

**Washington Northeast, Cabot School and Twinfield Union School
Reach Settlement with Local Associations on Support Staff and Teacher Contracts**

The Board Negotiating Council for Washington Northeast Supervisory Union (representing the SU, Cabot School, and Twinfield Union School) and the Negotiating Council for the local NEA Associations at Cabot and Twinfield Union School, completed negotiations on collective bargaining agreements for Support Staff and Teachers. The Support Staff agreement came on December 20, 2017, and was implemented in late January following ratification by the Associations and School Boards. The Teacher agreement came on March 8, with final ratification on March 26th. The terms of the teacher settlement will be implemented over the next few weeks, bringing to an end a nearly twenty-one-month negotiating process for the two sides. Both agreements cover the period of July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2019. Support staff and teachers had been working under terms of collective bargaining agreements that expired on June 30, 2017. Both agreements are retroactive to July 1, 2017.

Contract language in the Support staff agreement, which covers unlicensed school staff including paraprofessionals, bus drivers, custodial staff, food service workers, and office administrative staff, was basically unchanged except for new salary and healthcare arrangements. The Teacher agreement added language to clarify the process for making Reductions in Force, and made minor adjustments/corrections to other Articles. The Teacher agreement also contains salary and healthcare adjustments. The basic financial tenets are outlined below.

	FY18 (Current Year)	FY19
Support Staff		
Salary Increase	2.9%	3.0%
Healthcare Cost Sharing	Employee pays 15% of Premium cost & \$400/\$800/\$800/\$800 Out-of-Pocket costs, depending on plan tier	Same
Teachers/Professional Staff		
Salary Increase	1.5%	2.75%
Healthcare Cost Sharing	<p>Until January 1, 2019, continues terms of the Side Letter Agreement on Healthcare (click here to read the Side Letter Agreement).</p> <p>Effective Jan 1, 2019, covered employees pay 20% Premium & \$400/\$800/\$800/\$800 Out-of-Pocket costs, depending on plan tier (Single, Two-Person, Parent-Child(ren) and Family).</p>	

The Teachers settled for a much lower than usual salary increase in year one of the contract (1.5%). This year-one settlement reflects an acknowledgment by the Teachers of the difficult financial situation the Boards were placed in when the Legislature passed Act 85, the Healthcare Recapture legislation, in July 2017. The aim of the recapture process was to allow the State to realize savings from the lower premium costs of new healthcare plans that went into effect on January 1, 2018. A more complete overview of Act 85 can be found [here](#). By mandating that 65% of recapture amounts (\$73,000 for Twinfield and \$45,000 for Cabot) be collected in the current fiscal year (FY18) AFTER budgets had been passed, Act 85 effectively withheld revenue that the schools were anticipating receiving, based on their passed budgets. The healthcare recapture was especially galling to the Boards, because both had set budgets in anticipation of lower healthcare premiums starting in January 2018; in effect, the State realized savings twice from the Cabot and Twinfield schools. The only way to cover the recapture amounts for FY18 (\$47,500 for Twinfield and \$29,250 for Cabot) was to take it from money that had been budgeted for teacher salary increases. This limited what the Boards were able to offer for salary increases in year-one, without having to deficit-spend. Neither of the parties to this negotiation were happy to have a post-approved-budget curveball thrown at them by the Legislature, but in the end both sides agreed to accept the fiscal realities of the situation.

The settled agreements are in effect until June 30, 2019. This means that the Boards will be sitting down with employees again starting later this calendar year to begin the process of negotiating a successor agreement to take effect on July 1, 2019.