



Maplewood Richmond Heights School District

MRH Board of Education

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Board Briefs, March 28, 2024

At its March monthly business meeting, the MRH Board of Education approved a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with teachers. It is the first such agreement between the District and the Maplewood Richmond Heights National Education Association (MRHNEA) since the two groups shifted to a Compensation/Benefits Task Force system more than two decades ago.

In October 2023, the MRHNEA indicated its interest in bargaining. Members voted unanimously to move forward with CBA efforts earlier this year. On March 28, the MRH Board of Education certified the election results and approved the agreement, [which can be found on the District website](#). The CBA is effective from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.

“The MRHNEA is pleased to have ratified our first collective bargaining agreement with the District in over 20 years,” said Early Childhood Center instructor Annie Rothenberg. “I was honored to lead the Union bargaining team with Rich McCollum to do this important work with the District. We believe it is the first step in addressing some issues impacting teacher morale and retention. I want to express my appreciation for the collaborative effort of the administrators and teachers who participated in the bargaining sessions. We look forward to continuing to make progress in improving working conditions for teachers and student outcomes.”

“The negotiating team spent countless hours in this process, and I’m very appreciative of the collaborative spirit they brought to the negotiations,” said Dr. Shonda Ambers-Phillips, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources. “We are confident that Collective Bargaining will align with our Strategic Plan by improving teacher working conditions, ensuring fair compensation and benefits and enhancing educational quality for students and staff.”

Highlights of the agreement include:

- New teachers may apply up to 15 years of experience in previous workplaces to their MRH salary schedules
- Continued commitment by the District to pay 100% of insurance premiums
- Pre-K teachers will now also receive 250 planning minutes weekly
- Tuition reimbursement increases to cover the cost of 3 credit hours per semester at the University of Missouri-St. Louis
- Paid parental leave days will double to 20 per school year
- The hourly rate for “extra duty” work (i.e. curriculum-writing, student supervision, professional development training) increases to \$33/hour
- One extra day of paid time off for each overnight “expedition” (off-site learning)

The CBA negotiating team includes District administrators Dr. Bonita Jamison, Dr. Shonda Ambers-Phillips, Chris Hoelzer, Nicole Huffman and Dr. Chris McGee; MRHNEA members Annie Rothenberg, Rich McCollum, Scott Greife-Wetenhall, Jenna Muskus, Stacey Schwab, Sarah Macky, Mindy McBride, Tate Haugen, Angie Mitchell, Bethany Nobbe, Amy Williams, and David Ganey; MRH legal counsel Cindy Ormsby; and Kari Estes of the Missouri NEA.

In other action, Assistant Supt. for Human Resources reported the results of the “stay” survey for the 2022-2023 school year. Stay surveys are designed to:

- ask current employees why they’re happy at MRH and why they might not be

- understand the specific reasons employees have for staying in MRH
- understand employment practices from the employee's perspective
- develop next steps to improve employment satisfaction and strengthen positive workplace relationships

Stay survey results can be found [ON OUR WEBSITE](#).

The Board of Education approved a 5% tuition increase for the Preschool program. The increase would raise Preschool tuition revenue from \$644,670 to \$677,160. Also receiving a 5% tuition increase was Discover Club (before/after care). Reasoning:

- Increasing inflation costs and increases in Discover Club wages since 2020
- Supply and activity costs for engaging planning and updated materials
- Increase in expenditures for a system to allow online payments, tracking and tax document generating capabilities

Ahead of the annual MRH employee celebration event on April 25, the Board of Education selected awards recipients in the Distinguished category:

- Citizens of the Year: PAL Board
- Family of the Year: The Ward Family
- Advocate of the Year: Annie Rothenberg, ECC teacher
- Spirit of MRH: Heather Jaber, Elementary teacher
- Special recognition to City of Maplewood Fire Department