Talking points for members when meeting with legislators

Senate bill S-2606, sponsored by Cryan
Assembly bill A-4352, sponsored by Reynolds-Jackson & Schaer

Suggested talking points:

• Take your paycheck and formulate how much you have lost since 2011, share how a raise may be negotiated but the take-home pay is drastically reduced. If possible, project out how much more you will lose over the course of the next few years (talk to NJEA Field Representative).

• Tell your story. Talk about the impact. “This is what has happened to me or my colleague,” for example. Make this as personal as possible: “Because of this bill, I/my family/my kids won’t…”

• Additional impact to the profession is:
  ▪ Good educators are retiring or leaving the profession early.
  ▪ This scares qualified young people from going into the profession.
  ▪ Makes us feel devalued of by the public.
  ▪ There is no end in sight, the gap just keeps getting bigger.
  ▪ This is a policy issue. It was created by bad policy passed in the legislature, and the legislature alone can fix it... Senate and Assembly bills will start that fix.

• Talk about how tying the health care deduction percentage of salary is better than tying it to the ever-increasing health benefit premiums, which is creating a gap between the take-home salary and health care deduction that can never be breached.

• For Democrats—discuss the importance of supporting labor and the middle class. This law attacks working people across the state, particularly school employees.

• The education workforce makes on average nationwide, roughly 11% less than their counterparts in the private sector. If we want to elevate our children, we have to elevate the people who work with them every single day. They deserve fair wages and quality, affordable health care.

• Stick to the talking points you’re comfortable with—don’t debate the technical aspects of the bills.
Senate bill **S-296**, sponsored by Holzapfel
Assembly bills **A-3185**, sponsored by Conaway and **A-3395**, sponsored by McGuckin

*Suggested talking points:*

- S-1191 provides a common sense approach to balancing the needs of employers and employees.
- This legislation does not outright prevent subcontracting or privatization.
- School districts can still choose to privatize a service, but they must follow certain guidelines:
  - The first guideline is that a school district cannot subcontract during an existing collective bargaining agreement. A contract is a contract and should not be broken!
  - If a school district chooses to privatize a service, they must notify the impacted employees in writing at least 90 days in advance of soliciting bids. Employees should be given a reasonable amount of time to prepare for the possibility of termination!
  - A school district must offer to sit down with affected employees and their union representatives to negotiate the impact. Such discussion may lead to alternative solutions or cost savings.
  - Any displaced employee must be given recall rights. Many privatization arrangements do not work out. If this happens, employees should be brought back to continue to provide the service they so ably provided in the past.
- **With this bill, employees will be in a better position to work with their employer to find solutions in tough budget situations.** With advance notice, employees can help identify cost saving measures or alternatives to privatization.

Assembly bills **A-3664**, sponsored by Caputo

*Suggested talking points:*

- This bill provides due process rights to school employees who do not currently have them.
- Under this legislation, all school employees would have the same right to binding arbitration in disciplinary matters.
- In addition to teachers, current law already gives secretaries, some custodians, and attendance officers the right to binding arbitration.
- This leaves out all other school employees, like bus drivers, cafeteria workers, teachers’ aides and many others, who do not have the same basic statutory right to challenge disciplinary actions.
- This bill does not take away a school district’s right to make managerial decisions and apply appropriate disciplinary actions when warranted.
- The provisions under this legislation merely allow school employees an opportunity to argue their side before a neutral third party, if they feel the disciplinary action is unwarranted.
- Employees should have a right to defend themselves against arbitrary, capricious and unfair disciplinary actions.
- This bill puts all school employees, regardless of title, on an even playing field.
- It provides a very basic right to due process that is already enjoyed by certificated staff and nearly all other public employees in the state of New Jersey.
- What is fair and just for certain public school employees should be fair and just for all public school employees.