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MEDIA RELEASE

Fresno Teachers Association Disregarding Interest-Based Bargaining

On January 13, Fresno Unified and Fresno Teachers Association (FTA) shared in a joint statement agreement to participate in Interest Based Bargaining (IBB). On February 6, both parties further reiterated that commitment in another joint statement as the teams entered IBB training. IBB is a negotiations strategy where the parties work collaboratively to develop solutions to identified interests rather than exchange individually formulated proposals based on each respective party’s position.

While Fresno Unified has continued to follow the principles and practices of IBB, it is becoming increasingly clear through several actions that FTA continues to use traditional bargaining tactics.

For example, FTA shared an almost 30-page document with specific proposed language, rather than high-level interests, which more closely resembles positional bargaining. Bringing these individually formulated proposals, instead of interests, stunts the ability to brainstorm and collaborate on shared solutions, as is expected in IBB. Even after receiving IBB training, FTA themselves, continually references back to their proposals, not interests, and pressures Fresno Unified to provide a full response to those proposals, as would happen in positional bargaining. In commitment to IBB, Fresno Unified has not done so and FTA has used that to claim that Fresno Unified is “unprepared” during livestreamed bargaining sessions.

Successful IBB depends on developing a positive, ongoing relationship between the parties and FTA has continued to disregard the foundations of IBB, including the importance of collaborative, empathetic, and effective communication. These actions are evidence that FTA’s words of commitment to IBB are not matching their actions.

Most recently, Fresno Unified has received information that leads one to believe FTA plans to take a Strike Authorization Vote amongst their membership on Tuesday, April 25. While a Strike Authorization Vote is not actionable at this time, as we are in a closed contract with FTA through June 30, 2023, this vote would show us that FTA has no intention of continuing with a collaborative IBB process.

Fresno Unified continues to be committed to collaborative interest-based bargaining with FTA and hopes to see FTA’s actions support their words of commitment to IBB moving forward.

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