



Thompson School District
Negotiations Session #2- Summary
March 13, 2025
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Susan Sparks, Facilitator

WORK PRODUCT

Welcome:

Dr. Bill Siebers - Chief Human Resource Officer
Dr. Melissa Schneider - Chief Academic Officer
Patti Virden - 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 - PreK -8 Principal
Karen Hanford - Elementary School Principal

Ms. Sue Teumer - 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 - TOSA, Learning Services
Mr. Aaron Estevez - Teacher, High Plains School

Purpose:

Problem solving and solutions for 2025-2026 school year negotiated items

Critical Questions 2025-2026

1. What adjustments need to be made to the Site Based Shared Decision Making process?
2. What adjustments need to be made to elementary plan time?
3. How can we recruit and retain quality professionals?
4. How can we clarify the problem solving / grievance process?
5. How does the TEA president's release time help support education?
6. How do we address undesirable student behavior?
7. Are leave practices meeting the needs of our employees?
8. How do we clean up the Memorandum of Understanding to match intention?

Agenda:

- Welcome and purpose
- Check-in and expectations

Environmental Scan

- 2 + 2 met on March 10 and reflected on the first negotiations session and how it went. Planned and overview of March 13 session
- State is looking at three year averaging instead of four, student enrollment is lower

- \$50M cuts across the state
- We will not see impact from federal level this year

Communication

- Both teams to review notes prior to electronic distribution

Question 1: What adjustments need to be made to the Site Based Shared Decision Making process?

- Large group reviewed and discussed draft of Collaborative Decision-Making: Site/school and revisited intent of wording
- 6-1. The Association and the Board of Education value increasing job-effectiveness, recognition and self-respect of staff through shared responsibilities at their workplace. This will be accomplished through a well-designed school-based, collaborative decision-making process.
- 6-2 The Board, the Association and Administration are committed to having a collaborative decision-making process implemented at every work site in TSD. A trust building and collaborative process involving the entire staff will be used at each site to develop protocols for a decision-making spectrum which includes collaborative decision making.
- 6-3 All stakeholders (teachers, school building administrators, classified staff, students, parents/guardians, families, and community) should be encouraged to participate in improving the effectiveness of the educational system through their diverse input.
- 6-4 All employee groups will be required to share **some** responsibility for decision-making and collaboration at schools and other work sites within TSD. **Licensed staff should actively be involved in the collaborative process.**
- 6-5 Collaborative decision making and collaborative processes are not meant to supersede managerial responsibility or employee rights, but to acknowledge stakeholders' investment in public education.
- 6-6 When stakeholders have ideas or concerns regarding specific issues, they should be brought to the attention of the principal and/or to site designed collaborative committees.
- 6-7 TSD encourages site decisions, and those decisions must:
- Conform to local, federal, and state laws
 - Comply with Board of Education Policies
 - Comply with negotiated agreements
 - Support the vision, mission and goals of TSD
 - Comply with financial parameters (be fiscally responsible)
 - Adhere to stated TSD parameters: Strategic Planning, Evaluations, District and State Assessments, District Professional Development
- Exceptions can be made only through existing means of appeal (See Article 3-4).
- 6-8 Shared decision-making process in TSD should:
- Include time for continued training, implementation, and assessment
 - Represent the diverse nature of its stakeholders
 - Reflect the division of responsibilities. (See Article 6-10)

- Employ a method of recording decisions and communicating essential information and coordinating decisions with affected groups
- Include a ~~method~~ **process** for revisiting decisions

6-9 Site-Based Shared Decision Making **Plans** will be reviewed and agreed upon by **schools** sites annually by the end of September.

6-10 Continuum of Decision-making: while not all decisions can be made with 100% collaboration, it is desired that most decisions exhibit collaboration and inclusion.

Large group approved with consensus

Question 2: What adjustments need to be made to Elementary Plan Time?

