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District makes final offer to teachers' union regarding instructional time increase

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Brookings, Ore.] – The Brookings Harbor School District (BHSD) 17C Board of Directors concluded expedited bargaining sessions with the Brookings-Harbor Education Association (BHEA) earlier this month, and issued a final offer to the teachers' union to address the addition of time to the school day for students to meet minimum state standards.

The parties met twice on Nov. 11, 2015; and Dec. 10, 2015 during the 90-day bargaining period to discuss the impacts of adding more instructional time to daily schedules at the high school and elementary school last fall. The district and teacher's union exchanged several proposals, but did not reach an agreement.

The last offer made by the school board was rejected by the BHEA bargaining team on Dec. 10, 2015. However, in a sign of good faith for the adjustments made by the teaching staff this year, the school board announced during its Jan. 20, 2016 meeting that it would resubmit its final offer to the teachers' union. The school board's offered terms, include:

- All BHEA-certified members (instructional teaching staff) at the elementary, middle and high school will receive a one-time lump sum payment of \$90.
- Regular route bus drivers that lost 15 minutes of drive time will be held harmless for the 2015-16 school year and will continue to work this 15-minute time period. This means that regular route bus drivers impacted by the Nov. 2, 2015, increase to the instructional time will continue to report at times established at the beginning of the 2015-16 school year.

The current three-year contract between teachers and the district is a collective bargaining agreement that sunsets on June 30, 2017.

The issue: Instructional time

Superintendent Sean Gallagher, who joined the school district on July 1, found after his arrival that the district was in danger of non-compliance with new state minimum standards for instructional time initiated in the previous school year. Worse yet, in a state that already falls below the national average for the amount of time that students are required to be in class each year, Brookings-Harbor also lagged behind most schools in the state.

Immediate changes were needed to bring the schools into compliance with the minimum standards and to provide the best environment for student success. Instructional time minimums are connected to state funding, and non-compliant districts also run the risk of having funds withheld by the state.

According to state standards for 2015-16, districts must schedule a minimum of 900 hours of instruction annually for kindergarten through eighth grade; 990 hours for grades 9-11; and 966 hours for grade 12. For the Brookings-Harbor School District, grades kindergarten through third grade, and high school instructional time were deficient.

After meetings in July and August to explore the issue, Gallagher brought recommendations to the school board in September. The board voted to update class schedules effective Nov. 2, and the Superintendent sent out a communication to parents and the teacher's union in October, announcing specific changes to the daily schedules for Kalmiopsis Elementary School and Brookings-Harbor High School. The changes to the schedule added the needed instructional time for students to meet state minimum, without having to increase the length of contracted time for union members (7.75 hours per day for teachers). The updated schedules did not use or remove any protected staff times such as lesson preparation time, lunch or duty-free recess time.

After the announcement, the local teacher's union (BHEA) requested negotiations to resolve issues related to the change that had modified teacher's work schedules mid-contract

At the elementary school, an additional schedule shift also helped remedy a safety and community concern. Previously, students arrived to a locked school building before 8 a.m. and had to loiter outside waiting to enter classrooms. Since the schedule update to increase instructional time, there is better safety supervision provided school-wide as students arrive on campus. While students get settled prior to the first bell, parents and guardians can better interact with teachers before the start of the school day from 7:45 a.m. to 8 a.m.

Detailed bell schedules are posted on the district website. To receive future updates and new releases, please sign-up for the Brookings Harbor School District's Key Communicators email list at <http://www.brookings.k12.or.us>.

Brookings Harbor School District 17-C: "Every Student Can Succeed."