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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Seminole Education Association and Seminole County Public Schools at Impasse on Teacher Salaries

- **District's final offer to teachers is over \$2000 less than other Central Florida counties**
- **Seminole holds 3 times the Statewide mandated minimum reserve of 5% of the total budget in unused funds**

Sanford, FL – November 18, 2022 -- The Seminole Education Association (SEA) and Seminole County Public Schools (SCPS) went to impasse on November 2, 2022, after numerous meetings to bargain an agreement on teacher salaries. SCPS' final counter proposal on teacher salaries -- which would cost the district approximately \$10.8 million of the \$74 million in unassigned fund balance from last year, was rejected by the SEA, which thereby declared impasse.

The SEA, which represents the district's 4500+ teachers, has filed notice of impasse with the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC), meaning the parties cannot come to an agreement on their own. The next step which are being worked out by the SEA and SCPS.

Florida most recently ranked 48th in the nation in average public school teacher pay, according to the National Education Association, which compiles the data annually.

The district's final proposal for teacher salary raises the district's lowest starting salary by \$1000, to \$48,500. All other teachers will receive either \$1997 or \$2441, depending on whether they rated "effective" or "highly effective", respectively, on their 2021-2022 evaluations. The total cost to the district would be \$10.8 million.

Additionally, the district is willing to provide teachers with a Retention Bonus. Beginning with 10 years of service, the district is willing to provide teachers with a retention bonus of \$50 per year as a teacher

The district first stated that this proposal was as high as they were willing to go during a bargaining meeting on October 10, 2022. The SEA asked the district for a two-week break from the bargaining table in order to get feedback from its teachers on the district's salary proposal. Representatives from the SEA were in the schools speaking with teachers, holding town hall meetings, in addition to sending a survey to SCPS's 4500 teachers.

After two weeks of getting feedback from the teachers, the SEA learned that the vast majority of the teachers were "very unhappy" with the district's final salary proposal and did not want the SEA to agree to it.

"The SEA's bargaining team is a representative body of our entire teacher unit" said SEA President, Dan Smith. "During the last two weeks, I have spoken to and met with close to 1000 Seminole teachers, and the feedback I received from our teachers is that the district's offer is unacceptable."

At the final bargaining meeting, this past November 2, the district claimed that their \$10.8 million dollar final proposal is the highest salary increase that the district can afford and remain fiscally responsible.

"I find that hard to believe", said Smith. "Our district passed a billion dollar budget in September. The district's \$10.8 million dollar proposal comes to 0.01% of the district's budget."

The SEA's counter proposal to the district's salary proposal was that the SEA would agree to the district's proposal for the 2022-2023 school year, and in addition, the district would agree to the same salary increase for the 2023-2024 school year. The SEA's proposal would double the cost to the district, but the cost to the district would be spread over two years.

"In the last ten years the district's budget has nearly doubled, but the total cost for teachers' payroll has stayed relatively flat," said Thomas Bugos, SCPS teacher and veteran SEA bargaining team member. "The district is not following their own mandate to retain and recruit experienced educators through investing in teachers."

The district would not agree to the SEA's counterproposal, claiming that they cannot commit to the two-year proposal. At that point, the SEA declared impasse.

"The district ended its 2021-2022 school year on June 30 with a \$51,425,672 unassigned fund balance that can be used for teacher salaries" Smith stated. "The district can commit the funds for a two-year salary increase for the teachers, my question is, why would the district choose not to considering we have a historical teacher shortage in Florida."

About SEA

The Seminole Education Association is a professional education association that represents the teacher-based employees of Seminole County Public Schools.

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Related Information Regarding SEA-SCPS Impasse December 2022

With the passing of the Student Success Act (SSA) in 2011, teachers now receive salary increases based on their annual evaluation. Additionally, the SSA ended Personal Service Contracts (PSC)/Continuing Contracts (CC), which most know as teacher tenure, for any teacher hired after 2009. These teachers will work their career as Annual Contract teachers.

The district's final proposal for teacher salary increases provides

Annual Contract Teachers whose final evaluation for the 2021-2022 school year was Highly Effective will receive a salary increase of \$2441.47,

Annual Contract Teachers whose final evaluation for the 2021-2022 school year was Effective, will receive a salary increase of \$1997.57,

PSC/CC teachers, referred to as Grandfathered teachers (because they had their PSC/CC status before the SSA became statute) will receive a salary increase of \$1997.57.

The district's final proposal for teacher salary raises would increase the district's lowest starting salary by \$1000, to \$48,500 due to a Florida statute passes in 2020. This statute requires districts to increase their lowest beginning salary by 75% of whatever salary increase is given to Grandfathered status teachers.

Prior to the passing of the 2011 Student Success Act, there was one statute that related to how teachers are paid in Florida. Since the passing of the SSA, the number of statutes relating to how teachers are paid is over 20.

2020 Year of the Teacher. Governor DeSantis invested in beginning teacher salary to attract teachers to Florida, but did very little for veteran teachers. The 2020 DeSantis plan, raised beginning teacher salaries to \$47,500, which is a historical funding increase. This brought Florida into the top 10 nationally for beginning teacher salary. However, Florida ranks 48th out of 50 nationally in average teacher salary.

New teachers hired in the past three years have experienced an \$8500 salary increase since beginning their teaching careers. In Seminole County, teachers with 20 or more years of experience have received less than \$1400 salary increase over the same three years.

Florida Statutes

1012.22, 1008.22, 121.021(22), 1012.01, 1012.335, 1012.34, 1011.62, 1008.34, 1012.07, 1001.42, 1012.986