

Good morning, TOTEM,

I have been in discussions with the district over the last several months regarding the need for recognition of our employees & the request for this to occur prior to going into contract negotiations later this year. I am appreciative that the District and School Board were willing to have conversation and for TOTEM to be given due consideration, as there is no obligation outside of negotiations for this to happen.

I am pleased to announce that yesterday I signed (4) Letters of Agreement (LOA) and the following is a brief overview of those agreements.

BONUS

To retain & recognize our current employees, while also working to hire new employees into the 180 open positions within our bargaining unit, the district will pay employees a \$2,000 bonus (prorated by FTE) for the 2023/2024 school year. The bonus will be paid in two parts. The first with the last pay period in December 2023, and the second payment with the regular final pay period in May. You must be in paid status for at least half of that semester's workdays to receive the bonus.

DIFFERENTIAL PAY

To recognize the difficulty in retaining and recruiting employees in our higher needs classrooms, the pay differential for those working in Behavior Support positions will go from \$2.00 to \$4.00 per hour additional; and for those in Special Programs positions will go from \$1.00 to \$2.00 additional. These differentials are for a maximum of (8) hours per day and only for hours working with students. It is also for this school year only.

HEALTH BENEFITS

The District's monthly contribution for health benefits per eligible employee per month will increase from \$1,695 to \$1,850. This will have no impact on the amount you contribute monthly to your health benefits. This is to bring the amount contributed by the district up to the level received by other bargaining units within the district.

CLASSROOM COVERAGE

This is an extension of the previous several years' LOA that lays out the requirements for the additional \$10 per hour when staff covers for absent/vacant certificated staff positions. This is not only to cover classroom teachers but can be applied by office staff who cover for unfilled nurse positions that are also AEA for example.

REFERRAL BONUS

The District will again be offering referral bonuses to employees of \$1,000 this school year. If you refer an applicant, who is then hired into the following positions: bus driver, bus attendant, Special Education paras, or Student Nutrition and they **put your name on the application** you will receive a \$500 bonus when they successfully complete probation, and then an additional \$500 if they remain employed to the end of the school year.

Please reach out with any questions.

*Sandy Thompson Wallace, CAP
President, TOTEM Association of Educational Support Personnel, Inc. 6265*