make \$18.12 per hour. They will have their hourly wage increased to the Associate Educator (AE) Step 2 rate of \$20.06. That is an increase of \$1.94, which will be provided in 2 equal increase for hours already worked. Half of the increase will be in retro pay dating back to January 1, 2020, and the other half will come this January 19, 2021.

2. NON-PARITY RETRO PAY

ESPs in steps 1 through 5 in the non-parity classifications will receive 1 step increase that is retroactive to July 1, 2019. For example, a Step 4 School Success Program Assistant (SSPA) who earned \$27.92 per hour under the present contract will advance to Step 5 in the 1st year of the proposed contract to now earn \$28.76 per hour. The increase of \$0.84 takes effect July 1, 2019, so this SSPA will receive retro pay for all hours worked this school year.

3. STEP 6 NON-PARITY ESP CLASSIFICATIONS

Current Step 6 ESPs will receive a \$1,000 lump sum retro pay check. It is not based on hours worked or a particularly hourly wage. If you are a current Step 6 ESP, then you will receive this \$1,000 retro pay. **NOTE** – ESPs moving from Step 5 to Step 6 will not also receive this benefit.

GOING FORWARD - 3% PAY INCREASE STARTING THIS COMING JANUARY 1, 2021

All ESPs - except those in the parity classifications - will receive a 3% wage increase on top of any retro pay they receive. For instance, an AVID Assistant at Step 3 earning \$20.95 per hour in the present contract will move up in Year 1 of the proposed contract to a Step 4 to earn \$21.88 per hour. Retro pay will be provided for the \$0.93 increase difference in pay. Then, starting this January 1, 2021, they will earn an additional 3% on the \$21.88, which is an increase of \$0.66, bringing their hourly wage to \$22.54.

Prepared by Stacey Gurian-Sherman, ESP Contract Team Recording Secretary, 5-26-2020

SIDE-BY-SIDE ESP CHAPTER CONTRACT COMPARISONS

	CURRENT CONTRACT (July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2019)	PROPOSED CONTRACT (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2021)
Steps	<p>1st year – 1 Step Movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective July 1st <p>2nd year – NO Step Movement</p>	<p>1st year – 1 Step Movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective July 1st <i>EXCEPT</i> ESP receiving wage parity, i.e., SEA, BPA, and EA <p>2nd year – NO step Movement</p>
Parity	<p>1st year – NO Parity</p> <p>2nd year – MINIMUM WAGE PARITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wage parity increases to \$15 per hour minimum wage for: <p>115 TOTAL Individual EPSs**</p> <p>CCA – 103 ESPs / 67 FTE FLA CCW – 8 ESPs/ 8 FTE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Step 1 increase: \$13.19 to \$15 \$1.81 increase across all steps <p>FL CCH / 0 FTE (<i>NO positions filled</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Step 1 increase: \$8.85 to \$15.00 \$6.15 increase across all steps <p><i>**Numbers are approximate</i></p>	<p>1st year – 1st “Even Increase”** To AE PARITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> January 1, 2020 <p>2nd year – 2nd “Even Increase” to AE PARITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> January 1, 2021 <p>695 TOTAL Individual EPSs**</p> <p>SEA - 682 ESPs and BPA - 11 ESPs and EA- 2 ESPs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> District language: “AE parity for BPS, EA, SEA on January 19, 2021, achieved through even increases on January 1, 2020 and January 19, 2021.” <p>* “Even Increase” is half of the difference between the initial step and the new step with parity</p> <p><i>**Numbers are approximate</i></p>
Wage increases Steps 1 – 5	<p>1st year – NO Wage Increase</p> <p>2nd year – 1% Wage Increase – effective July 1, 2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>EXCEPT</i> ESP receiving wage parity increase 	<p>1st year – NO Wage Increase</p> <p>2nd year – 3% Wage Increase - effective January 1, 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>EXCEPT</i> ESP receiving wage parity increase, i.e., SEA, BPA, and EA
Wage Increases Step 6 ESPs	<p>1st year – 2% for Step 6 ESP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example SEA – \$555 Example SSPA - \$1,008 <p>2nd year – NO Wage Increase</p>	<p>1st year – \$1000 for Step ESP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>EXCEPT</i> ESP receiving wage parity, i.e., SEA, BPA, and EA <i>EXCEPT</i> ESP moving from Step 5 to Step 6 <p>2nd year – 3% Wage Increase - effective January 1, 2021</p>