



Monticello Public Schools



January 24, 2020

TO: Our Monticello Community and Education Stakeholders

RE: Information and facts about the 2019-2021 Teacher Contract Negotiations

The Monticello School Board recognizes that our teachers are a key ingredient to maximizing the growth of our students. We have an amazing staff who care deeply about our students. The Monticello School District staff take great pride in building meaningful relationships with our students and educational stakeholders.

The purpose of the information provided on the school district website is to provide helpful facts about the ongoing negotiations with our teachers in reaching a new labor agreement for 2019-2021.¹ Included in the teacher negotiations folder are the following documents: This Frequently Asked Questions Document from the School Board, Opening statement from the School Board Chair (Jill Bartlett) from the 1-22-2020 School Board Meeting, Opening statement during Citizen's Comments from EMM President (Joe Rosh), and a place for EMM to attach a Frequently Asked Questions document of their own.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why is the district bargaining with teachers?

In accordance with the Public Employee Labor Relations Act (Minnesota Statutes, (Chapter 179A), the school district is required to meet with the exclusive representative of the teachers every two years to negotiate the terms and conditions of employment including teacher salary and benefits. This is true for all Minnesota school districts.

2. What is the District's current offer to teachers?

The District's last offer to EMM during a negotiation session was an increase to base salary of 1% for 2019-20 and 3% for 2020-21. In other words, each salary listed on the 2018-19 salary schedule would be increased by 1% for 2019-20, and these salaries would again be increased by 3% for 2020-21. These raises are in addition to the existing salary increases teachers receive when progressing through the existing steps or career increments as listed in Appendix A and Appendix B of the 2017-2019 master contract.

¹ The District believes it is important to provide facts about negotiations that are material to an informed public discussion about the public policy implications of this process. Given the level of public interest generated by the news release in the local Hometownsource (hometownsource.com), it is appropriate for the District to share helpful facts. Please note that the District cannot comment on strategy, discuss or debate possible settlement offers, or enter into discussions about prospective bargaining ideas or issues while outside of the formal bargaining process. As a result, the District is limited in the type of information it may disclose.



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Teachers have built in increases in the Steps of their contract. These Steps vary from 0% to 8.3% every year. This embedded increase is dependent on where each individual employee is on the matrix.

The District's offer includes a 6.58% aggregate increase in total 2-year contract cost with a 2-year contract dollar increase of \$3,180,538 over the aggregate 2-year cost of the 2017-2019 teacher contract. Other language items, including proposed cost increases on career increments, are included in the overall amount cited above, but not specified in detail here.

A copy of the 2017-2019 Master Contract can be accessed here:
[Faculty Contract 2017-2019](#)

3. Throughout negotiations, what topics or language items were made a priority?

A new Sick Leave Bank, Personal Day (Addition and Payout), Extra Compensation, Definition of a Teacher, Unrequested Leave of Absence (ULA), Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Year of Service, 50/50 Workshop work time vs. Professional Development Time, and Building Hours/Flexible Schedules (Monday and Friday).

4. How many Monticello teachers are there?

As of January 24, 2020 the District has approximately 334 teachers in permanent certified staff positions (not including substitutes). This number can change as more students move into the District.

5. How many COOP employees are also on the Monticello contract?

As of January 24, 2020 the COOP has approximately 71 teachers in permanent certified staff positions throughout the COOP of which 56 are fully funded by the COOP (but on a Monticello contract). The remaining 15 of these teachers are partially funded through the COOP and partially funded through the Monticello budget.

6. Are teachers working without a contract?

While it is true the Monticello School District and the teachers' union exclusive representative (Education Minnesota Monticello - EMM) have not yet reached a new agreement on the terms and conditions of employment for July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2021, it is inaccurate to say that our Monticello teachers are working without a contract as this could imply that teachers are not being paid.



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In the interim, and for now, Monticello teachers continue to receive the same pay and benefits as the 2018-19 school year, and the terms and conditions as outlined in the 2017-2019 Master Faculty Contract remain in full effect.

7. *How does the negotiation process work?*

Some delay between successive two-year teaching contracts is common in the context of public school collective bargaining.

Every two years the District and the teacher's union (EMM) negotiate a new two-year agreement. Each side provides notice that it wishes to renegotiate a new contract. Next, each side appoints representatives that are vested with the authority to meet and negotiate a new contract. For the current negotiations, we began meeting in April and we have been meeting regularly through December 2019. There are proposed dates to meet in January and February.

Once the bargaining teams reach an agreement on the terms and conditions of a new 2-year agreement, the new agreement must be ratified by the membership of EMM and also by the School Board.