- Large group added to story after 2 + 2 recommendation
 - Elementary teachers have lost time over years - soft starts (10-30 minutes), staying late until last student picked up. Loss of two hour early release time (collaborative and also individual time 1x/month) is now one hour building, loss of building access after hours and on holidays, can no longer print at home so more time at school, can't behavior reports at home
 - Time in general has been lost...not just plan time. Time teachers used before
 - Our plan time gets interrupted because of student behaviors (now have to attend to kids during specials)
 - Math curriculum - teachers have to turn it into 4 components, (teachers have created multiple slides) how do we make it interactive. Need both global plan time, just in-time plan time
 - Small groups are different each time based on student needs
 - We are adding literacy and same process, and time is needed. A lot of components, not just following text lesson plans
 - Task Force developed list of prep time activities/tasks
 - Instructional practices
 - Communication
 - Documentation
 - Additional Activities
 - Middle school has similar new curriculum and can learn from elementary practices
 - Elementary curriculum adoption can also learn from middle school about the importance of time to fully develop/explore all of curriculum offerings
 - Important to have support structures across district: core instructions, tier 2 additional support, academic and behavior
 - PLCs big topic. Very important part of culture. "it is a process that develops a plan", material resources. Not "magic", need time to prepare some clerical work too - no

- longer have this as resource
- Difficult to capture time in the school day based on school schedule because of shared teachers. limits due to multiple schools being involved
- Planning for learner variability needs to happen at the core and beginning - also pre-assessment, also need time to plan w/interventionist, specialist or special ed teachers. Can't get to them because they are teaching
- Difficult to progress monitor students - data collection and analysis. Challenges with that can cause Tier 3 interventions. All of these supports require assessment and planning to close gaps for student populations
- Shortage of subs means elementary teachers cover classrooms - small size of elementaries means that task falls on small number of staff
- At K-8s it is difficult to find time to collaborate with specialist staff - similar at small elementary schools
- Middle school and high school plan time more closely aligned than elementary/middle school. Difficult for K8s especially
- MTSS and IEP requires specific team members that are in different locations. Meetings occur before and after school due to scheduling. Meetings we are having sometimes happen during plan time to accommodate families and needs
- K-8 discrepancy amount of plan time between elementary and middle school creates issues with specials
- Elementary school has a focus, also having to integrate the focus in lessons
- Many assessments need to be done during plan time. Pull kid from specials
- Math adoption and ALN have taken a lot of work and has big impact on student learning. That success is contributing to literacy adoption - we can't delay
- Have not updated elementary plan time minutes to accommodate state laws like READ Act
- Two Spanish language immersion elementary schools where teachers share students and monitor growth of students in two languages
- Large group added to interests
 - Quality instruction for all students that leads to high achievement and a high sense of well being for both teachers and students
 - Increasing positive culture and climate for both staff and students
 - Seeing the work we are invested in and taking the PD and putting it into practice. Making it effective
 - Teaming with alike grade levels district-wide
 - Take district initiatives to a deeper level rather than surface level
 - Equality, breadth and depth of instruction
 - Teachers having a work/life balance

- Making a statement to elementary teachers, we value their work
- Recruiting and retaining quality staff members
- Being a good steward of district resources
- Supporting history of small neighborhood schools
- Student growth
- Large group added to options
 - Group based soft-start
 - Specials teachers full time
 - Adding specialist roles - science and social studies
 - Specials teachers teaching more than one content
 - Shifting clerical responsibilities to a classified staff member
 - What initiatives are getting the results? Could anything be taken off
 - Add days to contract
 - Reduce student time during the day 6 hours instead of 6/5
 - Expand late starts once/month
 - Combo - expanding late start plus longer work days
 - Longer work day
 - Classified supervision with soft-start. Teachers not involved
 - Individual time on Wednesday late start specified in MOU
 - Elementary two hours late start and plan day each quarter. Also look at soft-start more
 - have 30 minutes before soft start: Teachers start 7:30, soft start 8:00, logistics/transportation
- Large group added criteria
 - State required instructional minutes
 - Mindful of what is lost with a recommendation
 - In support of instruction improvement
 - Return on investment of student outcomes
 - Apply to both traditional elementary and K8
 - Financial considerations
 - Legal
 - Compulsory attendance law, number of days/hours
 - Consider, be mindful of calendar
 - Question on underperforming schools, varied design
 - Equitability, access, programs, Title, DLI vs LISA
- Large group moved to small group work
- Small groups to propose one action (straw design) based on interests and criteria
 - Extending late start Wednesdays,
 - 4 days, 6 hours for students vs 6.5 hours for staff. Four days may be easier for family

