

The Teacher Contract Agreement

By Lynn Davis

Individual Contract Highlights

1968-1969 - Our first contract. It contained a lot of contractual language that is still in effect today. We won a grievance procedure (although it only went to advisory arbitration), a rotation of "unpleasant duties" (later to be renamed "supervisory duties"), the first evaluation card and the first negotiated salary schedule.

1969-1970 - Sick bank and jury duty paid for at regular salary.

1970-1972 -Elementary teachers received a 30-minute per day preparation time and all teachers received a duty free lunch period of 30 minutes.

1972-1974 - A telephone was made available for parental conferences and professional business, and extra pay for extra duty was originated.

1974-1976 - Leave time for personal business and religious observances, just cause dismissal for non-tenured teachers in their second year, and binding arbitration on certain sections of the contract.

1976-1979 - The dental insurance program and pregnancy disability was brought into existence.

1979-1982 - Letters of reprimand were mandated to be placed in the file within 30 days, teacher notification in writing by April 15th if the employer does not intend to rehire a non-tenured teacher, improvements in the health insurance package, and the June 15th notification date if a teacher is to be assigned a handicapped student.

1981-1983 - Final end-of-year evaluation gone over with teachers by June 10th, all off-step teachers placed back on the salary schedule, transfer and handicapped committees originated, district assumes a larger percentage of individual dental and dependent health insurance costs, past service credits given to newly hired teachers, improvements in the surgical benefit plan, and improvements made in coaching salaries.

1983-1985 - Improvements in the grievance procedure, additional articles placed under binding arbitration, unused snow days to be given back, release time for union officers, automatic increments on the salary schedule in the event of an unsettled contract, prescription insurance coverage, retirement incentive improvements, improved district contribution toward dependent health (from 65%

to 75% of the total cost) and dependent dental, expanded reasons for personal leave, leave for child adoption, and new language for long and short term leaves of absence.

1985-1987 - Class size limitations for low ability students, 30 day notice of change in teacher assignment or transfer, deletion of the mandatory retirement age, established the preferred eligible list for laid off teachers, mini-sabbaticals, agency fee, 20 minute increase in the school day, 186 day calendar, half day for elementary teachers the last Wednesday of school. There was also a re-opener clause for the 6th teaching period assignment, dental insurance and medical insurance for retirees.

1987-1991 - Changes in the grievance procedure, released time for WGTA Officers, additional coaching pay for extended seasons, increased dental contribution by the district, increased retirement incentive, Excellence In Teaching stipend included in the contract, day before Thanksgiving becomes a vacation day, teachers given the right to use the photocopier machine, (how innovative--Ed.) 5 teaching periods and 2 supervisory duties for secondary teachers, 40 minute planning time for elementary teachers, nurses brought into the WGTA contract, additional language regarding Elementary Grade Level Chairpersons, Middle School Subject Coordinators and High School Department Chairpersons.

1991-1993 - an 8% increase in salary each year. One sabbatical and 150 mini-sabbatical leave days per year for two years were negotiated; then the language reverted back to the sabbatical leave policy in the 1987-91 contract. Retirement incentive language was negotiated.

1993-1995 - Extended the 1991-93 contract by 2 years with a 4% raise each year and minor editorial changes were also made.

1995-1998 - 4% raise each of three years. Eye care insurance, retirement incentive language, increased district contribution to dental insurance, the "125 Plan" (insurance pre-tax payment plan), NYSUT Benefit Trust negotiated into contract.

1998-2001 - The WGTA membership ratified the new tentative contract agreement by a vote of 278 to 16. The three (3) year contract settlement is the product of formal in-house negotiations involving twenty-six (26) negotiation sessions between November 1997 and June 1998. Mike Cost (High School) was the WGTA Negotiations Chairperson.

The new agreement calls for raises of 3.75% (average) in 1998-99, and a 3.75% increase in both 1999-2000 and 2000-2001. The BA step 1 schedule will start at \$33,583 in 1998-99, the MA step 1 schedule will start at \$36,703, and the CAS schedule will start at \$39,857. Other monetary items that were increased included workshops, summer school, extra duty / advisors, building chairs / subject coordinators, coaches and mileage. A 30-year longevity was created

In addition, retiring teachers will receive 1 month of health insurance for every 10 sick days they have accrued, up to a maximum of 240 days. This is in lieu of the cash payment for sick days that was in the old contract. There is a retirement incentive award of 20% of a teacher's final salary if the teacher retires during the second year of the contract (retirement must be effective at the end of the first or second semester of the second year).

In non-money items, the snow-day giveback language was changed. Emergency closing days will now effect the school calendar in the following manner: 0 days used -- 1 recess day added to Easter and 1 recess day added to Memorial Day. 1 day used -- 1 recess day added to Easter and 1 recess day added to Memorial Day. 2 days used -- 1 recess day added to Easter. There was also just cause protection negotiated for staff after they have taught 3 years of Summer School (unless they have received written notification by October).

