



REDBANK VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Community Members of Redbank Valley,

The district's negotiations committee met with the teachers' negotiations committee on August 30 and would like to review the evening's events for the community. The District was prepared to meet with the support staff, but since they declined to meet that evening, we only met with the teachers' committee. We received a proposal from the teachers for them to receive \$3000 in bonuses for each teacher in addition to step wage increases factored in for each of the first two years of the contract and 2.5% in annual salary increase for each of the final three years of the contract.

The teachers also asked for a gradual implementation of some copays over the next three years, but remained unwilling to accept any co-pays for physician office visits and urgent care visits. They were willing to accept copays as follows: \$125 ER, \$20 spinal manipulation, \$15 specialist office visit, \$15 allergy extract shot, \$20 brand name medication with free generic medicine, and a mandatory mail order pharmacy program. They were willing to add a \$10 diagnostic service copay next year and a \$10 physical and occupation therapy copay the following year. Additionally, the Association asked for all co-pays to be eliminated at the end of the contract.

We responded that the format of the proposed raises was new and unique and required some additional time for cost analysis. We explained that we were not in a position to respond on Monday, but could schedule another meeting in a couple of weeks, after we had an opportunity to run the cost calculations.

While we were unable to address the teachers' wage proposal on Monday, we were able to discuss their co-pay proposal. The District countered the teachers' proposal by suggesting no co-pays in contract years 1 and 2 which have already passed, followed by initiating co-pays this year amounting to \$125 ER, \$10 physician office visit, \$10 urgent care visit, \$15 specialist visit, \$20 brand name medication with free generic medicine, and a mandatory mail order pharmacy program. Next year, we would add a \$20 spinal manipulation copay and increase physician office visit and urgent care copays to \$20. The following year, we would add a \$10 physical and occupational therapy copay. In summary, the District was willing to gradually implement co-pays and offered not to have co-pays for diagnostic and allergy services, in exchange for including physical office visits and urgent care copays. We also responded that we were unwilling to have the copays end at the conclusion of the contract, but we would work with them to find other health insurance provider options in the future.

After reviewing the District's counterproposal in a private caucus, the Association informed the District that it would not respond to our co-pay proposal that night. The

parties agreed to schedule another meeting in mid-September once the District had an opportunity to run the wage cost calculations.

We have subsequently determined that even raising taxes to the maximum allowable projected level each year would not be able to pay for the teachers' proposal coupled with the support staff's last proposal. The District seeks to limit annual expense increases to the amount of additional revenue it can bring in each year at the end of the contract. Nonetheless, we were preparing to meet again and provide a progressive counterproposal this month, but unfortunately, an employee strike notice has been given.

We lament the disruption to student learning and family life. Just as strongly though, we feel our directive to maintain financial solvency for the district is critical to current and future students, as well as our community.

Chad Shaffer
Redbank Valley School District Negotiations Committee Chairperson