



## **Bargaining update**

June 6, 2019

### **BPS school board to resolve impasse with teachers; District rejects magistrate's recommendation**

VIERA, Florida – The Brevard County School Board will make the final decision on teacher pay after the school district on Thursday formally rejected a special magistrate's recommendation of higher raises.

Superintendent Mark Mullins twice this week attempted to resolve a months-long impasse with the Brevard Federation of Teachers by inviting union leaders back to negotiations to hear an updated offer. Details of the offer could only be disclosed in a public meeting, not privately, under procedural rules. Union leadership declined.

"We continue to agree with the magistrate and the union that we should provide all the compensation we can for teachers," Mullins said. After the magistrate's May 17 decision, Mullins said, the district continued to review budgets and state revenue projections in hopes of re-starting negotiations with BFT.

"We have not stopped working to increase employee compensation," Mullins said. "We have scrubbed our budgets, and we now have more confidence in future funding since the release of the state budget. I'm disappointed that union leadership will not consider new, sustainable salary options."

Next, following protocol, the superintendent and BFT leaders will submit their written recommendations to the school board for retroactive pay increases for the 2018-2019 school year. The board has not yet scheduled its meeting to resolve the months-long contract impasse.

The district's last offer in December called for paying the nearly 5,000 employees covered by the BFT contract a nonrecurring district bonus of \$1,000. Teachers rated "highly effective" on performance evaluations would receive a permanent \$770 salary increase, raising median pay from \$45,798 to \$46,568. Teachers rated "effective" would receive a raise of \$540.

The special magistrate recommended that the district give larger, permanent raises by drawing from fund balances committed to purchases and contracts and to board-approved initiatives that include social workers, security officers and instructional coaches at schools. The magistrate's recommendation was non-binding. The district and union had until this week to accept or reject it.

BPS rejected the magistrate's recommended salary increases in a letter Thursday to the state Public Employee Relations Commission. Mullins said the district could not commit \$8.5 million to permanent raises from fund balances that are not recurring.

Apart from pay, the school district and BFT had tentatively agreed on several measures that would improve work conditions for educators including:

- Providing more protected planning time for teachers and school counselors.
- Allowing teachers to donate unused sick days to colleagues who need them.
- Keeping disruptive students out of class longer.

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