

## CHITTENDEN EAST SUPERVISORY UNION SCHOOL BOARDS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On May 18, 2009, the CESU Executive Committee and seven local school boards agreed to impose their Negotiating Committee's final bargaining proposal on the Green Mountain-NEA, along with all tentative agreements reached during the bargaining process, as the final terms and conditions of employment for the 2008-2009 contract year. The Vermont Teachers Bargaining law allows a school board to bring bargaining to a close once it has fully met its bargaining obligation with the Union.

After receiving the Factfinder's recommendation, school board and union negotiators met three times to try to reach a settlement. At these meetings, agreement was reached on roughly thirty of the Factfinder's recommendations. However, when the parties met again on May 6<sup>th</sup>, they were not able to reach an agreement on all remaining issues.

The new contract will alter three areas:

The first of these has to do with the Board's proposal regarding the teacher work day definition. This includes the use of teacher "flex-time", attendance at required activities, and the use of personal days. The Boards want to give the administration greater flexibility to manage the work schedules of teachers so they can better meet the needs of our students.

The second area of change is the health insurance package. The Boards will add another optional health insurance plan. This plan has lower premium costs, but higher deductible amounts. Under this plan, the Districts will reimburse teachers for the higher deductible costs. Teachers will continue paying 12% of their premium costs, but these premium costs are 20% lower than the current plan. Teachers may still choose to keep the current insurance plan. Because the current plan has significantly higher premium costs than the new plan, teachers will be required to contribute 15% toward the premium costs of this plan, rather than the 12% they currently pay.

The Board will delay the increase in teacher insurance contributions until June 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. On a full-year basis, this increase will cost teachers between \$190 and \$500, depending on whether they have single or family coverage. If teachers switch to the new plan, their premium costs will decrease by between \$150 and \$400, again, depending on whether they have single or family coverage.

The third area is the amount of teacher salary increases. The Board offered a 3.75% total increase which will provide an average increase of \$1,950 to teachers for the current school year. The Board feels that this increase is generous given the difficult economic conditions facing our taxpayers. The Board has agreed to implement the revised salary schedule as proposed by the Union.

Insofar as the imposed contract will expire on June 30, 2009, the Board is preparing to invite the NEA to resume negotiations on a new collective agreement some time during the upcoming summer months.