



**PRESS RELEASE
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NASD School Board Approves New 5 Year Teacher Contract

The Norristown Area School District Board of School Directors unanimously approved a new, five-year contract agreement with the Education Association of the Norristown Area (EANA), its teachers association at a Special Meeting on June 18, 2018. The agreement is among the most fiscally conservative in District history.

Turea Hutson, School Board President said "This Board is focused on what is best for our Students. With every decision the Board makes, we want to make sure we do what is in the best interests of our children, while being mindful and respectful of the taxpayers of this community. With this agreement, we have accomplished these goals."

The District will realize significant savings from several key negotiated changes to EANA's wage and benefit package, according to NASD Chief Financial Officer, Anne M. Rohricht. In addition to the introduction of a lower cost quality medical plan and a comprehensive overhaul of the prescription drug package, the District is also able to implement new hiring practices that will limit the base salary costs for newly hired staff. These savings, combined with the limited increases in the salary schedules - .50% in year one, .60% in year two, .85% in year 3, 1.25% in year 4 and 1.50% in the fifth year, will provide both short-term and long-term relief from the financial pressures currently facing the District.

Rising health care costs remain a concern for NASD. As a result, "negotiating a change in both the medical and prescription drug package was a priority for our team", said Attorney Michael Clarke, lead negotiator for NASD, "EANA recognized the challenges of the District and worked with the team to explore health care options that met the needs of their

members while, at the same time, reduced the District's healthcare costs. A new medical plan will be introduced to EANA members when they return for the 2018-19 school year and all EANA members will be migrating to a new custom prescription drug plan at that same time."

The new medical plan, referred to as Open Choice 3, is a new plan recently made available through the Bucks & Montgomery County Schools Healthcare Consortium. This plan, which has increased in-network annual deductibles, is available through Aetna's network of hospitals, doctors, and specialists. Starting on 9-1-18, all of the District's medical plans will be paired with a new prescription drug plan. This plan encourages the use of mail order prescription refills, calls for the implementation of several Dispense-As-Written penalties which are designed to encourage the use of generic prescription drugs, and will require all specialty drug prescriptions to be filled exclusively at CVS/Caremark. EANA members will continue to contribute annually towards the premium costs; with contribution rates increasing each year. Contribution rates will increase to as high as 15% of premium costs in the fifth year of this contract.

A significant change in the new contract is in the area of leave for EANA members. The Contract eliminates Special Leave and gives the District great control over Personal Leave.

"One of the more important changes is in the area of Unpaid Leaves of Absence." said Michael Clarke. "The new language we negotiated gives the District more notice when an EANA member wants to take unpaid leave. It sets a standardized length of time for the minimum amount of leave that can be requested, thus ensuring that the leave is being used for its intended purpose."

"Finally and most importantly," Clarke added, "it gives the District the discretion of where to assign an EANA member who is returning from leave to cause the least amount of disruption for our students."

School Board Vice President and negotiating team member, Matt Rivera, thanked EANA, the District Administration and his fellow negotiating team members for how the negotiations were conducted. "The negotiation process was long and at times difficult, but it was conducted with respect and professionalism." Rivera stated. "Everyone at the bargaining table agreed that keeping what's best for students at the center of our meetings was most important."

Assistant Superintendent Christopher Dormer, who will become the NASD Superintendent on August 1, 2018 added "I am pleased that the Board and EANA were able to reach an agreement at this time. This allows the District, Administrators and teachers to focus on our number one priority of providing the best possible education for our children as we begin the 2018/2019 School Year in September."

The prior contract expired on August 31, 2017. The new contract will expire on August 31, 2022.