



## Thompson School District Negotiations Session #1- Summary

February 24, 2023

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Carrie Bennett, Facilitator

WORK PRODUCT

### Welcome:

Attendees:

Dr. Bill Siebers - Chief Human Resource Officer

Dr. Melissa Schneider - Chief Academic Officer

Ms. Charlie Carter - Executive Director

Student Support Services

Mr. Thomas Texeira - Director of Human Resources

Dr. Jason Germain - High School Principal

Brandy Grieves - Middle School Principal

Valerie Lara-Black - Elementary School Principal

Mr. Lazlo Hunt - Director of Special Education

Mr. Andy Crisman - President

Ms. Kayla Steele - Vice President

Ms. Carol Thomas - Teacher Garfield ES

Ms. Kim McKee - Teacher Mountain View HS

Ms. Jill Date - Instructional Coach Sarah Milner ES

Ms. Chrissy Marshall - Teacher Loveland HS

Ms. Sue Teumer, Teacher - Lucile Erwin MS

### Purpose:

#### **Problem solving and solutions for 2023-2024 school year negotiated items**

1. What are the quality working conditions for Exceptional Student Services?
2. How can we recruit and retain quality professionals?
3. Are leave practices meeting the needs of our employees?
4. How do we ensure educators are well prepared to deliver high quality instruction on a daily basis?
5. How do we address Memorandum of Understanding cleanup or intention?
  - a. Outperforming the budget by a dollar amount v/s a percentage
  - b. Digital teaching and learning conditions
  - c. Mandated professional development practices (ref 13-6)
  - d. Mandated testing days in Appendix A
  - e. Revise to inclusive language

### Agenda:

- **Welcome and purpose**
- **Check-in and expectations**
- **Reviewed Protocols from MOU:**
  - 38. The cost of negotiations will be shared jointly by the Thompson School District and Thompson Education Association with Thompson School District paying the first ~~\$20,000~~ \$25,000 and Thompson Education Association paying any cost above ~~\$20,000~~ \$25,000 with a stop loss of ~~\$7,500.00~~ \$5,000. This does not include any cost for mediation.
  - Agreement made by 2 + 2 Oversight Committee on October 12, 2022.

Large group approved

- **Norms/Interest Based negotiations process**
  - Small groups reviewed norms, chose particularly relevant norms and how they applied to interest based process:
    - Story: Norms #2,17 & 14
    - Interest: Norms #1 and 2

- Options: Norms #13 and 16
- Criteria: Norms #15 and 18
- Straw Design: Norms #11,13 and 18
- Agreement: Norm #12

Large group approved 2022-2023 Norms, and changed dates to 2023-2024.

***Relationships matter.***

***Together, we collaborate and create solutions to 2023-24 negotiation questions.***

- **We will...**
  - Keep a broad view.
  - Be good representatives and remember our audiences who are not in the room.
  - Be on time.
  - Provide notification and catch up if absent.
  - Understand and follow small group and visitor protocols.
  - Keep focused on purpose and interest-based process.
  - Be present and participate in the work.
  - Take care of personal needs.
  - Communicate to the public through a spokesperson.
  - Use consensus and conduct temperature checks along the way.
  - Honor small group and committee work.
  - Keep in mind that we don't agree on anything until we agree on everything.
  - Listen to understand first and respond second.
  - Honor talking time. All voices need to be heard.
  - Ok to voice strong opinions.
  - Take risks.
  - Use your voice; all voices have space to contribute.
  - Ask questions and seek clarification as needed.
  - Presume positive intent.
  - Treat others with respect and value all voices and perspectives.
  - Respect others' opinions and experience.
  - Keep a sense of humor!
  - Celebrate successes!
  - Support the work of the group and agreements.

**Communication**

- Citations for story will include facts/data as needed for clarification
- Both teams to review notes prior to electronic distribution
- **Review 2 + 2 Oversight Committee Report**
  - What 2 + 2 Oversight has been working on...
    - Created Critical Questions
    - Question #5 - **How do we address Memorandum of Understanding cleanup or intention?**
      - What language do we need to change without changing intent
      - Does the language meet current practice
      - Impact doesn't match intent from 25 years ago
      - Possible small group work

