



## CENTRAL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

5652 W. Gettysburg Avenue

Fresno, CA 93722

Phone: (559) 274-4700

Fax: (559) 271-8200

[www.centralunified.org](http://www.centralunified.org)

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Yesenia Z. Carrillo

Naindeep Singh Chann

Nabil Kherfan

Karla Kirk

Joshua Sellers

Jaspreet Sidhu

Harman Singh

### SUPERINTENDENT

Mark E. Marshall, Ed.D.

### Central Unified School District CUTA Negotiations Update – May 8, 2026

The Central Unified School District bargaining team and the Central Unified Teachers Association (CUTA) bargaining team met on May 7, 2026, at the District Office for continued negotiations regarding the 2025–2026 collective bargaining agreement. The session focused on several major topics, including class size and staffing, compensatory time procedures, transfer language, specialized services, workload concerns, stipends, and the District's current fiscal outlook. Both parties continued reviewing articles that had previously been discussed and identified several tentative agreements (TAs) throughout the day, while also engaging in extensive dialogue on areas that remain under active negotiation. Members of the negotiation team representing the District included Dr. Javan Childs, Julia McLennan, Eliseo Cuellar, Patricia McCurley, and Chelan Shepherd. Members of the CUTA negotiations team included Laura Bolton, Angie Botelho, Gregory Pullinger, Andrea Chase, Krystle Pumarejo, and Maria Ocegueda.

The session began with discussion surrounding Article 7, including class size and balancing procedures. The District proposed that balancing of classes occur by the 20th day of school and reiterated its position that overage funds should continue to be directed into a centralized fund rather than paid directly to individual teachers. District representatives explained that balancing decisions and staffing responses are often impacted by competing operational priorities across departments. Additional conversation focused on weekly continuation high school meetings, where teachers expressed concerns regarding the effectiveness of multiple whole-class meetings each week and questioned whether the meetings were producing meaningful benefits for students.

The parties also discussed compensatory time language. The District clarified that while it had initially considered removing compensatory time provisions altogether, it was now proposing advance notice procedures intended to provide adequate time to secure substitute coverage and maintain continuity for students. District representatives proposed language requiring two weeks' notice when possible and restricting the use of compensatory time during major school events such as Open House. CUTA representatives expressed concern that employees who rely on compensatory time as an emergency leave option or who have exhausted other leave balances could be negatively impacted by rigid timelines. District representatives acknowledged the concern and indicated openness to reviewing counterproposals that would preserve flexibility for emergency situations while still allowing administrators to manage substitute shortages and classroom coverage. The discussion also included clarification regarding site approval procedures and the operational challenges schools face when large numbers of staff are absent simultaneously.

#### *District Administration*

*Mark E. Marshall, Ed.D. - Superintendent*

*Javan Childs, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent - Human Resources & Labor Relations · Amer Iqbal, Assistant Superintendent - Chief Business Officer  
Marilyn Lopez, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent - Student and Family Services · Julia McLennan, Assistant Superintendent - Educational Services*

Several tentative agreements were reached during the session, including portions of Articles 7, 8, and 13. In Article 8 discussions, the parties reviewed language regarding exams, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), six-period schedules, advisory assignments, elementary preparation time, and Wednesday schedules. District representatives emphasized the need for flexibility in elementary schedules to preserve teacher preparation time while also maximizing available instructional resources. The District proposed a structure for Wednesday collaboration and preparation schedules that would provide opportunities for principal-led collaboration, professional learning communities (PLCs), and teacher-directed preparation time. CUTA representatives raised questions about implementation impacts on specialty programs such as music and physical education.

A substantial portion of the conversation focused on workload concerns, extended responsibilities, and Employee Pay Requests (EPRs). District leadership explained that the District has recently received a significant number of EPR submissions seeking compensation for work performed beyond contractual duties, with some requests totaling several thousand dollars per employee. District representatives expressed concern that certain requests reflected overlapping work hours or responsibilities that may already fall within existing stipend structures. The District indicated that site administrators may require additional training regarding stipends, approved duties, and expectations for compensated work outside the regular contract day. Both parties acknowledged the importance of conducting a broader stipend study to ensure duties, expectations, and compensation structures are aligned and consistently understood across the District.

