

# RCTA Newsletter

## What YOU Should Know and Why Facts about the Teacher's Contract

May 2010

Aside from the usual that everyone expects to see in a contract, we as a community give away more than anybody realizes to the teacher's union. Teachers are hired to do a job, a job that many do exceptionally well, but it is a job nonetheless making them no more important or less important than any other employee in the city.

One has to remember that the School Department is a bureaucracy. Like most bureaucracies the board cannot admit that they did not or cannot fulfill its mission. Like a bureaucracy they crave to keep the power they have achieved, the money they have been able to take, (i.e. from the taxpayer) and have an obsessive need to save face. They do not listen to what the public wants, but push on with their pet projects no matter the cost.

A perfect example of this bureaucracy would be the contract that is currently in effect between the Rochester Federation of Teachers and the Rochester School Board which will expire in August of this year. Despite the fact that the RFT attempted to put forth a one year contract with no salary increases, everyone needs to be aware of what they will be negotiating for once they feel the economy has taken a positive turn.

When compared to the private sector and many of the current union contracts in effect, how many have ever had such sweet deals as the RFT? Who is negotiating on behalf of the taxpayer?

For starters for the purpose of the salary schedule, a full-time covered employee serving more than 1/2 of a school year (6-months) will be given credit for one year of service (September-January 92 days, February-June 88 days, six months 107 days). Does this happen in the private sector? I don't think so! A year is 12-months long. Makes you wonder what they are teaching the kids.

We pay them mileage allowance if it applies to their job.

Department Heads and Curriculum Advisers shall be paid stipends of \$1,400 plus \$65 per teacher supervised. Mind you they do receive a salary, this is on top the salary. Effective August 25, 2008 the stipends shall be increased each year by the same percentage as applied to Step 1 of the salary schedule.

Occupational Therapy and Speech Department Heads, K-12, shall be paid stipends of \$1,200 plus \$60 per teacher supervised, and \$30 per paraprofessional supervised, yet again on top

of their base salary. They shall also be paid a stipend of 0.092 times their base salary for the amount of time needed for evaluations.

Department Heads may be assigned the same class load as other teachers. Department Heads may be relieved of duties on a case-by-case basis.

Elementary Teaching Principals and Alternative School Director - Payments to persons holding the position of Elementary Teaching Principal or Alternative School Director shall be paid at a rate of 0.137 times the maximum salary for a teacher with a Masters Degree and no additional graduate hours.

Perish the thought that we may pay a child for good grades! We pay our teachers for perfect attendance. It is sad that there is such a lack of intestinal fortitude that we have to pay teachers to come to work.

There is a choice of four insurance options for health insurance: 1) Blue Cross/Blue Shield Managed Care Program Plan, \$1 million Major Medical Program 2) Blue Cross/Blue Shield Comp 100 Indemnity paid, 3) BlueChoice point of service, 4) New Hampshire Municipal Association Trust HMO administered by Matthew Thornton. The Board will pay 75% of the total premium for option (1), the employee

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25%. The Board shall pay 80% of options 2, 3, 4 and the employee 20%.

The taxpayer will pay 100% of the per credit cost of tuition for in-service courses or courses at accredited colleges, universities, or professional training schools which are taken by covered employees. So, in essence we pay for their education and then give them a raise based on the degree we, the taxpayer, just paid for. Do the other union contracts have such a caveat?

The taxpayer will pay 100% of the costs of approved workshops not to exceed \$375 per teacher per school year. We currently employ 474 teachers, this works out to \$177,750. Do not forget the mileage reimbursement that will go along with these workshops. The total amount of course and workshop reimbursement shall not exceed \$236,000.

Workshops and outside training budgets are the first cut from other department budgets throughout the city, yet never from the School Department.

As stated on the New Hampshire Department of Education website the teachers only have to give us 180 days of instruction, plus 5 days for teacher workshops. They will start a school year no sooner than seven days prior to Labor

Day and terminate no later than June 30.

It seems like they are getting a lot, while we as taxpayers are not getting very much bang for the buck.

It has been stated that we can not go back to how it was years ago. I beg to differ. I think the time has come that we do go back to before Jimmy Carter brought about the U.S. Department of Education.

Since the inception of this department the education of our children has plateaued and we are behind developing nations in the education of our children.

The School Department wants more and more and we see less and less. As a district we are incredibly top heavy with administration with no end in sight. Why is it that year's ago when school enrollment was higher and computers were a luxury, the schools were able to keep track of students, let you know who their teacher would be the last day of school, knew who the "problem" children were with only one principal and one secretary in the elementary schools and everything was done by hand?

Administration has lost sight as to what they are truly supposed to be doing for the students. Unfortunately, it

seems they do know exactly what to do for the district.

**The *School Department will be presenting their budget to the City Council on Tuesday, May 11th.***

There will be public input. If you have any misgivings regarding the school budget let your voice be heard. Before we start cutting other services, don't you think it is time we got the school budget under control?



Just a quick update: To add a new stairwell on Nancy Loud and Maple Street will cost us approximately \$570,000, if not more. Some members of the School Board saw the letter to the editor about Maple Street and Nancy Loud. It is not even a thought to close the Maple Street School. The time has come for people to rally and make the School Department fiscally responsible. Communities such as Somersworth and Portsmouth, who do not even have a Tax and Spending Cap are making major cuts because the citizens cannot

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afford the tax increases any longer. How does Rochester handle this? They keep on sticking it to the taxpayer acting as if the well will never dry up. With a constant theme of how can override the tax cap?