- scheduling, compared to late start. Is earlier pickup more challenging for families
 - What is revealed by comparing TSD performance to other districts that have more plan time?
 - Is there data from surveys sharing greater staff satisfaction where principal/coach led PLCs are out of plan time
 - Soft start time isn't counted as instructional minutes, by adding it we remove activities from instructional time and therefore increase (or better use) instructional minutes
 - Half-time SEL specialist at each elementary school - SEL lessons
 - Adding another special would increase plan time
 - Four elements:
 - 30 minute paid non-contact time before school
 - Two-hour late start for elementary (what would that look like for PK-8?)
 - Four planning days - 1 per quarter
 - Next mill levy override, ask for funds to increase instructional days
 - Could be implemented through a three-year plan
 - 2025-26 Task Force to look at late start and early release
 - Four planning days
 - Soft start only after 30 minutes plan, non-contact
 - 2026-27 Mill levy override ask
 - 2027-28 Implement task force work and fully work the plan
- Straw Design commonalities
 - Four days
 - Soft start
 - SEL
 - Four day plus additional student contact day
- Large group discussed options
 - Need to be thoughtful of community and staff
 - What is BOE interest
 - Flexibility in reducing days - MOU
 - Too many district initiatives
 - Theme is elementary teachers are drowning, need to take something off their plate
 - Expectations for elementary school - inequality in minutes between levels
 - Soft starts - idea is to free up time before "soft start" - contract time starts at 7:30, instructional time starts at 8:00 - 8:i20
 - There is instructional time happening during soft start - buildings have made that decision that they want soft start, have seen the impact
 - Some staff do not agree with soft start, but it was a site-based decision
 - Not changing what they are doing with time, just a technicality

- Groups asked to caucus
 - Teachers report out: secondary teachers asked questions about soft start. What does it look like at different schools
 - Administrators report out: SEL requires different certification and not a viable solution. The amount of work that elementary teachers do is different than secondary
 - SEL cannot deliver the same quality of instruction that teachers do. Classroom teachers want to build a deep connection with their students, SEL specialists may be working with a kid in crisis and not available for lessons

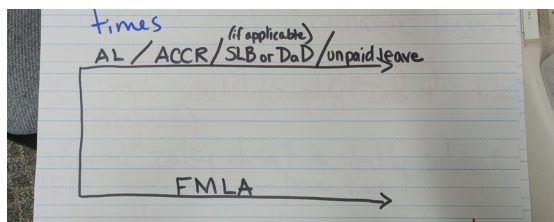
Large group agreed with consensus to remove SEL from Straw Design

Question 7 - Are leave practices meeting the needs of our employees?

Reviewed story from task force

- Talked about educating staff on leave policies and practices, closing the gap
Where are Gaps?

- Discussion on staff bereavement leave policy (GBGJ)
 - Paragraph 3 -- specific to “annual” leave, but current practice includes accrued... sub “available” leave?
 - Is list of qualifying people ideal? (Simplify? Does it include everyone?)
 - Current policy doesn’t identify intensity or need for leave time
- No options if employee does not have accrued/annual leave
 - Especially after prolonged illness, or with preventative
 - Mental health needs on top of bereavement
- Gaps -- Parental leave
 - Inclusive language -- birth-giving and non-birth-giving parents
 - FMLA kicks in before birth at times
 - Leave time policies follow two railroad tracks that run concurrently:



- Max # of sick leave bank days/year
- One pager of how it applies to TSD (gap identified... need for this)
 - Pay vs. unpaid leave
 - FAML I opt in
- Paid leave options for non-birth-giving parents
- 2 employee family = 12 weeks FMLA shared
 - \$421/day/licensed employee costs per annual leave day (+ sub costs)
- AL (annual leave) payout in excess of 360 hours is 75% of daily sub rate (\$150/day currently)
 - ↪ for long term employees who max out