**Environmental Scan**

- Gordon Jones, CFO, will be available to provide any necessary support
- Handout - Negotiations Update -2/24/2023 Legislative Update
- 2023 legislative session convened January 9th and is scheduled to end no later than May 8th
  - Funded Pupil Count (FPC) for 2022-23 lower than expected
  - At-risk pupil count for 2022-23 is higher than expected
  - Local property tax and specific ownership tax revenue are higher than expected
  - Budget Stabilization Factor (BSF) is being maintained at the dollar amount of the original appropriation from the 2022 legislative session for the 2022-23 budget

- These items result in a decrease in total program funding from the state for 2022-23 budget year of \$76.4million
- **October Student Count (Headcount) and Funded Pupil Count (FPC)**
  - 2023-24 preliminary budget forecast assumes TSD student count will decrease slightly vs 2022-23
  - Estimated TSD 2023-24 student count is 12,665 students (39 fewer than prior year)
  - School Finance Averaging means that even though student count is forecasted to decline by approximately 39 students from 2022-23 to 2023-24, the TSD Funded Pupil Count (FPC) is expected to decline by more than that
- **Per Pupil Revenue (PPR) after Budget Stabilization Factor**
  - 2023-24 preliminary estimate = \$9,967 (\$893 increase) (Governor's January requested budget)
- **Mill Levy Overrides (MLO)**
  - MLOs passed in 1999 and 2006 are at capacity, (\$14,040,000) will not increase in the future
  - MLO passed in 2018 is a fixed mill (7.6 mills)
    - 2022-23 was a non-assessment year for Assessed Valuation (AV)
    - Overall district net AV increased in 2022-23 by \$226.1M (9.2%) which is expected to result in approximately \$1.7M more in revenue from 2018 MLO
    - Change in AV for 2023-24 is unknown at this point for the upcoming assessment year
    - A 1% improvement in net AV across all property types would yield approximately \$200K of additional revenue for 202-23
- **Expenditure Increased and Other Factors to Consider (not intended to be all-inclusive)**
  - Employer PERA contribution rate will not increase in 2023-23, will remain at 21.4%
  - Previously applied 2.5% increase in Licensed staff wages (~\$2.0M)
  - 6% increase in renewal rate on District health insurance provided for employees (~\$900,000)
  - Increase in severance program costs based on higher number of retirees from Salary Schedule A
  - Anticipated property and liability insurance increase in 2023-24 due to additional property under coverage associated with ongoing completion of bond projects and increased caused by natural disasters in Colorado (fires, flooding, hail, wind)
  - Increased fuel prices for transportation of students
  - Higher costs for other transportation related costs (tires, repair parts, etc.)
  - Staffing strategies for hard to fill positions across all employee categories
  - Continued escalation of costs associated with out-of-district placements of significant news Special Ed students (tuition and transportation)
  - Implementation of UPK program with many variables still not determined by the State Department of Early Childhood
  - Unknown impact on how changed to the At-Risk calculation as one of the factors in the SFA funding formula may impact TSD funding (Healthy School Meals for All (HSMA) eliminates much of the incentive for families to complete the Free and Reduced Meal (FARM) application
- **Inflation in School Finance Act**
  - Inflation factor used in the SFA for 2023-24 is 8.0%
  - SFA calculation is based on the 12 month average for the preceding year
  - National inflation measurement typically is referring to the current month vs the same month in prior year
- **Federal Stimulus Funds**
  - ESSER 3 expenditures are nearing completion and need to be encumbered by June 30, 2024
  - Only approximately \$1.5M in ESSER 3 funds remain available for use in 2023-24
  - Focus on staffing to help address learning loss
  - Some position originally funded through Federal stimulus grant funds have been built into General Fund ongoing budget (counselors at elementary schools)
  - Funds must be considered as a one-time source of revenue since they won't be recurring - looming financial cliff (what are we going to do after funds run out?)

