

6. How does the Board prepare for negotiations? What steps do they take in order to begin negotiations?

- The Board spends in excess of 60 hours to prepare for the collective bargaining process.
- Preparation for negotiations begins in the fall before the contract expires.
- Board President assigns a negotiations committee at the re-organization meeting held during the first week of January.

Step 1 - Obtain Labor Counsel

- Identifies Labor Counsel Candidates
- Negotiations Committee Interviews Candidates
- Negotiation Committee Recommends Its Choice for Labor Counsel to the Full Board
- Board Votes to Approve or Not Approve the Candidate

Step 2 – Review Current Contract

- Negotiations committee identifies contract articles that need to be updated as a result of new laws, mandates or processes that would positively or negatively impact classroom education.

Step 3 – Review Current Contract with District Administration

- Review contract with superintendent to make sure it complies with policies, procedures, operations, educational programs and processes, professional development days required, and length of school day, week and year.
- The superintendent ensures that the contract maximizes the level of education that is delivered in the classroom.

Step 4 – Conduct Secondary Research

- Negotiations committee conducts a detail review, compares and documents contracts from “like-districts” & districts in Hunterdon County (Same Enrollment Size, K-8, District Factor I Group).
- Below are some examples of important items the committee factors into their review:

■ Salary Percentage Increases	■ Additional Instructional Time	■ Higher Co-Pays
■ Benefit Packages & Increases	■ Increase in Length of School Day	■ Increase in Deductibles
■ Professional Development Days	■ Additional Parent Conference Days	■ Sick Bank

	(conducted during the day or in the evening)	
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Step 5 – Identify the Current Structural Costs of the Existing Contract

- The negotiations committee identifies the structural costs of the current contracts related to:
 - Healthcare Benefits
 - Sick Bank
 - Increment Cost
 - Total Salary Cost

Step 6 – Meet with Board-Approved Experts

- Members of the negotiations committee consult with Board consultants, including:
 - New Jersey School Boards Association Consultant - Contract Review
To identify opportunities to improve the terms of the contract for both the staff and the District.
 - New Jersey School Boards Association Consultant – Salary Guide Review
 - Reviews the current salary guide to gain a full understanding of its current and future impact on the District and its members.
 - Insurance Consultant from Brown & Brown
 - Provides the District with information on current and future trends with healthcare benefits, new healthcare related laws, trends in benefit costs, and cost containment advice.

Step 7 – Develop Proposals

- The committee develops parameters and guidelines to assist in getting to a mutually-beneficial contract settlement. These parameters are put into proposal form.

Step 8 – Negotiations Committee Reviews Data with Full Board and Makes a Recommendation

- The committee reviews the proposals and supportive data with the full Board in Executive Session, and makes recommendations for negotiation parameters and guidelines to be conducted with the union.
- The committee must follow the guidelines that the full Board provides.

Step 9 – Discussions Occur in Executive Session and Board Provides Guidelines to the Negotiations Committee

- The committee updates the Board during every executive session that takes place while negotiations occur.

Step 10 – Committee Provides the Status of Negotiations on a Constant Basis

