

Crookston Public Schools Board of Education

Independent School District #593

402 Fisher Ave., Suite 593 Crookston, MN 56716

Phone: (218) 281-5313 Fax: (218) 281-3505



Hello Community Members, Parents, Students and Taxpayers of the Crookston Public School District,

The Crookston School Board entered into the negotiation process with the Crookston Education Association in March of 2025. Since that time we have met seven times to work on settling a contract. As we all know our teachers are the backbone of our District and their value is immeasurable. While we have met many times we have not settled the contract. The next step in this process is mediation. This is scheduled for November 19, 2025. A mediator sits with both parties to try and work out an agreement. Prior to that mediation session, the Board would like to relay to you what has occurred up to this point during the negotiations process.

There were initial offers back and forth between the Board and the CEA during the past several months. While nothing has been agreed to, we wanted to present what the current offer was between the Board and the CEA. We believe that all information should be shared with you and not just portions of the proposal. The following are items discussed during negotiations.

Salary Adjustments

CEA Offer - Salary increases - CEA offered to the board a 3.00% increase plus step and lane increases for 25-26 and 3.00% plus step and lane increases for 26-27. CEA also requested a career step 20 for all employees that qualify which would increase pay by \$750 plus the 3.00% increase on top of that.

If this offer was implemented the lowest pay would be approx \$48,456 and top pay could be \$86,806. The total entire contract package for the 2 year contract would increase approx 9.33%

Board Offer - Salary increases - Board offered 2.25% increase plus step and lane increases for 25-26 and 2.25% increase plus step and lane increases for 26-27.

If this offer was implemented the lowest pay would be \$47,752 and top pay could be \$84,785. The total entire contract package for the 2 year contract would increase approx 7.67%.

According to area superintendents, contracts settled have been roughly averaging 2% salary increase per year for both years of the contract, with the total entire contract package increase averaging 6-7%.

Group Insurance

Board agreed to increase District contribution to a single plan from \$1000 to \$1025 per month.

Board agreed to increase District contribution to a family plan from \$1833 to \$1933 per month.

This means that the District pays this amount per teacher for their health insurance per month. Most districts in our region contribute significantly less (around \$1000) and this is an expensive and highly valuable benefit that we give our teaching staff that in almost every case is significantly higher than surrounding districts.

Retirement Program

Board agreed to increase the 403B contribution to those teachers who participate by \$120. Depending on the years of service, the District will match from \$708 to \$948 per teacher. This is a direct cost to the District.

Leaves of Absence - Wellness Clause

Board continues to offer a stipend of \$500 to teachers who utilize 0-4 sick days per year. Currently teachers receive 15 sick days per school year. This is meant to provide an incentive for staff to come to work as much as possible. Last year 27 of 98 teachers we employ received this incentive. Board did not agree to expanding this incentive further to include an additional stipend of \$300 for teachers who used between 5-7 days of sick time.

Leaves of Absence - Personal Leave

Board did not agree to an additional \$650 stipend for those teachers who did not use any of their five personal days or 75% of five days at current sub rate, whichever is higher.

Full Time Substitute Teachers

Board requested a "carve out" for the position of a full time substitute teacher position. CEA and Board came to an agreement on language to allow this position in the future.

Activity Schedule - Extra curricular Pay

Board requested increasing the extra curricular pay scale with the same percentage that the teachers contract settles and add Pirates Cove to Group 8 and move FFA to Group 4. CEA agreed to these salary changes and movements.

Language Change Requests

The following three language articles were added two years ago and have proved to be difficult to administer, not what we felt was in the best interest of kids, and in some cases quite expensive to the District. Board initially wanted to remove all three from the contract but have offered to compromise to modify language. CEA has not agreed to any modification to any of the language changes.

Here are the three items:

Contracted Time

"The first 15 minutes prior to the start of each student contact day will be reserved for parent and team communication. These 15 minutes would fall within the 440 minute work day and not be considered part of the 56 minute prep time the teacher receives per day"

Board offered that each teacher be available twice per week in the first 15 minutes as well as the first two weeks and the last two weeks of student contact days. Without changes we cannot have teachers meet students outside in the mornings or assist with morning supervision of students. It is not in the best interest of kids and additional staff must be hired at an additional cost. CEA did not agree to this change.

Workshop Days

Prior to the start of school the District holds "workshop days". This is normally 4 days that includes training and meet the teacher. With the contract language added two years ago, 45% of the time available during pre-service is required to be reserved for "teacher preparation in their classrooms and would not be scheduled with official workshop duties by administration".

The Board requested to modify the 45% requirement to 30%. This will allow the district to provide mandatory and important training to all teachers within the allotted time. CEA did not agree to this change.

Subbing Reimbursement

Language was added two years ago that stated, "If teachers, when asked by Admin, to take additional students into their classrooms and/or covering substituting duties for the district, they shall be reimbursed at the rate of 80% of the current sub pay rate for half to a full day, 40% for less than half a day but more than one period, and 25% for one period."

This is a large expense to the District. If we split one classroom for a day and four teachers take on any additional students each would receive \$128 for the day. That would cost the District \$512 for splitting that classroom.

Board requested to modify the language to state, "In a split classroom scenario, teachers who take on additional students will equally divide the board approved amount of \$220 sub daily rate among themselves. Teachers reassigned to a classroom do not receive the additional sub daily rate."

This modification request is an attempt at controlling the high cost this language has caused the district. CEA does not agree to modifying the language.

The above three language modification proposals are what CEA has described as the Board trying to "deteriorate working conditions for teachers". The Board wants to do what is best for kids and teachers while balancing our fiscal responsibilities to our community and taxpayers.

Contracted Time - Outside contract day compensation

Board offered a \$50 stipend per contractual day if the teacher exceeded two or more hours past their contracted hours and are doing activities past their contracted day. For example when a teacher is on a field trip that extends more than 2 hours past their contracted time.

CEA countered that any hours past their contracted day would be paid at the current staff development rate of \$34.05. For the overnight Itasca field trip, all hours past contracted day would be paid at \$34.05, including hours while sleeping which would substantially increase costs and likely make trips too expensive to continue.

Hourly Pay for Behind the wheel-

Board requested teachers who provide behind the wheel driver education be paid at the rate of \$30.00 per hour. The current rate is \$27.00. CEA countered at \$28.83. Board has researched and wanted to make this position more competitive with area schools who are already above \$30.00.

There are other items that were presented that may be considered "less critical (but still important)" that are not covered in this letter.

Concerns about Administrative Salaries

The Board would like to address concerns about the Superintendent's salary and the HR/Payroll Director salary and position.

Our current interim Superintendent has been a very valuable resource to our district. He is receiving \$175,000 in salary but no additional benefits like vacation, sick time, retirement, health insurance, 403B matches, life insurance, and no severance so this is the reason for the higher salary. His contract is for 0.8 time. Mr. Bruer has been putting in significantly more time than contracted and has not received extra compensation for it.

In reference to the HR/Payroll Director position, with 200+ district employees more HR support is needed. To be fiscally responsible, instead of hiring a \$75,000-80,000 salaried HR position we added duties to an existing Payroll position and increased their compensation by \$18,000 per year.

We realize this letter is lengthy but the Board wanted our community to be fully informed and transparency is what we have strived for in this communication. Some of the items presented can be complicated and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss anything with you. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to any board member or Superintendent Bruer.

Sincerely,
Crookston Board of Education