2001 - 2004 - The WGTA membership ratified a new tentative agreement in March 2001, by a vote of 311 to 14. The three-year contract is the product of formal in-house negotiations involving seven sessions between December 13, 2000 and February 14, 2001. Mike Cost (High School) was the WGTA Negotiations Chairperson.

The new agreement calls for a 4% raise salary for each of the three years. There will be a one-time, pro-rated payment of \$250 to every teacher on the last paycheck in June 2001 for overall staff performance. The BA step 1 2001-2002 salary schedule will start at \$36,519, the MA schedule will start at \$39,911, and the CAS schedule will start at \$43,341. Other monetary items that were increased included workshops, summer school, extra duty / advisors, building chairs / subject coordinators, coaches and mileage. A retirement incentive award was negotiated at semesters' end during year 1 of the agreement.

There is a language adjustment on retiree health insurance allowing retirees to change their health plan option on an annual basis in the month of August of each year.

2004 - 2007 - The WGTA membership ratified a new agreement on October 5, 2003, by a vote of 321 to 5 (with 1 void vote and 4 unverified votes). The three-year contract was the result of informal negotiations. Involved in the negotiations were Mike Cost (WGTA President), Dave Smithson (WGTA Vice President) and Ray Fuller (Vice President for Grievances).

The new agreement calls for a 4% increase on all money amounts described within the agreement, including salaries, over each of the three years. The retirement award as specified in Article V, Section S3 will be offered in 2005 and 2007 as per the existing language with the award being placed into a member's 403b account. In addition, an award of \$2,000 will be granted for teachers achieving the National Board Certification and / or a doctorate degree.

2007 - 2010 - The WGTA membership ratified a new agreement in June 2007, by a vote of 327 to 6. The three-year contract was the result of informal negotiations. Involved in the negotiations for the WGTA were Mike Cost (WGTA President), John Christian (VP for Negotiations), Ray Fuller (VP for Grievances) and Dave Smithson (Vice President).

The new agreement calls for salary increases of 4.25%, 4.2% and 4.2% over each of the three years. Other monetary items will have a 4% increase each year. The bachelor's and Master's longevities will be equalized with a new 15 year longevity being added. All longevities were adjusted for an overall increase. A retirement award for teachers will be available in all 3 years of the contract with a 90-day notification of a June retirement. Retirees will receive 20% for 15 years of service or more and 25% for 35 years of service or more.

In addition mentoring language was added, the Cornell Arbitration option was added to the grievance section, the summer school memorandum of agreement (4 day week) was agreed to, as was a stipend of \$1,500 for National Certification for Counseling and Speech Pathology. Increases were agreed to for JV and Varsity Assistant Coach pay, and a couple of new extra pay duties were agreed upon.

2010 - 2012 - In consideration of the poor fiscal condition of the State, and a lack of sufficient state aid to the district, the WGTA and the District ratified a new agreement in 2010 calling for a 2% raise in each of the two years of the contract. In 2011, due to the deteriorating fiscal health of the state, the WGTA agreed to a one-year (2011 - 2012) contract change reducing the 2% raise to 0% (the final figure depending on the total amount of state aid received by the district). The two-year contract also froze any sabbaticals for the length of the agreement.

2012 - 2016 - The salary increases for 2012 - 2015 were: 2.25%, 2.5%, 2.75% and 3%.

2016 - 2020 - The 2016-2020 contract included many favorable changes for current and future members. The percent increases ranked among the highest on average, if not the highest, across the county. The increases to salary, in chronological order will be 3.8%, 4.0%, 4.1% and 4.25%. An additional benefit that was gained was extending the maximum amount of coverage of district provided health insurance from 7 years to 10. All future retirees still receive 5 years of free insurance coverage, paying 0% of the premium. All employees also can pay a small percentage of the premium for coverage in years 6 and 7. They can continue that coverage through year 10, however they must use 6.25 unused sick days for every month of coverage. (This is an increase from the prior contract where one month of coverage "cost" 10 sick days.)

A voluntary sick bank was also negotiated. It was the position of the WGTA that the procedure previously used to access the sick bank was in part a violation of the

employee's rights protected by HIPAA Law. Members can join the sick bank by donating two days. From that point on they can apply to the Sick Bank Committee if they have exhausted all of their sick days. Members accessing the Sick Bank no longer have to go 10 days without pay to use this benefit.

Coaches and Co-Curricular pay scales were unfrozen for the first time in 6 years. The steps of the salary scale will be returned to their appropriate levels, as if those salaries were never frozen.

Nurses now have the same retiree health insurance benefit that teachers enjoy.