



Established 1959

PACE

March 17, 2022



A Publication of Canton Professional Educators' Association

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MISSION STATEMENT: *The Canton Professional Educators' Association initiates and supports positive changes in the public school system, promotes the educational profession, and actively serves as an advocate for its members.*

COMMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT, [PAUL PALOMBA](#)

ONCE UPON A TIME . . . THE TALE OF THREE NEGOTIATING TEAMS

TBT – Utter these three letters in the Canton City School District, and it can literally cause trauma to anyone who has 10 – 11 years of service. After the initial TBT implementation, **we had to endure over 500 daily TBTs, equating to 20,000 minutes or roughly 333 hours, almost two solid weeks of life.** But it wasn't just that! Trapped within the deep, dark confines of TBT, we were forced into rooms to fill out compliance forms. With principals unable to escape the paralyzing grip of an iron fist Central Administration, we reached our lowest point of teacher morale and unacceptable working conditions. Upper Administration ruled via a chain of command that essentially became a chain of fear, placing teachers at the bottom. Even worse, principals were given a gag order; they were forbidden to even speak to Lynne and I. Our Association was being disrespected and discarded. But little did this Administration know, they were about to meet Negotiating Team I.

NEGOTIATING TEAM #1

The time was 2015, and this team knew, accepted, and could foresee that we would be in for a 10-month battle with the Allison Administration. We knew that we would have to make ultimate sacrifices and put our families on hold. We would go on to accumulate more than 400 volunteer hours to protect the life-long commitment our members made to Canton City Schools.

Our energy and passion would not be extinguished, and we were fueled by a powerful, engaged membership that carried this Negotiating Team throughout the arduous journey. 400-plus members engulfed the 1st and 2nd floors of the Timken Commons in a sea of black to support me while I gave a speech to address the Board and celebrate our greatest asset – teachers. We continued to pack auditoriums with 300 to 400 members, took over school Board meetings, and spread our message throughout the community. We followed our gut because no one could have felt or understood our plight. We knew our community. We knew our members, and we knew we would prevail and tear down Administration's stone wall.

We did prevail! We avoided a strike and we stopped TBTs; **we cut them in half and nearly doubled our personal planning to 260 minutes a week! For icing on the cake, we also received raises of 2.35 and 2.25 percent, the highest raises up to that point in over 13 years, and we also doubled the longevity increments and added steps in the salary schedule.**

If you see **Randy Bifulchi** (McKinley), **Lynne Watson** (CPEA), **Jen Schott** (Worley), **Kathryn Lacefield** (Youtz) and **Darren Furno** (Lehman) roaming the halls, please thank them for turning the ship around and being one of the most influential negotiating teams in recent memory. Finally, Dennis Stroud, Rosalind Henderson, and Patt Tercek were also a part of this team, but have since retired.

TEAM #2

Our next go round of negotiating with the Allison Administration produced a timely, quick and respectful negotiations process. It was abundantly clear that the Board knew that we were an Association to be reckoned with and respect was promptly granted. Sometimes a dog only needs to bite once, and it's always in the back of everyone's mind. This team continued to protect planning time and the frequency of TBT when Administration submitted proposals to get daily TBTs back. We held firm, and no changes occurred. In addition, we received raises of **2.5%, 2.5%, and 2.5%, plus a 1% lump sum** on top of the percentage increases. The combination of these teams had now strung together five consecutive years of raises at **2.35%, 2.75%, 2.5%, 2.5%, 2.5%, plus the stipends**. Again, the most lucrative financial movement in decades. Again, remember to thank: **Randy Bifulchi** (McKinley), **Jennifer Schott** (Worley), **Darren Furno** (Lehman), **Kathryn (Wengerd) Lacefield** (Youtz) and **Lynne Watson** (CPEA).

TEAM #3

This team had the first go-round of negotiating with a new Administration and Jeff Talbert. It was a pleasure and an honor to negotiate with Mr. Talbert. He was responsive, honorable, and appreciated the unique needs of our District, and after several negotiating sessions, understood why we brought a request for even more planning time, and an even firmer request for compensation. We stood firm in explaining that we have the most challenging job in the county, and we should be compensated as such. This team delivered. We are now the district with the highest amount of personal and co-planning time in the county, and we will become the highest paid district in the county as well. This team was able to further increase planning from **240 minutes to 320**, and we received raises of **2.75%, 3%, and 3%, plus a .5% stipend**. Again, remember to thank: **Randy Bifulchi** (McKinley), **Jen Schott** (Worley), **Lynne Watson** (CPEA), **Amy Kiss** (Arts Academy), **Darren Furno** (Lehman), and **Karen Brank** (Belle Stone).

IN SHORT . . .

It has been an honor to have had the opportunity to lead and help assemble these three outstanding negotiating teams that have created a more conducive, professional work environment. The following charts simply illustrate these points. Clearly, we are trending in the right direction and have had economic growth that is unparalleled.

Raises Prior to the Creation of the "Three Negotiating Teams"				Raises with the "Three Negotiating Teams"	
2003 - 04	0%	2010 - 11	1.95%	2016 - 17	2.35%
2004 - 05	2%	2011 - 12	0%	2017 - 18	2.25%
2005 - 06	2%	2012 - 13	0%	2018 - 19	2.5% + 1% lump sum
2006 - 07	2%	2013 - 14	1.95%	2019 - 20	2.5% + 1% lump sum
2007 - 08	0%	2014 - 15	1.75%	2020 - 21	2.5% + 1% lump sum
2008 - 09	1.5%	2015 - 16	1.55%	2021 - 22	2.75% + .5% lump sum
2009 - 10	1.75%			2022 - 23	3%
				2023 - 24	3%

Teacher Planning Time Prior to the "Three Negotiating Teams" in 2016	Teacher Planning Time with the "Three Negotiating Teams"
150 minutes	320 minutes

Our Financial Rank in the County in 2016	Our Financial Rank in the County after the "Three Negotiating Teams"
7th	1st