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NEWS RELEASE

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Historic agreement reached on raises for Alachua County Public School employees

Negotiators for Alachua County Public Schools and the Alachua County Education Association, which represents teachers and education support professionals, have reached agreement on the largest salary package in the district’s history.

The salary package totals more than \$10.5 million, more than double the previous record of \$4.5 million from the 2019-20 fiscal year. ACPS and ACEA signed off on the agreement last night.

“For the past six years the School Board has made increasing salaries a top priority,” said Alex Rella, the district’s Chief of Finance and a member of the district’s negotiating team. “We’ve provided aggressive raises in that time despite financial challenges, and that’s particularly true with this package.”

In addition to the annual, automatic pay bump called a ‘step’ that all employees received at the beginning of the fiscal year, they’ll receive another step increase under the agreement. There will be an additional increase for teachers who are rated as highly-effective or effective. All employees who worked during the first semester of this school year will earn a one-time bonus of \$1250 and will also be eligible for a \$1000 bonus for participating in training on youth mental health and online security.

The package also includes a \$1000 bonus for veteran teachers with at least 10 years of experience. For the second year the state’s educational budget is focusing funding on new teachers.

“While we understand the goal is to bring in more teachers, it does leave behind veteran teachers,” said Rella. “They are absolutely critical to the success of our students and schools, and the Board wanted to make sure they were recognized.”

ACEA will be sending the package out to all employees for a vote over the next few days. It will also be voted on by the School Board at its upcoming business meeting on March 1.

Assuming the package is approved, the district plans to have most of the bonuses in employees’ March 15 paychecks, ahead of Spring Break, which begins March 21.

“We are pleased that we are going to get some ESSER relief funds into the pockets of employees and are honored to be part of this historically large bonus and salary package,” said ACEA president Carmen Ward. “The district made us an offer we couldn’t refuse.”

“I appreciate the great work of everyone involved in the negotiations,” said Superintendent Dr. Carlee Simon. “We were all committed to getting our hardworking employees the significant pay increases they deserved and getting those dollars out to them quickly as possible.”

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