



# Indian River County Education Association

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Subject: District Rejects Union's Offer to Freeze Step for 2010-2011**

In recognition of difficult economic times and in a good faith effort to settle the 2009-2010 year contract, the IRCEA offered to forgo any step increases for the 2010-2011 school year. Under the union's proposal, approximately 87% of the District's 1,100 teachers would have waived the 2% step increase for next school year. Approximately 13% of the District's teachers are on the top step of the schedule and are not entitled to any step increases. These teachers have not received a salary increase since 2008. Waiver of the 2010-2011 step would permit sufficient time for the IRCEA to assess the Board's economic standing to determine the feasibility for step in 2011-2012. The Board rejected IRCEA's offer and chose to declare impasse last Friday, February 5, 2010. Teachers eligible for a step increase for the 2009-2010 school year have already been paid step. CWA workers have also received step this year.

Teachers have ten (10) workdays built into each school year calendar. With the demise of the modified instructional week (early release Wednesdays) and no time for professional development, an IRCEA proposal last year, subsequently agreed to by the Board, was for 20% of these workdays to be earmarked for teacher in-service. The Board's proposal this year is to allocate 40% of teacher workdays for mandatory in-service. This would require work normally done on these days to be completed on the teacher's own time, outside of the contractual workday. The IRCEA's proposal caps the use of workdays for staff development at 20% and calls for one modified instructional day each 9-week grading period for Professional Development. Additionally, IRCEA proposed language stating that assigned in-service must pertain to the specific duties of the teacher and/or be directly related to the teacher's Professional Development Plan. This is currently not the case. IRCEA has had numerous complaints from teachers regarding the quality and applicability of assigned staff development. It should be noted that all teachers have the absolute right under current contract language to voluntarily waive a workday to attend staff development needed for recertification, professional growth or other purposes.

For the last several years, one of IRCEA's initial language proposals has been to reduce the official teacher workday from 7.75 hours, imposed by the School Board in 1996, to 7.5 hours. Indian River is one of very few districts in the state with an official workday beyond 7.5 hours. In past years, IRCEA presented average teacher hourly salary rate comparisons with surrounding districts. These comparisons clearly demonstrated Indian River's average hourly rate of teacher pay as significantly below that of surrounding districts, as well as appreciably below the state average. The IRCEA is and has been amenable to signing-off on the 7.5 hour workday language. The Board equates the change in the workday time to a 3.2% pay raise, although teachers would still complete, outside of the workday, the ever increasing workload. IRCEA estimates this increase would place the average hourly rate of pay of Indian River teachers slightly below that of most of the surrounding districts.