

MOHAWK LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
CONCERNING NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE MEA**

This “FAQ” document has been prepared by the Mohawk Local School District (“District”) to inform the Mohawk community about the status of the District Board of Education’s (“Board”) negotiations with the Mohawk Education Association (“MEA”), which represents the District’s teachers.

Q: What is the status of negotiations?

A: The Board and MEA bargaining teams met six times, including twice with a federal mediator. After many hours of bargaining in good faith and compromises by both sides, the bargaining teams reached a Tentative Agreement (“TA”) on June 26, 2023, which was signed by representatives for both the Board and MEA bargaining teams.

Q. What is a Tentative Agreement?

A. Under Article 3(C)(3) of the parties’ expired Negotiated Agreement, “As tentative agreement is reached on each issue, it shall be initialed by each party. When consensus is reached, the proposed successor Agreement shall be reduced to writing as a tentative agreement and submitted to the Association and the Board for ratification. Following ratification by both parties, the Agreement shall constitute the successor contract between the parties.

Q. What happened after the parties signed the Tentative Agreement?

A. It is the Board’s understanding that the membership of the MEA voted to not ratify the TA. Due to the fact that union ratification meetings are private, the Board does not know what occurred during the ratification meeting, what the MEA members were told about the TA, or why they voted it down.

Q. I heard that the salaries agreed to in the TA were not fair to the teachers. Is this true?

A. The Board believes the salaries agreed to in the TA was very fair to the teachers, including:

- Base salary increases of 3%, 3%, and 3%.
- Maintenance of all Step increases.
- A stipend/bonus paid upon completion of each year of the Agreement in the following amounts:

2023-2024:	.5% of the teacher’s regular salary.
2024-2025:	1% of the teacher’s regular salary.
2025-2026:	\$1,500.

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- Signing bonus of \$3,000 for new teachers hired after July 1, 2023, paid in the last pay in June of the employee's third consecutive year of employment.
- Increase in the academic work rate from \$22 per hour to \$27 per hour.
- Increase in the amount of payment made for unused personal days at the end of each school year from \$100 per day to \$125 per unused day.
- Change in the attendance bonus, from requiring a full year of perfect attendance in order to earn a \$600 bonus, to only requiring a semester of perfect attendance to earn a \$300 bonus, which may be earned for each semester.

Q: How do “step increases” for teachers work?

A: A “step increase” provides teachers with a larger salary, regardless of whether the Board and the MEA agree to a base wage increase. Teachers receive a step increase during each year of years 4 through 12 of their employment at the District, and then again at years 15 and 20, 22, 27, 30 and 33. Step increases amount to between a 1.16% to 2.225% salary increase for teachers. That is in addition to any base wage increase that the Board provides. Therefore, the majority of teachers who returned to the District this school year received an increase to their compensation, despite not having even bargained for a base wage increase.

Q. What is the average raise for teachers across the State of Ohio?

A. According to the State Employment Relations Board (“SERB”), the average teacher raise in 2022 was 2.52%. See <https://serb.ohio.gov/view-document-archive/wage-settlement-reports/wage-settlement-reports>, page 6.

Q. Do the stipends or “bonuses” in year 1 (.5%), year 2 (1%), and year 3 (\$1,500.) count towards retirement?

A. Yes. Any income earned by a teacher for performing his or her job duties for the District goes towards the teacher's retirement. See <https://www.strsoh.org/>

Q. Where is Mohawk ranked in terms of pay?

A. Mohawk is #1 for base salary out of 12 local schools, i.e., teachers starting with a bachelor's degree with no experience at Step 0. Mohawk's top end of the pay scale “cash in your pocket,” is ranked #6, i.e., teachers having a Master's degree plus 30 additional credit hours, after deductions for benefits. **Source: Public Records**

The twelve local schools are: Buckeye Central Local Schools, Bucyrus City Schools, Carey Exempted Village Schools, Colonel Crawford Local Schools, Hopewell-Loudon Local Schools, Mohawk Local Schools, New Riegel Local Schools, Old Fort Local

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Schools, Seneca East Local Schools, Tiffin City Schools, Upper Sandusky Exempted Village Schools, and Wynford Local Schools

Q. I heard that the parties agreed to unreasonable increases in health insurance costs for the teachers. Is that true?

A. The Board believes the PPO insurance costs agreed to by the parties in the TA were very reasonable. There is NO increase in employee premium contribution during the first two years of the TA, and a modest increase in the third year. Specifically, the teachers will pay the following percentage premium contributions during the term of the TA:

Year 1 – 7.5%

Year 2 – 7.5%

Year 3 – 12.5%

10% for a High Deductible Plan.

Additionally, even in year three, the 12.5% premium contribution amount teachers would pay under the TA is less than the State-wide average for school districts like Mohawk which have less than 1000 insureds in their PPO plan. As SERB reported in its Health Insurance Report for 2023, the average employee contribution amount for school districts with less than 1000 insureds is 14.3% for a family plan, and 13.5% for a single plan.

Source: **Current** **Tentative** **Agreement** **and**
https://serb.ohio.gov/static/PDF/Insurance_Report/Health_Insurance_Report_2023.pdf, p. 26

NOTE: Mohawk also has the lowest insurance premium contributions for employees of any local school.

Q. I heard that the teachers are going backwards on pay with the parties' recent Tentative Agreement. Is that true?

A. No. Actually, this current Tentative Agreement is the most lucrative package for the teachers in over 15 years. **Source:** <https://serb.ohio.gov/>

Q. What is the average salary increase for the union members with the current Tentative Agreement vs. the administration for the same timeframe?

A.	Union Members	Administration
	Year one: 4.92%	Year one: 3.52%
	Year two: 4.87%	Year two: 1.94%
	Year three: 5.85 %	Year three: 2.19%

Source: Current Tentative Agreement and public records

Q. I read somewhere that the pay offered under the TA won't even keep up with the

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current inflation rate. Is that true?

- A. No. The U.S. inflation rate was 3% for the 12 months ended June, according to U.S. Labor Department. **Source:** <https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/inflation/current-inflation-rates/#:~:text=The%20annual%20inflation%20rate%20for,10%20at%208%3A30%20a.m>

Q. What has the Board of Education done to resolve this issue?

- A. The Board and the MEA bargaining teams met six times, including twice with a federal mediator. After many hours of bargaining in good faith and compromises by both sides, the bargaining teams reached a Tentative Agreement on June 26, 2023, which was signed by representatives for both the Board and MEA bargaining teams.

The Board further has met to discuss negotiations nine times this year, including at the following meetings:

Feb. 13, 2023 – Regular Meeting	June 6, 2023 – Special Meeting
March 13, 2023 – Regular Meeting	June 13, 2023 - Regular Meeting
April 1, 2023 – Special Meeting	July 17, 2023 – Regular Meeting
April 17, 2023 – Regular Meeting	July 27, 2023 – Special Meeting
May 23, 2023 – Regular Meeting	

Q. Why has there not been any form of communication with the public about the status of negotiations by the Board of Education or Superintendent?

- A. During negotiations we should not publicly comment or it could be deemed an unfair labor practice. However, under Ohio law a tentative agreement is a public record, available to anyone who requests a copy. **Source:** <https://serb.ohio.gov/>

Q. Where can I get a copy of the TA to review it for myself?

- A. The Tentative Agreement is located on the Mohawk App and on the Mohawk Website on the home page and the Board of Education page.