

What you wanted to know... Answers to YOUR questions

For the sake of space and not repeating questions, some questions were summarized and/or condensed.

The content of the questions HAS NOT been altered.

Obviously, we don't want a district managed health plan. Is it a lesser plan? I also hear the administrators already accepted a new health plan.

We have compared the proposed health plan to current coverage.

The proposed plan has higher co-pays, lower benefits, less coverage and potentially higher out of pocket member costs. The administrators are on a new self-funded health plan as of September 1, 2007.

Are WSD administrators paid in the top third of the county while teachers are in the bottom third?

Waterford teachers consistently rank in the middle of 28 districts in Oakland County. The Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) only releases administrator salary information to its members. We are trying to find this information.

Does the mediator look at what other districts are doing in Oakland County? (A ref-

erence to Royal Oak's settlement was made—we are not able to publish the details of this tentative agreement until it is ratified.)

Yes, mediators look at comparable surrounding districts. We have provided wage and insurance information for all of Oakland County to the mediator.

If there is information (bargaining) that you are not allowed to share through district email, is it worth compiling a list or our personal email accounts?

Even if we use private email addresses we still would not be able to divulge specifics of bargaining proposals. To communicate, the crisis team may ask for personal email addresses in the future.

Why is Brian Whiston making statements regarding insurance in the Oakland Press? Is it legal?

We don't know why Brian chose to comment in the newspaper, and while his comments implied that WSD employees need to give more than they have, his comments were not about details of bargaining. They were legal.

Has having students Pay to Play been suggested as a way to offset district costs?

Yes, the association has shared this idea. The district is not interested in this program.



How many Oakland County districts still have MESSA?

24 of 28 districts carry MESSA Health Insurance for their employees.

If bargaining reaches impasse and we aren't operating under a contract, are we at risk for layoffs?

We are unable to comment about impasse. The district always has the right to make financial decisions while adhering to our contracts.

How much longer will it be business as usual? The crisis team will continue to evaluate the process on a regular basis and determine what is the appropriate next step.

Why not make QE squared buttons?

The crisis team is looking into this idea.

As a non-tenured employee how visible should I be in my support? The association understands your concern. Please do only what you are comfortable doing.

How long can we work under our current contracts?

Until we reach an agreement or until either side gives ten days notice to terminate.

When businesses are cutting all over the state, how do we justify our retirement and insurance to these folks, especially when they say it's our turn?

We have continued to give through employee contributions to the retirement system and by accepting raises much lower than in the private sector to maintain benefits. We have also lost many members. Our compensation is not the cause of the school funding problem in Michigan.

Are principals on the negotiating teams for the board, isn't this a conflict of interest?

Yes, building administrators are on the district/board teams. This is commonplace in Michigan districts.

Since the state has not told districts what they will be getting financially, how can they know what cuts need to be made? Perhaps we need to wait for the state's decision before settling.

The district has an adopted balanced budget

and cuts for 07-08 have already been made. We will continue to bargain with the best information we have available until the state adopts a balanced budget. There is no way to know when this will be.

Why was nothing else tried to save money? All savings options are being explored.

How do we fight for insurance when we have 66 transportation drivers and only 30 insurance runs?

We must fight to keep what we have. We must urge the legislators to properly fund education. We will continue to work towards improving members' benefits.

Is the board trying to get rid of MESSA as middle man?

They are not trying to eliminate the "middle man" but rather replace him.

It seems you don't want to say what is or isn't on the table, how can we support your efforts?

It is not that we don't WANT to reveal specifics, it is that we cannot without committing an unfair labor practice. We will continue to bargain using the information we gathered from member surveys. We need your support in order to reach a fair and equitable settlement for all four MEA units.



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