



Update on Negotiations

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Negotiations with SCGA

September 11, 2015

To promote transparency, community awareness, accountability and open communication, the Governing Board of the Sweetwater Union High School District (SUHSD) has directed that its team provide regular and factual updates following negotiation sessions with the Sweetwater Counseling and Guidance Association (SCGA). This is the District's fourth update on its negotiations with SCGA.

September 9, 2015 Session

The District's and SCGA's teams met on September 9, 2015. The teams addressed caseload for the entire session, though SCGA committed to responding to the District's July 2015 economic proposal at the next meeting.

District's New Caseload Proposal

At the start of the session, the District team shared a new caseload proposal. The District team proposed to reduce the 7-12 counselor staffing ratio from 400:1 to 360:1 for three years, with the 400:1 ratio to be reinstated thereafter unless the parties agreed otherwise. The District also proposed specific staffing allocations at Palomar High School and the Learning Centers for the same three year period. The District again proposed to establish and convene a "working group" to study and make recommendations regarding caseload. Recommendations from the "working group" would be considered by both teams during 2018-2019 negotiations. As previously proposed, the terms above would be set forth in a written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

SCGA's Response

SCGA agreed to the temporary MOU concept. SCGA then proposed that the reduced ratios last for four years (not three) and that the staffing language relative to Palomar High School and the Learning Center be included as permanent contract language (not temporary). When the District expressed its objection to four years and the proposed permanent contract language prior to the workgroup's review of the impact of such changes, the SCGA team withdrew its support for the working group concept described above.

The District team expressed its support for the "working group" concept. The reason the District extended its proposal from a one year caseload reduction to a three year caseload reduction was to give the working group more time and additional data to study the issue and make meaningful recommendations. The District team stated that four years was too long a period of time, especially in the absence of the working group.

The day ended after the District proposed a temporary MOU resulting in a three year reduction in the 7-12 counselor staffing ratio (400:1 to 360:1), and specific staffing allocations at Palomar High School and the Learning Centers. As proposed by SCGA, the working group concept was dropped.

Next Session

Negotiations will resume in October (dates to be determined).