



# CONTRACT RATIFICATION Q&A 2014-2015

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## General Questions (ESPs and Teachers)

### Voting

**Q: Do HCTA members mail in a ballot and non-members vote online?**

A: No; everyone votes in the same manner via secure paper ballot.

**Q: Who counts the votes? Can anyone see how I voted?**

A: The HCTA Election Committee members handle the opening of the envelopes and the ballot count. No one can see how an individual person voted. As envelopes are received throughout the voting period, they are placed in a secure, locked area. None of the envelopes are opened until voting has ended and the committee members are convened to do the count. Each white envelope is checked against the list of eligible voters. After that validation is complete, each white envelope is opened and the green envelope containing the ballot is placed in a separate bin. After all green envelopes have been removed from the outer white envelope, the committee begins opening the green envelopes and sorting the ballots. The final step is to count the ballots. This is done by two different people, to ensure that the count is accurate.

**Q: Do employees who are on leave get to vote?**

A: Yes. If someone is on leave, we would have sent the ballot to their house via USPS. Those were put in the mail on Tuesday, October 7, 2014. The employee can mail it back to us, but they need to make sure that they put the green ballot envelope inside a regular envelope, address it to: Hillsborough CTA, 3102 N. Habana Ave., Tampa, FL, 33607, and put a stamp on it. The white "Return Envelope" that was provided is pre-printed with return information is for school mail only.

**Q: When can we expect increases and retro pay?**

A: New rate will become effective in the pay cycle following school board ratification and will be retroactive to July 1. Your new rate and retro pay will take effect in November.

**Q: Is there a supplement to help out with the high increase of insurance premiums?**

A: No, there is no supplement for insurance premiums. We have retained an employee plan (coverage first), which is a no cost to the employee. Additionally, it has been four years since the last increase in health plan costs, which is not the norm. We understand that insurance increases and/or the cost of dependent coverage are important issues and we will attempt to work with our district to secure better and more cost effective options.

## Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)

### Edsby

**Q: How is Edsby supposed to be implemented for elementary? Will we be penalized for not using it? And does the new language do away with the 5 day period after the end of the grading period?**

A: The following clarification was sent out by the school district to all elementary teachers:

*“Currently, most elementary teachers use the Edsby system solely for completion of report cards. Many teachers report that school administrators have told them not to use the electronic gradebook portion of Edsby. To clarify, the intention has always been for elementary teachers to use the electronic gradebook portion of Edsby and to enter grades consistent with contract language. This retains the current language that provides for 5 days to complete final grades each grading period. The current MOU states a minimum of two times per grading period. While teachers are encouraged to explore the features and hopefully see that Edsby can make their jobs easier, the goal of the MOU is to get everyone working within one system, working on the same page and in no way intended for discipline purposes. Doing so allows for easier display of marks leading to grades and eliminates the extra spreadsheets often used during report card reviews.*

*We understand that the grading process in Elementary is holistic and very different than in secondary classes. The Edsby electronic gradebook offers many alternatives for recording running record scores, participation points, etc. We have worked with Edsby to TURN OFF the averaging feature for Elementary. This means that with the proper settings, parents do NOT see a displayed average of grades. There is also a feature for the teacher to turn off averaging within the gradebook as well.*

*Moving to full implementation of Edsby in the Elementary grades is process that will take time, require training, and opportunities to explore the program. We realize there will be bumps along the way and we are committed to fixing them. Our team works daily with Edsby staff to continuously improve the system. We are here to support all staff during this transition. During the second nine weeks, we will begin providing information to assist teachers in using the electronic gradebook. By the end of the school year, we would hope to see a majority of teachers fully using the program.”*

### Extended School Year and Extended Learning Program Salary

**Q: Why did the ELP and ESY pay get changed to a flat rate and when will it go into effect, if ratified?**

A: Many of you will recall we fought to retain the hourly rate for summer 2014 and we were able to increase the rate to \$27 (as the district offered \$25). We realize this is very disappointing for many of you. We also understand that many of you feel the district is wrong on this and we agree. However, this was a monetary issue for the district because they went to a flat fee for administration several years ago and wanted to maintain the same system for teachers. Please note, we agreed to this for 2015. If schools cannot staff these programs because of the flat rate, we will certainly revisit this subject. If ratified, it will go into effect in January 2015.

