



Negotiations Update

The latest news on labor negotiations

October 11, 2021

At the October 6 negotiations session, the Gresham-Barlow School District (GBSD) presented its initial proposal and rationale. At the previous session, on September 22, the Gresham Barlow Education Association (GBEA) presented its initial proposal.

Setting the stage for our Contract Talks with the GBEA

The GBSD negotiations team recognizes that labor negotiations provide a platform for discussing two essential priorities for our schools and our teachers: maintaining a sound instructional environment and competitive total compensation package while prudently operating within the fiscal realities we must face now and into the near future. The labor contract we are working on needs to balance both priorities. We cannot spend money we don't have, and we should not rely on one-time monies to fund ongoing operating expenses. That doesn't make sound financial sense.

At our last two meetings, the bargaining teams exchanged initial proposals. There are stark differences between them. In the weeks ahead we will keep you informed about how we are working with the GBEA to narrow those differences and reach common ground on a mutually acceptable agreement.

You have our commitment that the district team will engage in this process in good faith and with open minds. We will be pragmatic, timely, and accurate in moving these negotiations toward resolution.

About the GBSD's Initial Proposal

The school district's proposal raises teacher pay, improves insurance benefits, and supports an equitable environment committed to excellence in teaching and learning.

Student Learning	<p>Provides increased instructional time by adding an additional student learning day to the calendar.</p> <p>Allows for the use of inclement weather days or emergency closures as remote student instruction days or teacher work days throughout the school year in lieu of make up days at the end of the year.</p> <p>Increases the time teachers have for focused collaboration with their teams and departments.</p> <p>Increases the time available for student interactions, teacher collaboration, and IEP meetings.</p>
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	<p>As per the new Oregon State Statute 342.934, ensures the school district can maintain a more diverse workforce which includes teachers with cultural and/or linguistic experience.</p> <p>In the event of a Reduction in Force, allows for the retention of teachers that have shown to have a high degree of success in the classroom and allows for the retention of teachers to remain in positions with a high degree of specialization.</p> <p>Works to establish consistent work day/building hours for teachers to provide parents and students a consistent time when they can contact teachers for support and assistance.</p>
Special Education	<p>Maximizes time for teacher input on the specialized instruction of students.</p> <p>Increases the time available for IEP meetings to better serve students and families.</p>
Safety	<p>When students require special help with their behavior, students will receive focused interventions based on their needs.</p> <p>Supports the District Student Discipline and Safety Committee in continuing to align and develop common processes in workplace safety for all schools and district-wide.</p>
Salary	<p>Year 1: Three percent increase in the salary schedule. Elimination of current step one and creation of a new step for each column. This results in an average year-over-year increase of 7.5% across the range of the salary schedule.</p> <p>Year 2: Two Percent Increase</p> <p>Year 3 : Two Percent Increase</p>
Insurance	<p>Year 1: \$50 increase (Monthly Insurance Cap of \$1315) Year 2: \$25 increase (Monthly Insurance Cap of \$1340) Year 3: \$25 increase (Monthly Insurance Cap of \$1365)</p>
Paid Leaves	<p>Allows administrators to make exceptions to building limits when allowing the use of personal leave. This will assist with supporting last minute emergencies that staff members may have.</p> <p>Provides an incentive for prudent use of personal leave by reimbursing teachers for unused personal days at the rate of \$100 per day.</p>

[View the GBSD's Initial Proposal \(pdf\)](#)

[View the GBEA's Initial Proposal \(pdf\)](#) (Presented previously at the September 22 Session)

GBSD's Financial Outlook is Uncertain

At the October 6 negotiations session, GBSD Chief Financial Officer Jordan Ely shared the District's financial outlook. The most pressing challenge we currently face is uncertainty. Our schools have lost several hundred students during the pandemic and we do not know how many will ultimately return. The level of funding we receive is determined by student enrollment. While we are serving fewer students this school year, we have not reduced our level of staffing. To maintain positions, the District is using one-time monies from ESSER Funds (Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief). If enrollment does not bounce back up to pre-pandemic levels, the District will be required to reduce its operating expenses to bring them in line with the amount of funding we receive from the state for day-to-day operations moving forward.

Ending Fund Balance: A Financial Reserve in place to Maintain Stability

It is prudent financial management for school districts to have an ending fund balance or financial reserve. Districts use ending fund balances to deal with revenue shortfalls and unexpected expenditures. That said, ending fund balances should never be used to pay for ongoing expenses. There is no hard and fast rule on how much of an ending fund balance a district should maintain. The GBSD Board Policy calls for a minimum of 5% reserve. Government finance organizations offer recommendations up to 15% of annual operating expenses. The GBSD's ending fund balance is currently \$26.7 million or 19% of budgeted expenditures. Nineteen percent of reserves is equal to nearly ten weeks of operating expenses. Like in a family budget, having reserves of more than a month ensures you'll always make your rent or mortgage payment on time. Reduced operating costs during the pandemic have caused the GBSD's ending fund balance to grow beyond expectations. For example, the District spent less last year on substitute teachers and student transportation.

Next session October 20

The next session will take place October 20, 2021 from 4:15 pm to 8 pm at North Gresham Elementary School. You can watch the session online via Zoom. The link to the negotiations session live stream will be posted on the [GBSD Negotiations Webpage](#) the day before the session.

Throughout the bargaining process the District will communicate with members in an effort to provide an accurate and transparent account for members who cannot be in attendance or watch the livestream. Updates on negotiations sessions will be shared by email and posted on the [Negotiations Webpage](#), which can be found in the Human Resources Department section of the district website.

Bargaining sessions are shown live on Zoom. The link for each session will be posted on the [GBSD Negotiations Webpage](#).

GBSD's Labor Negotiations Guiding Principles

The school district focuses on its [Labor Negotiations Guiding Principles](#) as it negotiates its contract with the teachers union. These principles can be found on the GBSD Negotiations Webpage.

The principles focus on:

- Improving Learning Conditions
- Being Financially Responsible
- Maintaining Quality Communications

Questions?

You can email your questions to: negotiations@gresham.k12.or.us