

Interest Arbitration, Total Package Final Offer

This is a written follow up to our verbal invitation at our March 13th meeting and our willingness to enter into Interest Arbitration, Total Package Final Offer basis.

PELRA gives the WEA and the District the option of requesting interest arbitration by providing written notice of the request to the other party and the Commissioner of the Bureau of Mediation Services (BMS).

As was explained, this means the arbitrator would select either WEA's final offer or the District's final offer in its entirety. The items to be submitted to arbitration would be subject to mutual agreement between the District and WEA and would not include matters of inherent managerial authority. If we agree to enter into interest arbitration, we would reduce our agreement to writing and submit our agreement to the Commissioner.

We believe that there are a number of benefits to participating in interest arbitration. If we agree to interest arbitration, the process would move quickly. Within 15 days after the BMS certifies the matter for arbitration, both parties would be required to submit their final positions on the items in dispute. Within five working days, the Commissioner would provide a list of seven arbitrators. The parties would then alternately strike names from the list of arbitrators until one arbitrator remains. The matter would then proceed to a hearing. The arbitrator would be required to issue a decision within 30 days from the date that the arbitration proceeding has concluded. In short, we should have a final decision in less than two months.

Another benefit of interest arbitration is that it allows an independent third party to review the relevant information that the parties present, including the District's financial condition, and determine which party's position is appropriate. Both parties would be bound by the arbitrator's decision. This would eliminate any need for further bargaining or mediation during this round and has the potential of improving labor relations.

Please let us know if you have any questions,