

Little Rock Education Association  
Press Release  
11-13-2018

The Little Rock Education Association and Little Rock School District Negotiations Teams reached a Tentative Agreement on the Professional Negotiated Agreement today. The Agreement was signed by Commissioner Key and ratified unanimously by the LREA Membership this evening.

The LREA Negotiations Teams re-entered negotiations with clear goals defined by the LREA Membership. Those goals were to preserve the Professional Negotiated Agreement and to preserve due process for its members. We believe that we accomplished those two goals. We were able to define due process in the absence of Fair Dismissal protections and provide for it through the grievance process. In addition, we are able to continue to serve as the exclusive representative of the LRSD employees and to ensure that the contract continues as long as we are negotiating in good faith with the LRSD. It is important to note that the individual employee contracts guarantee that the Fair Dismissal laws remain in effect, at least contractually, throughout the remainder of this contract year so a waiver would not go into effect until those contracts are complete, which is June 30, 2019.

For clarification, Commissioner Key could have sought a waiver of the Fair Dismissal laws at any time from the State Board. The law that allows waivers does not exempt the district because of the Negotiated Agreement. Commissioner Key made it clear that he would seek the waiver of Fair Dismissal regardless of whether we had an Agreement or not. Only the State Board of Education has the power to deny that request. We hope that they will ask for justification of the need for the waiver and be thorough in their questioning and decision-making. When the time comes, we feel certain that the community members and parents will stand up and speak against the waiver at the State Board meeting. It concerns us greatly that Arkansas laws and Standards for Accreditation that were meant to ensure a quality public education in Arkansas are being so easily waived when they were created to set the standard.

The LREA educators of the LRSD will continue to put our students first and do the work necessary to educate our students. We are professionals. We are reasonable. We expect and deserve to be treated with the respect due our profession. We will not be pushed around. We will continue to stand for every single child in the Little Rock School District and look forward to working with the District to continue to highlight and celebrate the great things that are happening in our schools and in our district. The LREA sincerely appreciates the support shown by our parents and community members throughout these recent events and we look forward to continuing to develop those relationships and protect and serve our children through those partnerships.

Teresa Knapp Gordon  
President  
Little Rock Education Association