

NORTHWEST INDIANA SPECIAL EDUCATION COOPERATIVE
2150 W. 97th PLACE
CROWN POINT, IN. 46307
Special Board Meeting Minutes
October 29, 2025

1. Mrs. Erica Smith-Gomez called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. Mrs. Erica Smith-Gomez took Roll Call. The following members were recorded as present: Mr. Kevin Music for Lake Station, Dr. Nathan Kleefisch for Tri-Creek, Mr. Frank Porras for Hobart, Ms. Sylvia Pedroza for River Forest, Mrs. Tara Beilke for Hanover and Mrs. Erica Smith-Gomez for Highland. There was no representation for Lake Ridge.
3. The Board met pursuant to Indiana Code 20-29-6-19(a) to discuss the terms of the tentative agreement of the teacher collective bargaining agreement.

Mrs. Horn reviewed changes to Master Agreement by page:

The cover page included updating dates.

On page 4 new language was written for a PTO Leave Bank. Dr Kleefisch asked if and when they leave do they get banked days? Ms. Gilmore reviewed severance and the ability to transfer days to another Indiana Public School.

On page 7 PPO wording changed.

On page 11 the definition of teachers was changed for the compensation model. The date was changed, updated salary range was proposed with a new beginning salary of \$47,500. The compensation model was presented with the Factors of Evaluation Rating, Experience, Academic Needs and Instructional Leadership. Raise and stipend distribution was discussed. Mrs. Smith-Gomez asked how much it costs for a teacher to add the literacy endorsement and discussion ensued.

Proposed stipend amounts were discussed on page 12. The beginning salary for teachers with 0 years of experience was updated from \$47,000 to \$47,500.

Meetings were updated on page 12 and page 13

The Board President was changed from Mr. Larry Biggs to Mrs. Erica Smith-Gomez.

Comments from the Board members were then allowed:

Dr. Kleefisch said "I wish we could have given them more, but I understand that we need to stay fiscally responsible you our districts."

Mrs. Smith-Gomez said "It is disappointing that we cannot give the people that work with our children what they deserve. I appreciate that the union and administration has such a great relationship and worked together to come up with an agreement."

Mrs. Lori Borwn-Runyon said “The only thing I ask when you go back to your districts, we have no money on our side, tell your people that these are hard to hire positions, how much did you want to give them for a raise initially? Can’t we do better. There is no blame, we have a very good relationship with our administration. Ms. Horn’s hands are tied, we don’t have referendums, we are dependent on the districts. You can see the turnover you are seeing is insane. If they want to keep the caliber of what the coop has always given them, they need to give us more money.”

4. Mrs. Erica Smith-Gomez asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Kleefisch moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Beilke and passed unanimously.