



CENTRAL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Mark E. Marshall, Ed.D.

Central Unified School District CUTA Negotiations Update – May 15, 2026

The Central Unified School District bargaining team and the Central Unified Teachers Association (CUTA) bargaining team met on May 15, 2026, for continued negotiations regarding the 2025–2026 collective bargaining agreement. Both bargaining teams engaged in productive dialogue and continued refining proposals across multiple articles of the collective bargaining agreement. Members of the negotiation team representing the District included Dr. Javan Childs, Julia McLennan, Patricia McCurley, and Chelan Shepherd. Members of the CUTA negotiations team included Laura Bolton, Gregory Pullinger, Andrea Chase, and Krystle Pumarejo.

Throughout the session, both parties demonstrated a commitment to maintaining high-quality educational programs while balancing fiscal responsibility and operational sustainability. Several tentative agreements were reached, and meaningful progress was made on a number of outstanding issues.

Key areas of discussion included preparation time, staffing flexibility, compensation, and specialized support services. The parties reviewed language related to balancing student populations and class sizes, with discussion centered on maintaining effective instructional practices and ensuring students receive meaningful learning opportunities. Both teams acknowledged the importance of small-group instruction and productive classroom structures, particularly in specialized instructional settings.

The teams also discussed compensatory time procedures and payout timelines. District representatives shared operational and fiscal considerations related to payroll processing, cash flow, and budget deferrals, while CUTA representatives emphasized employee flexibility and the importance of preserving staff options regarding accrued compensatory time. Both parties expressed a willingness to continue collaborating toward a practical solution that supports employees while remaining operationally sustainable.

Additional conversation focused on transitional kindergarten (TK) staffing and classroom configurations. CUTA representatives shared concerns about combination classes and proposed exploring student overflow options to preserve dedicated TK instructional settings whenever feasible. The District acknowledged the staffing challenges associated with expanding TK programs and committed to continued discussion on how best to support early learning environments.

The bargaining teams also reviewed language regarding additional responsibilities and supervision duties. CUTA representatives reiterated employee concerns regarding supervision

District Administration

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Marilyn Lopez, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent - Student and Family Services · Julia McLennan, Assistant Superintendent - Educational Services

duty assignments and protected preparation periods, while District representatives sought clarification on current site practices and operational needs. Both teams engaged in constructive dialogue around balancing student supervision responsibilities with employee workload and contractual protections.

Specialized support staff responsibilities, including counselors, school psychologists, speech-language pathologists, and other certificated personnel, were also discussed. Conversation focused on clarifying expectations for after-hours activities, campus events, and additional duties while recognizing the unique roles and confidentiality considerations associated with these positions.

The parties continued discussions regarding advisory periods and instructional scheduling at the secondary level. District representatives shared ongoing interest in exploring additional instructional opportunities to support electives, visual and performing arts programs, and student intervention needs. CUTA proposed the possibility of piloting certain scheduling concepts through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) before considering permanent contract language, allowing both parties to evaluate effectiveness prior to long-term implementation.

Preparation time protections for elementary teachers were another significant topic of discussion. CUTA expressed concerns regarding preserving guaranteed preparation time and maintaining adequate staffing support for physical education instruction. District representatives clarified that their intent was to improve clarity within contract language and ensure preparation periods could continue to support required student meetings, SSTs, IEPs, and other instructional responsibilities.

The teams also reviewed newly proposed transfer language intended to provide greater stability and predictability for teachers impacted by staffing adjustments or programmatic changes. CUTA expressed concern about introducing significant new language late in the bargaining process and proposed piloting the concepts through a one-year MOU during the 2026–27 school year. District representatives expressed openness to continued discussion and acknowledged the shared goal of minimizing disruptive assignment changes for employees.

Additional progress was made on language involving stipends, calendars, duty schedules, and support structures for librarians, counselors, school psychologists, and other certificated staff. Tentative agreements were reached on several appendices and operational items.

The session also included an extensive discussion regarding the District's financial outlook. CUTA representatives requested clarification on reserve levels, projected revenues, staffing expenditures, instructional material costs, and operational spending increases. District leadership provided detailed explanations regarding the expiration of one-time funds, rising operational costs, ongoing program commitments, instructional material adoptions, utility and service increases, and statewide fiscal uncertainty. District representatives also discussed the need for cautious financial planning in anticipation of possible state funding deferrals and pending details related to the Governor's May Revision budget proposal.

Both parties agreed to continue reviewing financial information and maintain open communication regarding budget assumptions and compensation discussions moving forward.

The session concluded with both teams expressing appreciation for the collaborative tone of the discussions and the continued willingness to work toward mutually beneficial solutions that support students, employees, and the long-term success of the District.

Negotiations will resume on May 20, 2026.

Sincerely,



Mark E. Marshall, Ed.D.
District Superintendent