The parties also spent considerable time discussing transfer procedures under Article 13. The District proposed language limiting voluntary transfer eligibility for probationary employees, citing concerns about stability, employee growth, and continuity at school sites. Discussions also centered on involuntary transfer procedures, including efforts to distribute involuntary placements more equitably among school sites and to protect employees from repeated involuntary transfers. The District proposed that employees who are involuntarily transferred would not be subject to another involuntary transfer for two school years. District representatives explained that the proposal was intended to create greater stability for affected employees while also ensuring school sites are not disproportionately impacted by repeated involuntary placements. CUTA representatives raised questions regarding implementation, site capacity, seniority implications, and the impact to specialized staff.

Additional discussion occurred regarding administrative transfers and special circumstances transfers. District representatives explained that these provisions are intended to address unique situations involving employee safety, severe workplace conflict, or other extraordinary circumstances that may impact school climate or employee wellbeing. The District emphasized that administrative transfers would not be based solely on performance concerns, but rather on broader operational or relational issues that may require intervention to preserve a positive working environment. CUTA representatives emphasized the importance of due process, administrator accountability, and ensuring that transfer decisions are not misused or inconsistently applied. Both parties acknowledged the importance of carefully crafting language that protects employees while also providing the District with flexibility to address legitimate operational concerns.

The bargaining teams also reviewed Article 35 concerning specialized services staff. Discussions included scheduling expectations, job descriptions, participation in Student Study Team (SST), Section 504, and IEP processes, and concerns regarding coordination responsibilities. CUTA representatives expressed concern that specialized staff are often informally designated as “coordinators” for 504 plans and other compliance processes without having the authority to ensure implementation or administrative follow-through. District representatives clarified that administrators retain responsibility for legal compliance and implementation oversight, while specialized staff often play important roles in organizing meetings, documenting discussions, and supporting collaborative planning. Both parties agreed that clearer role definitions, updated job descriptions, consistent systems, and additional training are needed to improve implementation and reduce confusion.

The District also shared updates regarding plans to modernize appendices and memorandums of understanding by incorporating outdated language into the current agreement and aligning terminology across articles. Additional conversations focused on voluntary duties, academic intervention counselor supervision structures, and the placement of stipend language within the agreement.

A major portion of the session was devoted to a detailed presentation regarding the District’s financial condition. District representatives shared projected staffing cost information and reviewed current unrestricted and restricted funding projections, reserve requirements, staffing expenditures, and long-term fiscal concerns. The District explained that certificated salaries and benefits continue to represent a significant portion of overall expenditures and noted that expiring one-time COVID relief funding has created substantial financial pressure moving forward. District leadership explained that while the District has worked extensively to shift allowable positions and expenditures into restricted funding sources where legally permissible, many one-time funding streams are ending, requiring the District to reduce expenditures and reevaluate ongoing staffing and program commitments.

District representatives also reviewed the estimated fiscal impact of proposed class size reductions and staffing increases, explaining that reducing class sizes to proposed levels would require the addition of multiple full-time equivalent teaching positions at significant ongoing cost. District leadership stated that while the District values employee compensation and staffing support, current financial projections indicate ongoing deficit spending and concerns about maintaining required reserve levels in future fiscal years. The District further explained that rising legal costs, increasing operational demands, and the expiration of grant funding continue to create significant fiscal challenges.

CUTA representatives acknowledged the financial presentation and raised questions regarding projected expenditures, reserve calculations, the use of restricted versus unrestricted funding, and assumptions related to staffing reductions and position backfilling. District representatives reiterated their commitment to transparency and explained that financial projections continue to evolve as state budget information, grant allocations, and year-end expenditures are finalized.

The session concluded with discussion regarding future bargaining timelines, additional article revisions, and continued collaboration moving forward. Both parties expressed interest in

continuing discussions related to job descriptions, stipend structures, and outstanding contract language. Future bargaining sessions are scheduled for May 15, May 20, and May 29.

Throughout the session, both bargaining teams engaged in extensive discussion regarding operational realities, employee protections, student needs, fiscal sustainability, and long-term organizational effectiveness, while continuing efforts toward reaching tentative agreements on multiple contract articles.

Sincerely,



Mark E. Marshall, Ed.D.

District Superintendent