



# BFT 2024 Tentative Agreement FAQ

## **Why is the Negotiations Team recommending approval of this agreement?**

- For the first time, our team negotiated for higher compensation than new available money from the state.
- We believe that this is the best deal we could negotiate in the current budget environment.
- The compensation increase more than covers all health care premium increases.
- We captured one-time dollars as a bonus.
- District expenses are increasing so waiting longer would only make it harder to get to an agreement.
- We accomplished many of our goals on a narrow set of reopeners.
- We are mindful that in a budget with declining new revenue, unpopular budget cuts would have a negative impact on our students.
- We did not give up any contract language that benefits our members.
- We are poised for an extended and coordinated 2025 contract campaign.

## **When are we going back to the negotiations table?**

We will be kicking off our next round of negotiations in January and will be bargaining again in March.

## **What if we need to resolve an issue before the next contract cycle?**

BFT and the District can sign an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that goes into effect between negotiations sessions. These agreements are common and solve problems as they arise.

## **What is BCCE getting in their contract?**

BCCE is currently in negotiations. They will receive at least the same % increase in total compensation through their me-too clause. The BCCE Negotiating team has their own set of priorities and will come to their own agreement with the District on how this money is distributed.

## **How do we get the state to fully fund public education?**

Activism! In the end, tax revenues need to increase so spending can increase. We also need to organize at the site level, bringing members into these conversations so we can be prepared to escalate in our next contract campaign with neighboring locals. Site level organizing will be a focus after the election.

## Compensation

### How much is the total compensation package if the TA passes?

- For the current year, there is a 2% increase retroactively applied to July 1, 2024.
- Additionally, there is a 1% bonus on your base salary for the year.
- For the length of this contract:
  - 2022-2023 - 6% salary increase
  - 2023-2024 - 6% salary increase
  - 2024-2025 - 2% increase plus 1% bonus
  - \$550,000 applied to District's contribution of medical benefits
  - At least \$500,000 estimate applied to salary schedule reform

### Is the 2024-2025 salary increase retroactive and when would it be available?

- Yes, the 2% salary increase for 24-25 will be retroactive for this school year.
- All time sheets and stipends will have retroactive pay.
- The retroactive payment will come to members on the December 15th payroll.
- All bonuses for salaried staff will be paid January 15th.
- All bonuses for hourly staff will occur over the summer.

### What if BUSD gets an influx of funding next year?

That would be great. It would offset some budget cuts in the short run. It would also be beneficial as we start a new round of contract negotiations. This won't be fully known until May 2025.

### How does BERRA (the 7% Berkeley parcel tax that goes towards salaries) impact my future compensation?

This is a bit complicated and involves some math.

- The compensation increase is on almost all of your pay but not the 7% (of 2019 wages) of your pay from the BERRA parcel tax.
- Future unspent BERRA money will pay for bonuses in the future in addition to the 7% it pays for now.

## Healthcare and Benefits

### Will the District's contribution to the cost of healthcare increase under this agreement?

- Yes, under this agreement, the District will share in the cost of any increase in premiums, including this upcoming plan year.
- The District will increase their contribution to cover half (50%) of any increase in premiums from this point forward.
- This establishes a higher District contribution to Health Care each year.

### **How will this impact health care coverage in the future?**

- In 2022, we have eliminated the 'hard cap' which means from now on, the District contribution will increase if health care costs increase. We now have a 'soft cap'.
- We plan on making healthcare a central part of our statewide campaign.

### **Why does the Adult School have a higher salary increase?**

- The Adult School is funded separately from TK-12 and has not experienced the same budget short falls as the general fund.
- Money not spend by the Adult School has to be given back.

## **Staff Meetings**

### **Who is impacted by the new staff meeting language?**

- Berkeley High teachers who teach periods 2-7 except those that are teaching 7th period by choice.
- Elementary teachers at early start schools that are attending a staff meeting based on a late start schedule. Some examples might be science/pe all district release or Sped PLC meetings.

### **How come we negotiated a TK-5 meeting off in Trimester 2?**

There were inconsistent practices across elementary sites. This language protects teacher work time regardless of the elementary site.

## **Payroll Errors**

### **What were our goals to resolve payroll errors?**

- We finally, after two years of advocacy, have formal agreement that the district will put into place an online 'ticketing' system.
- This will allow the employee to track progress of their repayment, reduce the back and forth email chains, hold the district accountable to quick resolutions and in the end, make it so people are paid what they are owed faster.
- Hard to resolve issues will be less likely to be 'lost'.
- Clearer language on being paid within 5 business days of notifying the district of an error.

## **Ratification Process**

### **What is the ratification process?**

- A general membership meeting was held on October 24th to explain the Tentative Agreement.
- The BFT Executive Board will make a recommendation on October 25th and that recommendation will be emailed out.

- BFT members have 10 days to vote on whether or not to ratify this tentative agreement.
- Voting opens on October 24th at 4:00 p.m. and voting closes November 3rd at 4:00 p.m.

**If the tentative agreement does not pass, what happens?**

- If the TA doesn't pass, there would be no agreement.
- None of the TAs would go into effect until the TA passes.
- We will no longer be on the same timeline as the other unions participating in the We Can't Wait campaign.
- The ability to get more money later will decrease as the District realizes their unexpected current costs.
- The parties could agree to return to negotiations, or the district or the union could unilaterally declare impasse, which would result in a state mediator being assigned to attempt to facilitate an agreement. If the mediator is unable to resolve the dispute, a fact-finding panel would be formed to hold a hearing and make a non-binding recommendation. If the two sides are still unable to reach an agreement, the district could impose its final offer and the union could go on strike.
- In situations where there is little new money, significant increases are not possible on the local level. In order to impact the state, we must be a part of a larger effort.

**Could we have done better if we had continued to escalate?**

- The BFT Negotiations Team does not believe that the salary increases in this tentative agreement would have been bigger if we had continued negotiations or escalated further.
- The revenue coming to BUSD from the state is currently less than what we have bargained for.
- Our members overwhelmingly want to keep budget cuts away from student facing services and protect BCCE jobs.
- We believe we have bargained the highest possible compensation package for this negotiation cycle. The distance between the two sides was not significant enough to make a strike financially worthwhile. A strike costs about .5% salary each day. **Our members have been consistently clear that our agreement should not trigger major budget cuts, especially when cuts are already on the table.**
- Agreements around report cards, instituting a tracking system, salary and bonus pay, staff meeting pay and leave requests would be delayed or completely missed.

- Moving towards a strike requires a massive mobilization of our members and our larger community with a path to victory. We are not currently organized in a way that can lead to successful escalation BUT it is our goal for Winter/Spring 2025.
- Approving this agreement will guarantee that people will see needed income NOW and that all other agreed provisions occur on time.

**If you have any questions, please reach out to Matt Meyer at [president@berkeleyteachers.org](mailto:president@berkeleyteachers.org).**