

**KEWANEE COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 229**  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

August 9, 2023

Negotiations between the Kewanee Community Unit School District 229 Board of Education and the Kewanee Education Association (KEA) began on April 28<sup>th</sup>. During the third negotiation meeting, the KEA informed the Board's negotiation team that they would file for mediation services. The KEA also informed their membership of their intent to file. At the next negotiation session (14 days later), the Board requested a copy of the mediation paperwork. The KEA then stated that they did not file for mediation services. The Board continued negotiation sessions with the KEA through June 27<sup>th</sup>. At this meeting, the Board informed the KEA that the Board would file for mediation services.

In order to clarify and correct any misinformation, the Board would note the following facts of the previous two contracts. To address the notion that teachers have not received any increase in salary over the past six years, the Board clarifies that all teachers hired prior to the 2017-18 school year have received 3.3% annually under the previous contract and 4% raises annually under the current contract. This has resulted in a cumulative 24% increase in their salaries. Teachers who earned additional graduate credits also received financial increases.

For the past two contracts, both sides agreed upon a different model of teacher salary increases which enabled the Board to competitively raise the starting teacher salary from \$32,675 in 2016-17 to \$40,515 in 2022-23. This model is similar to other districts in our area. The Board must also comply with Public Act 101-0443 which requires the state minimum teacher salary to increase by an inflationary rate (All Urban Consumer Price Index) set each year by the State legislators. This model has also allowed the Board to end the previous school year with a salary already above the State 2023-24 minimum of \$40,000.

Federal Mediation enabled the Board and the KEA to reach successful agreements in the past two contracts. The Board is confident that, once again, mediation will lead to a financially responsible and sustainable contract.