

I am **not** in support of the 2012-2015 collective bargaining agreement.

I want to make clear my decision regarding this contract is simply a reflection of current economic times, affordability and future sustainability. I respect and appreciate the Bloomingdale staff. I have had children in this district for 16 years, have attended my share of back to school nights, parent teacher conferences and have high regards for our staff. I have based my decision on what I believe is in the best interest of this community, taxpayer and student achievement while seeking fairness and equality for new and existing staff.

During the past two budgets I have expressed to this board that although cost reduction has been implemented through shared services, reduced busing and combined administrative rolls additional expenses need to be addressed within the BEA Union Contract. Specifically the climbing cost of health benefits and our costly percentage based longevity. I was informed these matters would need to be brought to the negotiation table. When the 2011/2012 budget failed I also presented my concerns to the Borough Council. After further cutting the budget I believe their message was made clear that with 53% of taxes funding education and a 2% cap, cost reduction and containment would need to be brought into negotiations. The contract before us tonight will hold this district and tax payers accountable for the next three years. With the public vote on the school budget no longer available, cost containment is the sole responsibility of this Board.

The Butler education association contract was settled last year with percentage increases of 1.9%, 1.6% and 1.5%. They also saw substantial savings by switching to the State health benefit plan. Butler also has a longevity plan since 2008 based on set dollar amounts, unlike ours which still contains grandfathered percentages factored on top of base salaries strongly favoring senior staff.

The collective bargaining agreement before us tonight does not reflect any changes in health benefits or longevity. The health benefit plan in this contract continues to provide costly grandfathered tiers, again favoring senior staff. We are in a struggling economy with ever climbing property taxes. We all see the for sale signs and hear about foreclosures. Many families are struggling to do more with less. I recently read from the NJ School Board Association that "the goal of the Board is to provide an appropriate level of staff compensation within the financial resources available to the community". I do not believe this contract represents an equitable financial balance in light of economic times and this communities financial resources. I respectfully Vote No to this contract proposal.

 Cathy Lumbard 10/23/12