

Press Release

The STA Unit 1 negotiating team is pleased to announce that members have ratified a new one-year contract. Seventy-two percent of the members accepted the agreement with 28% rejecting. The membership now awaits the Board of Education ratification vote in October. It is hoped that they will accept the agreements that placed professional issues aimed at student achievement at the top of the agenda.

STA and District officials began negotiating this contract in November 2007, well before the expiration of this agreement. That demonstration of respect and interest paved the way for very productive talks over the course of the school year.

Exceptional professional language in the areas of program introduction, implementation and support, professional development structures and site-based implementation of district initiatives has been negotiated. This reflects the union's and district's shared goal to improve student achievement.

A critical *Time and Learning Study* was agreed to as well. The purpose of this study is to examine the current school and classroom time structures and routines. Past studies such as *Prisoners of Time* have discovered that there are many intrusions of a non-curricular nature into the instructional time of the existing school day. This will be one of the strategies used to examine the issue of more time for student learning.

The District and the Association also agreed to strengthen the New Teacher Induction program. This helps to attract and retain new professionals in a time when many senior teachers will retire. The induction program now includes *Peer Assistance and Review* which provides a consultant teacher to support, guide and evaluate all new teachers and a *Mentor Program* for second and third year teachers. The parties agreed to add a mandatory professional development course designed to help new teachers begin their year on the right track followed by the existing three-day new teacher orientation.

There will be an increase in total new dollars to the salary schedules. They will be phased in in two stages— 3% effective July 1, 2007 and 1.5% effective February 1, 2008. The union agreed to modest increases in health care following two contracts with significant increases. Same gender domestic partner benefits will be available beginning January 1, 2008. This last benefit demonstrates the District's commitment to human rights and equality in our community, setting a fine example for our students.

STA President Kate McKenna said, "... that the union members and the District staff will continue to work collaboratively on issues related to instruction, student achievement, teacher retention, equitable school funding and parent involvement."

September 28, 2007