**Question 1:** What are the quality working condition for Exceptional Student Services

○ **Story**

- Small groups wrote down questions about working conditions in ESS - used as part of story
  - What do caseloads/workloads look like and why
  - What training/support/coaching exists
  - What is the state of unfilled positions
  - How does cost/funding impact workload/working conditions? Where does the money from
- Who is under the ESS umbrella ~ all staff that provide Special Education services: SSP's (Special Service Providers) Certified Staff: OT, PT, Speech Language, Psychologists, Social Workers (some), SpEd teachers, Coordinators, Teacher of Visually Impaired, Deaf and Hard of Hearing teacher, Board Certified Behavior Analyst, Autism Specialist, Transition Teachers (18-21 year olds), SWAP (transition), SWAAC, Child Find Coordinator, Academic Assessor, Preschool SpEd, Counselors (if they are supporting students), Nurses. Classified Staff: interpreters, paraprofessionals, classroom aides, SHOA
- Clarification on ESS/SpEd - the ideal is that SpEd students will be spending the majority of their time in the classroom with differentiated instruction. Kids are "boxed in" certain classrooms. Staff have the flexibility to determine how much time students are in GenEd classrooms, and the level of support they need. Staff and teams have the flexibility on scheduling depending on how teams work in a particular school and how services can be provided more effectively
- There are a little more than 2,000 students receiving services in TSD. There has been an increase in the number of students over time. We need to look at similar size districts with the same demographics that have 10% SpEd students
- Follow up question: Thinking about numbers/growth and pre-k, what does MTSS look like for pre-k, it's a significant feeder into K-12 schools?
  - MTSS if a framework of five (5) components
  - Continuum of layered supports- its fluid
  - Do eligibility requirements change? - Still some "hangover" from COVID
- Unfilled positions - some are filled with contracted staff, some completely unfilled, staff taking on extra work to meet students needs and legal obligation (IEP's)
- Student support needs are determined through the IEP, then to ESS to implement
- ESS Taskforce
  - Payscale w/caseload overload ~ do all schools know?
  - Full-time sub that works with SpEd staff to help with plan time, to catch up with work, etc. Academic tester position - certified SpEd role to support teachers by performing assessments, report writing, attending meetings, coaching
  - Being piloted this year ~ could be a possible solution next year
  - Working with 5 schools now (K-8)
- No new Board policies, Federal law ~ least restrictive environment, trumps Board policy
- Suspensions - students were once suspended, now being reintroduced to classroom w/o supports
- Shifting attitudes around discipline - student behaviors aren't all ESS related. Students are not getting equitable access to education
- ESS Staff are pulled away to help
- Student Success team rolling out plan (3 years, 3 practices)
- Implementing restorative practices w/o tons of support
- People in ESS are leaving with stories. Leaving less from some places than others
- Departures are draining the system
- When exiting - workload/caseload is overwhelming. People thing it's better in other districts
- Relationships/bullying drives people out (senior staff questioning new staff)
- Access to curricular materials for ESS staff have been very limited

○ **Interests**

- Student Support/Success
- Sustainability- retention, morale, budget
- Fairness/Equity
- Hope/Relief
- Empowerment/Input
- Learning and support for growth
- Leverage Resources: Connections, collaboration, recruitment
- Clarity around process and systems: What's there, who to talk to, how does it work?
- Efficiency - time: Processes, people's time, work time
- Being legally compliant - IEP's
- New channels for recruitment

○ **Options**

- Expand Academic Tester to increase capacity in more places
- Increase fulltime ESS subs to provide relief in more places
- Provide additional training for ESS staff to increase efficiencies w/IEP meetings
- Increase recruitment w/local universities. Consider for sub position, support/mentorship for retention
- Document ESS process - *share* updated flow with staff (Gen and ESS)
- Provide more training (regularly) on identified needs
- Grow our own careers - CTE for ESS paraprofessionals
- Develop and review universal expectations (shared w/GenEd) around mapping. Iterative technology
- Data mine Infinite Campus to inform/drive mapping, caseload decisions ~ quarterly workload/caseload review
- Create a system w/guidelines for different programs for equity-with caseload numbers for transparency - address inconsistencies: refine/fix caseload mapping - FTE allocated
- ESS Assistants - duties that could be delegated? Scheduling/clerical - classified>
- Targeted district PD days (in district ESS) for all GenEd. Focused on ESS training, focused skill building
- Continue compensation (possibly expand) for outside of contract work
- TOSA - ESS skilled for ongoing new hires
- Advisory Council for ESS staff input/stakeholders
- “Increase FTE?” not just how resources are mapped out/distributed
- Empower Coordinators to lower burnout via workload, and empower new teachers to ask for help
- With “caseload” review- seek transparency, use for recruitment-publicize district attention to workload

**Next Steps:**

- Revisit ESS - look at today’s work w/ fresh eyes, fill in gaps
- Move into evaluation and straw design for question #1
- Start critical question #2

**Future tasks and timelines**

- March 9, 2023 at Administration building - 8:00 a.m.

● **Closure and check out**