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PUBLIC WELCOME TO VIEW TUKWILA SCHOOL DISTRICT COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

(Tukwila, WA) --- The Tukwila School District Board of Directors has adopted a new policy to conduct future labor-management contract negotiations in meetings open to the public.

The policy was approved by the Board at its meeting July 11, 2017. In discussing the resolution, the Board agreed the purpose of the new policy is to provide the community with more transparency and enhance public understanding of District operations and budget process.

By opening the collective bargaining process to public view, the District will provide an incentive for both parties (management and labor) to take timely, reasonable, publicly defensible positions that allow the community to better understand the budget and other implications of collective bargaining contracts.

The District's policy direction is a result of careful discussion of ways to improve the collective bargaining process to ensure accountability to the taxpayers of the Tukwila School District. With declining enrollment and subsequent budget constraints and uncertainty surrounding the Legislature's budget adoption, the District believes public scrutiny of labor negotiations will help both management and labor present fair, reasonable and economically viable options for negotiation.

A more open process will facilitate communication of topics and issues within the District, and with taxpayers to ensure their elected school directors are accountable for how the District spends its budget.

The new policy would apply only to collective bargaining agreement not currently open for negotiation and not to other employee-related discussions such as grievance meetings. The collective bargaining itself will continue to follow state law mandating good faith bargaining and be conducted by District and union representatives without public input. However, those direct negotiations will now be available for viewing by the public.

The School Board approved the resolution in advance of future collective bargaining negotiations and to provide enough time for the District, its employees and the community to better understand the implications of the 2017-19 Washington State Budget. The new state budget contains changes to how school districts finance and deliver public education (including teacher compensation) to meet the State Supreme Court mandated compliance with its *McCleary* decision to fully fund public schools.

Tukwila is one of the first western Washington school districts to make their collective bargaining negotiations transparent and open to the public.

There are five collective bargaining contracts between the District and employee organizations. These agreements are between the District and the Tukwila Education Association; the Tukwila Education Association Athletics and Activities Association; the Tukwila Classified Education Association; the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 925 (Custodian, Maintenance, Food Service and Transportation); and the Tukwila Principals Association.

About 2800 students are enrolled in five schools located within the Tukwila School District in southwest King County. The average student-teacher ratio is 1:25. Students represent many cultures and ethnic groups and speak more than 80 world languages. About 40 percent of students qualify for English Language Learner services. About 80 percent of students are eligible for free/reduced school meals. A staff of about 400 serve our students.



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Tukwila School District
Resolution No. 855
July 12, 2017

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. How many collective bargaining contracts is the Tukwila School District a party to?

There are five collective bargaining agreements between the District and employee organizations. These agreements are between the District and the Tukwila Education Association; the Tukwila Education Association Athletics and Activities Association; the Tukwila Classified Education Association; the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 925 (Custodian, Maintenance, Food Service and Transportation); and the Tukwila Principals Association.

2. Why are there separate agreements with teachers, and other District staff?

Teachers, principals, para-educators, and other support staff have different job responsibilities, and different laws govern their employment. Each bargaining agreement covers employees who share common duties, skills, and working conditions.

State law requires individual contracts and additionally authorizes collective bargaining agreements. Each employee has an individual contract with the District. The collective bargaining agreements generally cover a broader range of topics, such as employee discipline, employee assignments and transfers, the school calendar, the work day, leave, and pay.

3. Why did the School Board adopt this policy now?

The School Board adopted the policy in advance of future collective bargaining negotiations to provide enough time for the District, its employees and the community to better understand the implications of the 2017-2019 Washington State Budget and its impact on labor-management relations. Current collective bargaining agreement negotiations are exempt.

4. How will the policy affect teachers, staff, parents and students?

The policy is designed to allow teachers, staff, parents, and students a more transparent process to view the collective bargaining process. The Board believes a public process will provide all stakeholders with more information about how the District manages its budget and collective bargaining process and other aspects of its operations.

5. Will this policy prevent teachers from gaining more salary and benefits?

The District and its unions bargain in good faith. By allowing the public to view the collective bargaining process the District hopes the public will gain insight into how the final contracts are structured – on both sides.

6. This idea has been proposed in other areas – how did this issue come to the Tukwila School Board? The resolution before the Tukwila School District was written independently at the suggestion of board members and not provided by any outside group.
7. Can this policy be legally challenged?

The District hopes not. Challenges to similar policies have been dismissed by the state administrative agency responsible for public sector labor-management relations, the Public Employment Relations Commission.

8. If you are willing to have the negotiations conducted in an open meeting, why not take public testimony on the contract itself and let the taxpayers/community have a say in the actual language of the agreement?

State laws govern the requirements for a collective bargaining process. This resolution does not open the bargaining process to public input, it simply allows the public to view the process as it occurs.