



# Metro Regional Bargaining Update

We are working together – across the Denver Metro area through our Metro Regional Bargaining Council – to ensure that all our members are on the same page as we face not only a difficult legislative session, but challenging bargaining as well. No local association is an island – all of us are stronger than any of us alone.

School districts are already planning for “cuts” and, in many districts, school boards and administrators are making decisions about the budget before they really know the full financial picture from the Legislature. We believe it’s important for Association members to (1) understand what districts are saying and (2) NOT believe everything the district says or take everything at face value. In the next few weeks, we will send you a series of informational emails that explain what districts are saying and what their “solutions” could mean to school employees. Today we are addressing “furlough days,” a popular budget shortfall “fix” in many places across the U.S.

## **Furlough Days: What Does This Mean to Me?**

If you’re in the Armed Forces, a “furlough” is a vacation or period of absence from your assignment with pay. If you’re a public school employee, it’s a temporary layoff from your job WITHOUT pay.

We generally oppose the use of furlough days as a means of balancing budgets because it means you lose a day’s pay for every day you are on “furlough,” and thus you lose not only a day of your monthly salary for every furlough day, but you lose overall compensation for that month, that year, and your entire career.

1. We would not agree to furlough days without a careful, thorough examination of the district’s budget to determine if furloughing employees were absolutely necessary. First, we would examine all expenditures not directly related to student instruction and all other options for solving the budget problem – because furloughing employees not only reduces their compensation. It reduces the time available for the principal activity of schools: student instruction and achievement!

2. We would not let the district impose furlough days on us. If furlough days were to occur, they would be the result of bargaining; be in writing and ratified by our members as any other part of our Master Agreement; be detailed, limited, and specific; and be enforceable through the grievance procedure.

3. We believe it’s important that each of us understands all the consequences of furlough days. If you lose pay because you are furloughed, you lose that money for all time; and because your career earnings are affected, your retirement is affected.

*This is second in a series of informational flyers for members of the 14 local associations which comprise the Metro Regional Bargaining Council.*