



AEA Negotiations Update



A Publication of the Aurora Education Association

2009-2010 Negotiations

Communication #2

(An electronic communication about bargaining from the Aurora Education Association)

Bargaining teams for AEA and the District will be meeting for the second time next week to begin in earnest the negotiations process. This year's negotiations call for two articles to be opened by each side plus bargaining of economic issues. AEA has opened Article 13, Teacher Duty Day and Teaching Hours, and Article 37, Discipline. We plan to address the decline in working conditions caused by the District's budget cutting recommendations and we would like to make the teacher discipline process and investigation procedure used by the District less damaging and onerous. The District has chosen not to open new Articles for negotiations. Economic issues (compensation and benefits) will be engaged in April when the funding picture is clearer.

One of the most critical issues in this year's negotiations will be whether teachers will be able to move on the salary schedule. Administration has chosen to place salary "steps and lanes" in quadrant one for budget cutting. Our bargaining survey shows that maintaining steps and lanes is of most importance for teachers. Your concerns are well founded as a freeze in steps can have significant negative financial impact to a teacher's career. Steps, of course, are the method by which teachers are able to move to a career salary appropriate to their professional level. Lanes recognize additional expertise gained through coursework or advanced degrees. By freezing steps and lanes this progression is delayed and a teacher's financial well being is adversely affected.

One problem with freezing steps is that it causes more than a one year sacrifice. A teacher whose step is frozen will remain one step behind in their progression on the salary schedule throughout their employment in the district. The step freeze would cause teachers to sacrifice every year beyond the freeze. Here is an example of how this harm would play out for a new teacher.

A teacher is recently out of college and in their second year in APS when their step is frozen. They continue a 30 year career in the District moving through the salary schedule earning three semester hours each year and completing a Master's degree at year seven. By the time this teacher retires after 30 years he/she would have lost in excess of \$37,000 in compensation due to the step and lane freeze. Of course, the loss in compensation varies depending on individual situations, but the point is the same. And, while this scenario highlights the damage to career earnings for a new teacher, the significance of freezing steps and lanes should not be minimized regardless of a teacher's placement on the salary schedule.

Teachers will stand to lose significant income over their career if this quadrant one recommendation is implemented!

We will be at the Bargaining table on Monday, March 22nd. We encourage members to wear **RED** on Monday to show support for your AEA Bargaining team. Look for our next negotiations update soon after Monday.