## Group Health Insurance Benefits for “Domestic Partner”

**Q: Why does the language in the domestic partner MOU discriminate against heterosexual couples regarding partner benefits?**

A: The proposed language covered all domestic partners, but this language was rejected by the district. Although people have different opinions on marriage, the law does recognize heterosexual unions, while the law is evolving as to same sex unions. We accepted this language as a step in the right direction, and we will continue to press for changes in the future.

## Renaissance Schools and Related Payments

**Q: In the past, the salary differential appears as installments on my paychecks. I will be taking a maternity leave soon. How will this affect my salary differential payments?**

A: Maternity leave should not alter differential pay.

## Seniority / Transfers Due to Unit Loss

**Q: Please explain the changes clearly. If there is a unit loss or transfer, someone can choose to leave, and if no one chooses to leave then the person who is deemed "least effective" based on evaluations is out. Is this to the pool, or are they done and out of a job?**

A: As you will see in the MOU, the parties tried to preserve the spirit of our long time language as much as possible, while still abiding by the legal requirement that seniority not be the determining factor. To this end, in the event of a unit loss, affected teachers will have the option first to volunteer for the pool. Second, if no volunteers are secured, the individual with no score will go to the pool. Last, if neither option 1 or 2 resolve the issue, evaluation scores will be used, with the lowest scoring individual being the person placed in the pool. Please note, because of the size of our district (8th largest in the country), there have historically been a high number of open positions. As such, going to the pool means you will accept another position – it doesn't mean you no longer have a job. It is also important to note that veteran educators who, for instance, take a leave have an evaluation score. If you let with a 79.2, that is your scores of record until it is replaced with another score. Similarly, a teacher who is out of the classroom as a resource person, coach, peer or mentor still has an evaluation score because all employees have an evaluation.

## Teacher Salary Questions

### Increase on the New Scale

**Q: Why was there no increase for teachers on the new scale and no salary differential (bonus) for those at the top of the scale?**

A: The “new” schedule (E/G) resulted in significant raises for teachers approximately six months ago. Moreover, all eligible teachers will move one year on the scale, with approximately 1/3 receiving a \$4,000 raise. Given this situation, money was not added to this scale this year. Going forward, we expect that money, such as cost of living increases will be added at each level.

## Opt-In for the New Scale

### **Q: How do I opt-in to the new scale?**

A: Every teacher who is eligible to opt-in to the new scale will receive an email from GreatTeachers with an opt-in form attached. If you have not yet received your form, please send an email to [greatteachers@sdhc.k12.fl.us](mailto:greatteachers@sdhc.k12.fl.us). We cannot provide you with a copy of the form because each one has a barcode that is specific to the employee.

### **Q: If I opt-in this year, am I going to scale E/G or P/Q?**

A: Current teachers will continue to opt-in to the E/G.

### **Q: I'm on the old scale. If I don't opt-in this year, what happens if I choose to opt-in next year (2015)? Will I be able to choose the E/G scale or will I have to go to the P/Q scale?**

A: You will opt-in to the E/G scale. No current teacher will ever be required to opt-in to the P/Q scale.

### **Q: Can people opt into the new salary scale at any time?**

A: No. There is an opt-in window each year. Teachers who are eligible to opt-in will receive an email from GreatTeachers with the opt-in information attached. The opt-in window this year is from October 6 through October 24. If a teacher believes he/she is eligible to opt-in and they did not receive the email with the opt-in form, they should send an email to [GreatTeachers@sdhc.k12.fl.us](mailto:GreatTeachers@sdhc.k12.fl.us) and request that they re-send the email.

## Performance Pay Salary Differential

### **Q: Is there a salary differential for highly qualified level 4 or 5 teachers?**

A: Yes. The see #5 in the document on our web site entitled "MOU – Salary and Benefits (Teacher & ESP)". It states, "Instructional performance pay earned during the 2014-2015 school year, which will be paid on or after October 15, 2015, will be: Level 4--\$1900; Level 5--\$2900."

