

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

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Q.	<p>What are some of the latest issues between the Parties?</p> <p>The Paraeducators Association intended to hand out a <u>Bargaining Update</u> dated February 28, 2008 and buttons at a celebration for children, <i>Family Fun Night</i>, at two of our schools on Friday, February 29th. The Association had not followed proper channels in getting the handout and buttons pre-approved for distribution (required of any organization asking to distribute items to students and/or parents). They did use public sidewalks at these events to distribute items to parents and the public.</p> <p>In the Association’s <u>Bargaining Update</u> dated February 28, 2008, the Association made the following statements/allegations. Below, the District responds to each allegation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>“THE EASTMONT PARAEducATORS ASSOCIATION IS IN A DEADLOCK WITH THE EASTMONT SCHOOL DISTRICT.”</u> The Parties had another negotiations session scheduled for March 4th. At that time, the District was planning on providing a counter-proposal to the Association. We were not aware we were “deadlocked.” • <u>“AT STAKE: PAY INCREASES, HEALTH CARE BENEFITS AND WORK SCHEDULES.”</u> Yes, those three items are still at issue at the table. • <u>PAY INCREASES:</u> The Association is asking for \$1.00/hour increase for all Paraeducators, plus a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). The first year cost for \$1.00 per hour for each Paraeducator is \$220,000. The District has compared current wages of Paraeducators in Eastmont, Wenatchee, Cashmere, Lake Chelan, Omak, Quincy, Moses Lake, and Ephrata. <i>With the <u>Vacation Cash-Out</u> currently paid each June to each ParaEducator (totaling \$131,000), Eastmont ParaEducators are paid above the average. <u>None of the neighboring Districts surveyed provides vacation to Paraeducators (180 day, 1-8 hour employees) in any form, including cash-out.</u></i> • <u>HEALTH CARE BENEFITS:</u> The District is proposing that all newly hired paraeducators (hired after ratification of the agreement) receive benefits when working four (4) hours per day or more. <i>Benefits for all current paraeducators working less than four (4) hours will be grandfathered.</i> Current contract language 																		

allows paraeducators working fifteen (15) minutes or more the ability to access all health benefits. **This is more than any comparison District – or other private sector employer – provides its employees.**

- **WORK SCHEDULES:** Current contract language requires building Principals to work with an elected Building Scheduler (Paraeducator) to assign Paraeducator staff and hours. Principals must meet with the elected Paraeducator scheduler for the purpose of developing the schedules of all building Paraeducators, and consult with them each time a position opens.

This is not working. This highly unusual, cumbersome language does not allow Principals the ability to assign Paraeducators as needed to meet the needs of the students, as he/she would assign Teachers and Secretaries.

The Association has expressed concerns that changing scheduling language is intended to modify Paraeducator seniority rights. **The District is NOT interested in doing away with seniority.** *In fact, the District has proposed that one-on-one special education Paraeducators be provided the same continuing employment privileges as others receive.* These valued Paraeducators would be moved to another assignment available in the District so there is no loss of highly trained, valued staff.

- **VETERAN PARAEDUCATORS AT THE HIGHEST PAY SCALE WORKING A FULL YEAR GET PAID \$15,000 PER YEAR: True.** *This is for 188 days of work, six (6) hours per day.* This \$15,000 does not include the vacation cash-out (one-time lump sum paid each June), nor the value of health benefits.

Paraeducators accepting 188 day per year positions are typically pursuing this type of work because they are dedicated to children, and enjoy the lifestyle afforded to them by working 188 days per year, not 260 days per year for full time work. If the same hourly rate was applied to the top wage-earning Paraeducator described above, working 260 days per year, they would earn \$28,000, not including health care or vacation benefits. Vacation benefits would add another \$.64 per hour, and health benefits would be an additional \$764.71 per month per full time position, or \$9,176.50 per year.

- **THE DISTRICT DELIBERATELY BLOCKS EASTMONT PARAEDUCATORS FROM ACCESSING THEIR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS DURING THE SUMMER.** *Not true.* Unemployment for non-year round school district employees are handled this way in the State of Washington. Employees are provided reasonable assurance by the District that their employment will continue after the summer break. If Eastmont paraeducators would like access to unemployment during normal school breaks (summer, winter break, spring break), they would be foregoing continued pay and health benefits during these time periods (winter break, summer, spring break). The district could lay them off and then consider rehiring them at the conclusion of this time. *Instead, Eastmont manages unemployment for school employees in the same manner that all Districts in the State of Washington do.*

Q. What's next?

The District has asked for assistance from the Public Employee Relations Commission (PERC) in the form of Mediation. Our Mediation case is still active from May of 2007 as there was no resolution. The District looks forward to receiving assistance from PERC in an order to move towards settlement with the Paraeducators Association.

Please visit www.eastmont206.org for bargaining updates.