8. *When did the parties start negotiating the 2019-2021 contract?*

The parties have met since April for formal collective bargaining. There has also been one round of mediation conducted by the Minnesota Bureau of Mediation Services. There are proposed dates for continuing the negotiation process in late January and early February 2020.

9. *Is there a requirement as to when a new contract must be reached?*

No. However, both parties are required to negotiate in good faith. This process typically includes meeting at mutually agreeable times and working in earnest towards a final agreement.

10. *What do teachers get paid now?*

2018-19 Teacher Salary Schedule

A teacher's compensation is determined by their placement on the salary schedule which is listed in Schedule A and Schedule B of the Master Contract which is linked above. For each school year, a teacher is placed on a certain step (based on years of teaching experience) and within a certain lane (based on additional education credits earned). For example, a Monticello teacher with 10 years of experience and a Masters' degree would earn \$62,319.00 under Schedule B for the 2018-2019 school year (183 duty days). For 2019-20, the same teacher would move to step 11 and earn \$67,475.00 for a school



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year. This part of the schedule demonstrates a 8.3% increase embedded into the schedule prior to the salary increases discussed above in the answer to Question 2.

11. How many districts have settled?

Districts and corresponding unions typically report settlements to the Minnesota School Board Association (MSBA) and Education Minnesota. Settlements are not final until ratified by the respective unions and the school board. As of January 16, 98 out of approximately 330 school districts have formally reported settlements to MSBA. However, some districts do not formally report through these channels and some districts may have recently reached settlement or tentative agreements that have not yet been reported. As a result, the actual count of teacher settlements to date is likely to be significantly higher than 98.

12. What is the District's overall and current financial condition?

A copy of the District's 2018-19 annual audit report and presentation is available on the district web site. Here are links to important financial presentations and documents:

[2018-19 Financial Statement](#)

[2020 Financial Forecast](#)

The District's total general fund expenditures for 2018-19 (last school and fiscal year) was \$55,751,701, which includes COOP expenditures. Of this total, approximately 74%, was spent on instruction. This amount includes both salary and benefits for staff in regular instruction, vocational instruction, and special education (note: some instructional supply costs and related expenses are also included in this amount).

For the past three years, our school district has been in a financial position where policy directed us to make budget adjustments (deductions) of: \$900,000, \$2 million, and \$299,000 respectively. While making these adjustments, class sizes have crept up at all levels. The district policy is to maintain a minimum unassigned general fund balance of 8% of the annual budget, with a target maximum of 16% of the expenditure budget. If the unassigned general fund balance is projected to fall below 6% we are to be actively generating additional revenue or reducing expenditures through budget reductions. The District anticipates the fund balance to be around 6.85% on June 30, 2020, but drop down a little to 6% on June 30, 2021.



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13. How have past contracts settled?

The District's offer included a 2-year aggregate cost increase over the prior contract of 6.58%. The amount of two-year aggregate cost increases (by percentage) over the prior contract for the last six contract cycles is listed below.

- 2017-19- Last cycle: 9.35% (1.5% in Y1; 1.5% in Y2)
- 2015-17- 8.19%
- 2013-15- 11.24%

14. Other helpful information?

Approximately 62% of the district's General Fund revenue (which includes the COOP activity) comes from state aid which is determined by a state aid formula authorized by the Minnesota state legislature. Minnesota school districts do not receive the same amount of revenue per pupil. For 2019-20, Monticello ranks 291 out of 330 school districts in total revenue per pupil. For more information, you can go here:

<http://www.schoolsforequity.org/revenue-and-equity-data.html>
<http://www.schoolsforequity.org/files/106321576.pdf>

15. How can I help?

The revenue information above puts the District in a place for advocacy. The District will continue to increase its legislative advocacy to help our voice be heard with regards to equity in school funding for our Monticello students. A legislative forum on public education funding will be held at Discovery Elementary School in Buffalo on Wednesday, January 29, 2020 from 6:30pm-8:00pm. In attendance at the forum will be state representatives, senators, local government officials, and administrators from up to 14 area school districts.

You can let your voice be heard about school funding by taking action and communicating with your state representatives. Current contact information for local officials:

Bruce Anderson (MN Senate) - sen.bruce.anderson@senate.mn

Marion O'Neil (House of Representatives) - Rep.Marion.Oneill@house.mn

16. Who can I contact, from the District, for more information about negotiations?

For more information or to request public data concerning negotiations, you may contact our Superintendent, Eric Olson at 763-272-2001 or our Business Manager, Tina Burkholder at 763-272-2015.