

Negotiations Update

Tentative Agreement FAQs

Spring 2026



Why is the Negotiations Team recommending approval of this agreement?

- Our team negotiated for higher compensation over the amount of the District's new available money from the state for both this year and next year.
- We captured one-time dollars as a bonus, which alone covers all health care premium increases this year regardless of type of plan.
- We changed the formula for health care coverage and have a clear path to getting to 100% coverage in future rounds of negotiations based on the new structure.
- We accomplished many of our goals with 15 Tentative Agreements and 2 MOUs, addressing issues brought up by many subgroups like Substitutes, Adult School, School Psychologists, Early Childhood and Counselors.
- After many years we finally have a structure to be paid for IEP/SST/504 meetings after the duty day!
- We are forcing the District to re-prioritize spending and decreasing reliance on contractors.
- We believe that this is the best deal we could negotiate pushing the District as far as possible without declaring a fiscal emergency.

How much is the total compensation package?

- For the current year, there is a **3% increase in total**. 2% will be retroactively applied to July 1, 2025 and another 1% increase for this year is retroactive to January 1, 2026. This will be paid within 60 days of ratification.
- **There will be a \$1000 bonus** for this year for all members prorated against FTE. Substitutes will receive a 1% bonus (since they don't have a FTE) paid after the work year.
- **There will be an additional 3% increase** for the 2026-27 school year.
- Increase district contribution to **70%** for health benefits starting January 1st, 2027, and an additional increase to **80%** in January 2028 for employee, employee +1 and family. These are bigger health care increases than our neighboring districts.
- We negotiated trigger language for both one time dollars and ongoing dollars based on California's projections which will allow us to capture new dollars in this contract if they are available.

Why is this year's retro pay split?

The district does not have enough money on hand in this current year to retro the total amount for the full year. This year's money is already spent and unlike some other districts, there are little reserves. We will see all of the retro as a lump sum payment and the 3% ongoing increase will be part of the salary schedule.

Is the 2025-2026 salary increase retroactive and when would it be available?

- All time sheets and stipends will include retroactive pay.
- All bonuses for salaried staff and Adult School will be paid within 60 days of ratification.
- All bonuses for substitutes will occur over the summer.

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

YES! Under this agreement, we are changing how the district covers healthcare. The district will now cover 70% of the total cost next year and 80% of the total cost the year after. The district currently covers 56% of the total cost. Future negotiations will push this higher. This is no longer a split of the increase but a guaranteed amount of coverage. This is a huge win for our members on health care and a larger increase than other locals were able to get this year. Part of the rationale for the bonus was to cover increases that occurred this year.

Plan Type - Kaiser	2027 Savings	2028 Additional Savings	Total Savings
Employee	\$1,918	\$1,403	\$3,321
Employee +1	\$3,845	\$2,806	\$6,651
Family	\$4,991	3,647	\$8,638

What if BUSD gets an influx of funding next year?

That would be great and we are all pushing this statewide. We negotiated two contingencies to capture these funds in 2026-27 if they come in as one-time dollars and ongoing dollars. These new dollars may also help offset any staff reductions in the short run. This won’t be fully known until May 2026. We are also back at the table next year for our next contract so any money that comes in we can also negotiate over in our next round.

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.

- Our salary schedule has a built in amount (7% of 2019 wages) that does not change based on the 2020 BERRA parcel tax that pays directly for salaries.
- 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. This won’t be fully figured out until the new salary schedules are developed.
- Future unspent BERRA money in the ending fund balance is one time and pays for bonuses in addition to the 7% it pays for now.

What other Tentative Agreements were signed?

You can find a summary of the TA on our website. There will be hard copies in each site's mailroom.

When do various parts of the agreement go into effect once TA is ratified?

ECE Salary Schedule	Retro to July 1, 2025
Counselor Duty Day	May 4, 2026
Substitute Compensation	April 6, 2026
504/IEP/SST Meetings	2026-2027 School Year
All other TAs	March 18th, 2026

What is the ratification process?

- A general membership meeting will be held on February 24th to explain the Tentative Agreement.
- The BFT Executive Board will make a recommendation on February 25th and that recommendation will be emailed out to the membership.
- BFT members have **10 days to vote** on whether or not to ratify this tentative agreement.
- Voting opens on February 24th and **voting closes on March 6th**.

How did we get to this deal?

- Our members made this possible through our contract campaign and strategic escalation.
- We created a credible strike threat that the District could not ignore.
- The We Can't Wait campaign established a high standard and the organizers from various locals worked together on consistent contract campaign actions and messaging.

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.
- Our leverage could decrease as the District realizes their unexpected current costs making it harder to get to an acceptable agreement.
- We would continue to bargain but be past our peak power with possible layoff notices to fight at the same time. This will definitely be a challenge for our narrative in the community.

Could we have done better if we had continued to escalate towards a strike?

- The BFT Negotiations Team does not believe that the salary increases and health care contributions in this tentative agreement would have been larger if we had escalated further. We were prepared to strike if necessary. Luckily, we could avoid this.
- By declaring impasse and going to factfinding, we pushed the district to the very edge of what they could afford. Further gains would have triggered some serious tradeoffs, risking the jobs of our members and BCCE members, as well as significant cuts to student services.

- Our members have been consistently clear that they want to keep budget cuts away from student-facing services and protect BCCE and BFT jobs.
- Unlike other districts, our district has very low reserves due to our much lower level of staff vacancies.
- The state revenue that was sent to BUSD is significantly less than the amount we bargained for and won in these negotiations.
- 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.
- We knew our initial proposals were significantly more than the district could afford. We did not want the district to declare a fiscal emergency as that would trigger class size increases up to 1/3rd larger.
- We successfully, along with others, raised public awareness around the need for education reform in CA and with our legislators and the media. Currently, the only districts that went on strike are the ones where their districts did not make real movement during factfinding. Almost all other WCW locals have reached agreements or will be reaching agreements soon.
- We identified potential savings but they can only be realized in the medium to long run due to the need to restructure programs.
- Our neutral factfinder said that he wouldn't have recommended the district go higher than our agreement. To push past this would pose problems with our narrative and community, especially since the district came ready with real offers during factfinding.
- Approving this agreement will guarantee that people will see needed income before this school year is over and that all other agreed provisions occur on time.

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

Activism! In the end, tax revenues need to increase so state spending can increase. We have aligned the end date of this contract with the other We Can't Wait locals so we can continue to strengthen our narrative and collaboration and look forward to bringing in many more locals into this ongoing campaign. We are one of the most activated education unions around, especially given our size, and we will continue to work towards more funding for public schools.

We must pass the [extension of Prop 55](#) on the November ballot. Both CFT and CTA, alongside other progressive groups, are looking into revenue generators for the 2028 ballot. The We Can't Wait campaign was the most coordinated unions have worked together for similar goals in our state, and we will continue to strengthen our relationships with education unions up and down the state. Our fight has always been a multiyear and multicontract project. We remain committed to being a part of this coalition and will take part in any coordinated statewide actions that arise.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Matt Meyer at president@berkeleyteachers.org.