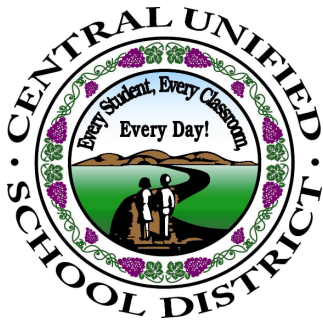




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Mark E. Marshall, Ed.D.

Central Unified School District CUTA Negotiations Update – May 20, 2026

The Central Unified School District bargaining team and the Central Unified Teachers Association (CUTA) bargaining team met on May 20, 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, Amer Iqbal, Eliseo Cuellar, and Chelan Shepherd. Members of the CUTA negotiations team included Laura Bolton, Angie Botelho, Twylite Lawrence, Gregory Pullinger, Andrea Chase, and Krystle Pumarejo.

The session reflected continued progress toward narrowing differences on several contractual issues while maintaining open dialogue around areas that require additional discussion. Both bargaining teams remained engaged in productive conversations centered on supporting students, protecting instructional quality, and balancing fiscal realities facing the District.

A significant portion of the meeting focused on incorporating class size language into the contract to preserve enrollment averaging protections for elementary grade spans. The parties continued discussions regarding how best to maintain manageable class sizes while addressing enrollment realities and staffing needs.

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) staffing and classroom placement remained another key topic of discussion. District representatives reiterated concerns about transporting young students to overflow sites and emphasized a preference for maintaining TK and kindergarten combination structures where necessary due to facility and staffing limitations. CUTA representatives sought additional information regarding site-specific enrollment and facility challenges, and both teams discussed possible approaches to minimizing combination classes whenever feasible.

District representatives emphasized the need for clearer contract language to define expectations consistently across employee groups and avoid future disputes or conflicting interpretations in Article 8. CUTA representatives shared concerns about preserving employee workload protections while ensuring that specialized staff responsibilities remain appropriately defined.

Both teams engaged in extensive conversation regarding specialized certificated staff, including counselors, speech-language pathologists, psychologists, and other support providers. Discussions focused on clarifying duties, updating job descriptions, and ensuring contractual language accurately reflects current practice. The District shared its intent to review and

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*

modernize job descriptions over time, while CUTA emphasized the importance of protecting specialized staff from responsibilities that detract from direct student services.

The parties also continued discussing secondary advisory periods and scheduling concepts intended to support electives, intervention opportunities, and student access to courses. District representatives shared the desire to remain status quo for a six-period day for the 2026-2027 school year, resulting in the District maintaining status quo language. CUTA representatives indicated continued interest in exploring future scheduling options and noted that discussions could potentially resume in future bargaining cycles.

Preparation time protections for elementary teachers remained a major point of discussion. CUTA reiterated concerns about maintaining guaranteed preparation periods and preserving physical education staffing that currently supports teacher prep time. The District clarified that proposed language changes were intended to provide operational flexibility for additional professional collaboration opportunities while continuing to protect instructional planning time.

The bargaining teams also reached agreement to move proposed transfer and reassignment language into a one-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the 2026–27 school year. Both parties expressed support for using the MOU as a pilot framework to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed language before considering permanent inclusion in the collective bargaining agreement. Discussions emphasized the shared goal of reducing disruptive reassignments while maintaining operational flexibility during staffing adjustments.

Additional discussions centered on Article 35 related to Specialized Certificated Service Providers. Both teams reviewed language surrounding professional development days, additional responsibilities, and coordination of student support meetings such as SSTs and 504 plans. District representatives emphasized the importance of clearly defining responsibilities through updated job descriptions, while employee representatives expressed concerns regarding workload balance and ensuring specialized staff remain focused on direct student services.

The session also included an extensive financial discussion regarding salary proposals, healthcare costs, projected revenues, and the District's long-term fiscal outlook. District leadership provided detailed explanations regarding ongoing deficit spending, rising operational costs, and the limited amount of unrestricted new revenue available for compensation increases. CUTA proposed a 3.0% salary increase plus the cost of statutory and healthcare cost increase. District representatives shared that the current compensation offer is a 1.25% salary increase with a 2.01% total compensation, proposal and emphasized concerns about maintaining long-term fiscal solvency without reductions to staffing or programs.

CUTA representatives raised questions regarding projected state funding increases, reserve levels, healthcare contributions, and surrounding district settlements. Union representatives expressed concern that employees are being asked to take on additional responsibilities without compensation increases that reflect the broader economic environment and regional trends. Both parties engaged in transparent and respectful discussion regarding the financial challenges facing the District and the competing priorities involved in maintaining programs, staffing, and employee compensation.

District leadership also discussed the impact of enrollment trends, noting that the District has experienced significant student enrollment loss at the secondary level from the 2021-2022 school year through present day while maintaining comparatively stable staffing levels. District representatives emphasized that maintaining financial stability while preserving employee positions remains a primary objective moving forward.

Despite ongoing differences related to compensation and supervision duties, both bargaining teams acknowledged the collaborative tone of negotiations and expressed appreciation for the continued willingness to engage in constructive dialogue. The parties agreed to continue discussions prior to the next scheduled bargaining session on May 29, 2026.

Sincerely,



Mark E. Marshall, Ed.D.
District Superintendent