

Greetings, FASSE Members.

I am pleased to announce that your FASSE Negotiations Team has reached a tentative agreement on salary and language openers for this year. Please take a moment to read this email; it is lengthy, but important.

First, I want to thank your FASSE Negotiations team: Lois Strickland, Randy Kelly, Kelly Esslinger, Kristin Airey, and Karren Sowell for all their time and efforts in this important endeavor.

The budget process began with 2% being proposed in the salary resource pool. After over 170 FASSE members, FCTA members, and FCASA members turned out to the Board of Education Budget hearing at Tuscarora High School, Board Vice President Dean Rose made a motion to increase the amount to the salary resource pool, because he and other Board members were moved by the stories of life in the trenches of FCPS, by employees who give their all to the students and to their profession. The County Council underfunded their portion of the Board's budget by around \$20 million and left the Board of Education with some decisions to make. Fast forward to the time of this communication: the Board of Education still must decrease their budget by around \$2.5 million.

As FASSE members, you indicated in last year's bargaining survey that salary (specifically steps), safety and health, and longevity were the top priorities. Therefore, your FASSE bargaining team began negotiations proposing robust safety language, pensionable longevity stipends, and a salary increase of around 6% (including 2 steps). For reference, a step is worth about 2.5%, and the Board had 2% in the salary resource pool. To make longevity stipends pensionable, it would cost another \$600,000 yearly. In terms of insurance, we are self-insured, so the cost goes up as employees use it.

After months of negotiations, the basics of our tentative agreement is as follows and the exact language is attached in PDF. At the bottom of this email is information regarding the ratification process.

**Salary:**

-2% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). No Step. (Scales attached. To find your step, go to your PeopleSoft [Employee Self Service Assignment Information](#) or reach out to a Bargaining Team member)

**Health Insurance** (Self-Insured Health Insurance Plan):

-4.5% increase to monthly premium cost

**Language:**

-Safety and Health- Substantial improvements in reporting and accountability, and an expansion of our Safety and Health language.

- Voluntary Transfers- Language to guarantee interviews to current employees seeking a lateral transfer, and improve internal transfer process.
- Sick Leave- Codifying existing practice of the employer being able to request a doctor's note after 4 consecutive days of absence.
- Family Crisis Leave Language- Editorial changes to ensure consistency of the shared process in all 3 unit negotiated agreements.
- Duration Language- Editorial changes with the intent of allowing more time for negotiations (the budget calendar is always a challenge).
- Longevity- No change in current language. *\*The team rolled the dice in asking for a large salary and using a language item on something that had a cost. We knew the possibility of there not being enough money in the budget, but we also know that members expect their team to fight, and to aim for the stars, because you deserve nothing less. There simply was not enough money for this proposal, and so, current language stands. And remember, "No does not mean never."*

## Ratification Process

The ratification process will begin on Monday, June 2nd. Voting will open at 9am on Monday, June 2nd and close at 5pm on Friday, June 6th. Only FASSE members are eligible to vote on this agreement.

Ratification Informational Meetings will occur as seen below. Your FASSE office is located at 1 Wormans Mill Ct. Suite 15-16 (Next to the Domino's). The zoom link will be sent to you upon submission of the RSVP. <https://forms.gle/bCzZuEG23T895LFT6>

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Note: ALL sessions have an option for you to log on virtually. You need to be prepared to identify yourself on camera and by name to verify your FASSE membership.

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<input type="checkbox"/> Mon, 6/2 @6:30pm - VIRTUAL ONLY	X
<input type="checkbox"/> Tues, 6/3 @12:30pm - HYBRID (in office/online)	X
<input type="checkbox"/> Wed, 6/4 @ 12:30pm - HYBRID (in office/online)	X
<input type="checkbox"/> Wed, 6/4 @5:00pm - HYBRID (in office/online)	X
<input type="checkbox"/> Thurs, 6/5 @12:30pm - HYBRID (in office/online)	X

While FASSE leadership strongly hesitates in using FCPS email systems, we understand that many FASSE members do not have personal email addresses or home computers, or simply do not check their personal email accounts. It is also important to us to achieve participation in elections and contract ratification. While we will send this communication and your ballots to your FCPS emails, we will continue to prioritize the use of personal email addresses to limit reliance on FCPS-managed systems. We highly encourage you to reach out to our Office Secretary, [Thomas Riedo](#), in the FASSE Office if you need to update your personal email address.

Upon successful ratification, the Board of Education will then vote to approve (June 11th), and the new language and salary will go into effect on July 1, 2025. Failure to ratify would result in

the teams returning to the table, a potential change in terms, and potential delay in implementation of language and salary. At the time of this email, the Board of Education is still short around \$2.5 million dollars and returning to the table creates the possibility of losing our 2% salary increase.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to any members of the Bargaining Team.

Finally, we are already preparing for next year when we have a full contract open. While we expect money to be very tight, this is our opportunity to address serious issues in all job titles and classifications. In order to be effective, it is important that we have participation in the negotiations committee from a variety of job titles, classifications, and people. Participation can be as simple as drafting new language proposals or as exciting as meeting FCPS at the bargaining table. If you are interested, please complete this brief survey <https://forms.gle/B16FcnZ72j2qxUXb8> and Carlos will send you the information for our first committee meeting on Wednesday June 4th at 6pm (via Zoom and at FASSE Office).

Thank you again for participating in your Union.

In solidarity,  
Carlos

Carlos Mellott UniServ Director  
Frederick Association of School Support Employees