



Osceola County Education Association Press Release

The OCEA Instructional Bargaining Team and the SDOC Bargaining Team met on April 13, 2023 to continue negotiations for the Cost of Living Adjustment and additional proposals. OCEA believes these initiatives are essential to improving the lives of our Osceola County educators. We continued to advocate for our Cost-of-Living adjustment of 6.5% in addition to a \$2,000 supplement.

The district has agreed to pay all instructional employees the \$2,000 supplement in the May 15 paycheck AND to continue to negotiate the COLA increase!

We are pleased with this result as it will allow our employees to have immediate access to funds **and** will guarantee that we will see a COLA increase for next year's salary!

While we wanted to receive the recurring COLA increase this year, we understand that such a long-term budget investment will require a longer conversation and consideration of the changes the Florida State Legislature is making to available funds. Therefore, we view the \$2,000 supplement and continued COLA negotiations as the best possible way to allow our members access to immediate short-term relief, as well as access to the maximum amount of funding available for a long-term increase. Furthermore, we are hopeful that our members' tremendous turnout at school board meetings and letter writing campaigns will encourage a realignment of next year's budget priorities which will allow for further salary increases.

In addition to COLA, OCEA proposed the following improvements to working conditions and compensation:

1. Compliance with the state statute mandating additional payment for critical needs teachers and teachers at Title I schools.
2. 3-5 additional days off for bereavement leave for the death of immediate family members.
3. Additional protected planning time for teachers during testing season.
4. Additional payment for Counselors, Social Workers, ESE/ESOL Resource Compliance Specialists and Media Specialists to cover extra work days at the beginning and end of the year to complete their compliance responsibilities.
5. Paycheck protection to guarantee 24-paycheck employees will receive their summer checks on the last day of school.

SDOC reacted favorably to these requests and we are hopeful that action can be taken in our next bargaining session on May 11th! We encourage all instructional personnel to attend this meeting as your presence will strengthen our continued commitment to COLA and all other negotiations!