### **Q: Will the salary differential be paid out in a lump sum or in installments?**

A: It will be paid in installments over the remainder of the school year.

### **Q: Why did the bonus for level 4 and 5 decrease by \$100 from what was originally agreed upon, and peers and mentors got a \$750 increase?**

A: Performance pay for teachers that will be paid soon, for the 2013-2014 school year, remains at \$2,000 and \$3,000. Opening the bonus to all level 4 and 5 teachers has increased the number of people receiving performance pay by approximately 2,000 people. We agree that changing the number is a bad move and we argued as such. The district originally wanted to decrease each level by much more and we fought against that to end up with \$100 decreases.

It is important to remember that the union fought for most of the money on the new scale to be in the base salary for this very reason – performance dollars are subject to change. The union and the

district have committed that there is no cap on excellence. We think this is right because all highly effective teachers deserve to be recognized. But the financial reality is that paying more people does cost more.

## ESP Salary Questions

### Changes to the Salary Schedule

**Q: Please explain how the ESP Salary Schedule is changing.**

A: All ESPs, regardless of hire date, will move up four steps. This means that there will no longer be any employees on the current Steps 1 through 4. Assuming the changes are ratified, effective immediately, those four steps (1-4) for each Pay Grade will be eliminated. The pay steps will then be re-numbered, starting with 1 and going up to 28.

### Calculating My New Hourly Rate &

**Q: On the modified attached pay scale, if an Aide is a Pay Grade 14 Step 5, will they stay a Step 5 per the scale or move up to Step 9?**

A: All ESPs will move up 4 steps. For example, an ESP on Grade 14 Step 5 will move to Grade 14 Step 9 (on the current scale). Once the salary schedule is ratified that step will be called Grade 14 Step 5, but the pay rate will have increased. If you locate where you currently are on the scale and move 4 steps to the right and that will be your new hourly rate. To calculate your total annual salary, multiply that hourly rate times the number of days you work and then multiply by the number of hours per day that you work.

**Q: What happens to the people at the top of the ESP scale? They can't move 4 steps.**

A: Here's how it will work for ESPs at or near the top of the scale:

- If they're on 29, they'll move to 32 and get a 2% salary adjustment (bonus).
- If they're on 30, they'll move to 32 and get a 4% salary adjustment (bonus).
- If they're on 31, they'll move to 32 and get a 6% salary adjustment (bonus).
- If they're on 32, they'll stay on 32 and get an 8% salary adjustment (bonus).

The salary adjustment (bonus) will be paid in two installments; one in November and one in March.

**Q: How do I calculate how much the bonus will be, if I'm at the top of the scale?**

A: If you are on Step 29 or above on any grade (14, 15, 16, etc.), look at the hourly rate for Step 32. You will also need to know how many days you work per year and how many hours per day.

Here's how to calculate it:

- 1) Multiply the number of days you work by the number of hours per day. This will give you the total number of hours you work per year.
- 2) Multiple your total number of hours by the hourly rate on Step 32 for your grade (14, 15, 16, etc.).
- 3) Multiply the result by the applicable percentage (2% if you are moving from 29 to 32; 4% if you are moving from 30 to 32; 6% if you are moving from 31 to 32; and 8% if you are already on 32).

4) Divide the result by two to see the approximate amount you will receive in November and March.

Here's an example, assuming the following: the individual is currently on Grade 14, Step 30 and will move to Grade 14, Step 32 (hourly rate = \$15.55) and receive a 4% salary adjustment, and the individual works 7.5 hours per day, 196 days per year.

1)  $196 \times 7.5 = 1,470$  hours per year.

2)  $1,470 \times \$15.55 = \$22,785$ .

3)  $\$22,785 \times 4\% = \$911.40$

4)  $\$911.40$  divided by 2 =  $\$455.70$

Based on this example, the individual would receive approximately \$455.70 (minus applicable taxes) in November 2014 and the same amount in March 2015.