

WEA FACT SHEET

Are you going to go on strike?

We hope not. We were disappointed that the BOE negotiating team decided to walk away from the negotiating table. However, we are hoping that a fair contract that is in parity with the feeder schools to New Trier can still be worked out and that a strike can be avoided.

What do you mean by “A fair contract?”

A fair contract means an agreement that is affordable for the district and recognizes the district's need to attract and retain high-quality teachers.

A fair contract would include a compensation package that is comparable to that received by teachers in other New Trier feeder districts.

A high quality education can only be provided by high quality teachers. A fair contract will help ensure that the children of our district will continue to get the high quality education they deserve.

The district has said it has a large budget deficit this year. Can it afford a fair contract?

Yes. The district currently has a multi-million dollar surplus in the education fund. The district can offer the teachers a fair and affordable contract and still maintain a substantial surplus.

The District says that it is proposing a very competitive salary. Is this true?

No. Teachers in all of the feeder schools to New Trier are required to obtain additional education in order to get additional compensation. The average number of semester hours of education required to reach maximum in the surrounding school district is around 20 semester hours in addition to a Masters Degree. The number of semester hours required to reach the maximum in Wilmette is 60 semester hours in addition to a Masters Degree. The additional 40 semester hours costs Wilmette teachers thousands of dollars out of pocket (even after some reimbursement from the district). This is a cost that teachers in the surrounding districts do not have to pay. In the past the pay schedule has been structured to allow teachers to recover some of that cost. The BOE wants to eliminate that.

The district says it proposed an insurance package that is comparable to that available to teachers in New Trier feeder districts. Is this true?

No. Wilmette teachers or teacher candidates who want the option of a health plan that allows them the freedom to choose their own doctors, will have to pay thousands of dollars more out of pocket than teachers in surrounding districts for the same PPO offering. While the BOE is offering to pay the same amount as surrounding districts in the first year of their proposal, teachers will be required to pay \$600 per month more to continue the coverage in the last year 4 years of the contract, rendering the coverage unaffordable. Instead the BOE tactic is to force teachers into a High Deductible PPO plan which saves the District \$600 per month per employee. We know of no other school districts in the state of Illinois that are taking this tact.

Are the teachers offering anything back in exchange for the compensation adjustments they are seeking?

Yes. In a highly unusual move, the teachers proposed extending the elementary school day to be in parity with the surrounding districts. The teachers offered to extend the student school day by 20 minutes in order to increase instructional time. This equates to around 2 school weeks.

How does a “fair contract” benefit the community?

According to realtors, District 39's high quality public schools are a major reason so many families want to live in Wilmette, which has a very positive impact on property values.

To have a high quality school system, a district must have high quality teachers. Attracting and retaining high quality teachers requires that a district offer compensation that reflects the quality and experience of the teaching staff.

A fair and affordable contract will allow District 39 to continue to compete with Kenilworth, Winnetka and other area districts for the finest teachers. The beneficiaries of a strong school system include children, parents and property owners.