- All AL paid out at 50%
 - Many licensed employees hit max leave limit (360 hours) around 7-11 years in TSD
 - 9 days AL = 4.9% of school year (~1 in 20 days)
 - 8 days AL = 4.3% of school year (~1 in 23 days)
 - No easy info for opting into FAMLII for staff
 - Only option for pay during childbirth leave is recovery from childbirth... not for paternal or adoptive leave
 - Returning from FMLA childbirth leave often a squeeze with children's/self's illness, doctor visits
 - Inequities in timing of when baby is born
 - Donate a Day varies by time of year & other factors... requests not reliably filled
 - Donate a Day & Sick Leave Bank not universal across districts
 - People often don't understand the policies until moment of need
 - Donate a Day feels informal @ times, which may ↓ response
 - Donate a Day may make people feel required to include personal details about hardships
 - Donate a Day limited to family member's serious illness
- Overview: Two different typed of leave time - annual, and crisis leave: baby or illness, intermittent, unpredictable
- Clarification on accrued time: there are limitations, needs to be approved by HR
- Large group added to story
 - Two-year charge - task force
 - TEA created quiz - demonstrated lack of knowledge related to leave practices
- HR has been creating more awareness
- Loss of Ed Camp has removed opportunity for employees to learn
- Donate-a-Day is not technically a full day
- Teacher survey-Fall 2024, leave time comes up high
- Big question, why nine days
- TSD has a very generous (employee-focused) leave
 - Some districts are less generous and they penalize employees, when people are taking certain days
- Large group added to interests
 - Providing additional benefits to employees
 - Continued support for our employees for a variety of life events
 - Easy to understand benefits policies
 - Recruiting and retaining quality employees
 - Maintaining and honing a competitive edge for recruiting
 - Staff members being able to support each other in crisis

- Having consistent staff members for our students
- People getting through crisis and coming back
- People covering people during leave are quality and consistent
- Ensuring no matter what your role, you can access the leave
- Large group reviewed options from task force
 - Revise Donate-a-Day sheet for clarity (hours, suggested limits, formality...)
 - Expand qualifying events for Donate-a-Day (would be BOE update) to include...
 - Bereavements
 - Self-illness (not of family)
 - Post new child/post FMLA
 - Communication of leave benefits
 - FMLA
 - Leave of Absence
 - How FAML I interacts with TSD benefits
 - FAML I
 - Flow charts
 - TSD benefits
 - Sick leave/AL/etc. for births
 - Frontline education
 - Streamlining info about FAML I/TSD benefit
 - Updating MOU to match BoE policy about payouts of leave upon separation
 - Survey staff satisfaction on leave use
 - Review sick leave/D-a-D policies form mental health/wellness availability
- Large group reviewed options from task force
 - Cost
 - Legal
 - Equitable
 - Impact
 - Aligns with district mission/vision
 - Student impact
 - Reasonable

Task Force recommendations

- Communication of leave time benefits
 - Admin and AR toolkits for the following topics:
 - FMLA
 - FAML I and its interaction with TSD extended leave benefits
 - Accrued Leave Use and Procedures
 - Bereavement
 - Leave of Absence and Coordination with other Leaves
 - Frontline education for licensed and building admin (for example: how to put in leave

- time of less than 1 hour). Clarification - teachers can take hour increments. Building secretary can change to hour. No sub required, in-house coverage
- Surveying staff knowledge after new communication for leave time policies to measure new awareness
 - Update Name of and Expand Donate-A-Day policy
 - Other eligible events. For ex: military leave, bereavement, mental health/wellness, non-birthing parents, other FMLA-qualifying events. We recommend negotiations discuss this list; there must be a conversation about circumstances that may qualify and the HR vetting process to approve the collected days.
 - Revise Donate-A-Day sheet for clarity (for example: hours, suggested limits, formality of..., a process for a neutral party to make the sheet available to other staff)
 - Align MOU and board policy about annual leave payout
 - GBGG-R page 1: “upon voluntary separation of employment or retirement” (Available Leave #1)
 - MOU 9-6-1 part C: “non probationary teachers upon retirement, separation (excluding termination)”
 - Recommendations on communication will be in TA, but not MOU 9-6-1 to change part C: - align with board policy
 - Next Steps:
 - Small groups record any ideas for Donate-a-Day for next meeting April 10

Future tasks and timelines

- April 10, 2025 - 8:00 a.m.
 - April 11, 2028 - 8:00 a.m.
 - April 28, 29 and 30, 2025 - 8:00 a.m.
 - May 5, 2025 - 8:00 a.m.
- Closure and check out