



a world of possibility

4640 S. 144th St. Tukwila, WA 98168 | (206) 901-8000 | tukwilaschools.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 12, 2017

CONTACT:

T.C. Wallace

Interim Executive Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations

(206) 901-8000

PUBLIC WELCOME TO VIEW TUKWILA SCHOOL DISTRICT COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

(Tukwila, WA) --- The Tukwila School District Board of Directors has adopted a new policy to conduct future labor-management contract negotiations in meetings open to the public.

The policy was approved by the Board at its meeting July 11, 2017. In discussing the resolution, the Board agreed the purpose of the new policy is to provide the community with more transparency and enhance public understanding of District operations and budget process.

By opening the collective bargaining process to public view, the District will provide an incentive for both parties (management and labor) to take timely, reasonable, publicly defensible positions that allow the community to better understand the budget and other implications of collective bargaining contracts.

The District's policy direction is a result of careful discussion of ways to improve the collective bargaining process to ensure accountability to the taxpayers of the Tukwila School District. With declining enrollment and subsequent budget constraints and uncertainty surrounding the Legislature's budget adoption, the District believes public scrutiny of labor negotiations will help both management and labor present fair, reasonable and economically viable options for negotiation.

A more open process will facilitate communication of topics and issues within the District, and with taxpayers to ensure their elected school directors are accountable for how the District spends its budget.

The new policy would apply only to collective bargaining agreement not currently open for negotiation and not to other employee-related discussions such as grievance meetings. The collective bargaining itself will continue to follow state law mandating good faith bargaining and be conducted by District and union representatives without public input. However, those direct negotiations will now be available for viewing by the public.

The School Board approved the resolution in advance of future collective bargaining negotiations and to provide enough time for the District, its employees and the community to better understand the implications of the 2017-19 Washington State Budget. The new state budget contains changes to how school districts finance and deliver public education (including teacher compensation) to meet the State Supreme Court mandated compliance with its *McCleary* decision to fully fund public schools.

Tukwila is one of the first western Washington school districts to make their collective bargaining negotiations transparent and open to the public.

There are five collective bargaining contracts between the District and employee organizations. These agreements are between the District and the Tukwila Education Association; the Tukwila Education Association Athletics and Activities Association; the Tukwila Classified Education Association; the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 925 (Custodian, Maintenance, Food Service and Transportation); and the Tukwila Principals Association.

About 2800 students are enrolled in five schools located within the Tukwila School District in southwest King County. The average student-teacher ratio is 1:25. Students represent many cultures and ethnic groups and speak more than 80 world languages. About 40 percent of students qualify for English Language Learner services. About 80 percent of students are eligible for free/reduced school meals. A staff of about 400 serve our students.