



## Saugus Teachers Association

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[www.saugusteachers.com](http://www.saugusteachers.com)

### STA FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### 1. What are the goals of our association?

Our goals have always been to provide the best possible salary, working conditions, and benefits for our members, and of course, preserve the jobs of our teachers. We have enjoyed a very collaborative relationship with our district over time, and hope to continue to do so for many years to come.

#### 2. What can we do to help our association meet its goals?

We all need to work together, along with our district administrators, school board members, and community to make the message clear to the public that **CUTS HURT OUR SCHOOLS!** Please stay united as we make our way through these difficult times.

#### 3. What is the process for negotiations?

Each side has to sunshine, or make public what they are going to be negotiating for the contract year before negotiations can take place. Then the bargaining teams meet and discuss proposals.

#### 4. Has either side sunshined proposals for the 2010-2011 school year?

Yes.

#### 5. What kinds of things are negotiable?

Wages, salary schedules, hours, workdays, work year, working conditions, and calendar.

#### 6. Can the association propose budget cuts for the district?

It is not up to the teachers to propose budget cuts. It is the responsibility of the district to bring budget cut proposals to the bargaining table. The teachers association can then decide if they are willing to accept or reject proposals, find alternatives or come to a compromise.

#### 7. Will teachers be given an opportunity to have their voices heard?

Yes! Your suggestions and feedback are always welcome. When necessary, teachers will be surveyed. Informational meetings will be held before the ratification, or approval of a contract. Contracts are approved by a majority vote of teacher members. Feel free to contact us via email as well.

#### 8. What is a step and column freeze?

A step and salary column freeze would not only affect teachers who are moving down a step (which affects approximately 67% of our members) but would also prevent teachers who are receiving their masters degree or doctorate and who are counting on the increase to pay back education loans, from moving over a column. This opportunity that they were counting on could potentially cost them \$10,000 a year! Before anyone else would

get a cost of living increase, the people who lost step and column would need to be paid back for their loss of income. It could take a decade or more in these difficult times for anyone to see a raise.

**9. What are other ways to prevent layoffs?**

New options from the state are providing flexibility in spending that might help. The teachers association is trying to make sure that cuts stay off the backs of teachers. At one recent SUSD Board meeting, early retirement incentives were discussed that might encourage teachers who are near retirement age to retire a little sooner, freeing up positions for those at a lower seniority level. The number of people in shared contracts could be increased. There are many more options not mentioned here.

**10. Why doesn't the association want to list things that they are willing to give up?**

We are a strong union and believe that we have worked hard to get the excellent wages, salary and working conditions that so many of us have enjoyed for our careers. Let's welcome everyone back with the excellent wages, salary and working conditions that we have all enjoyed in the Saugus Union School District, instead of spending years clawing our way back to where we once were.

**11. What are RIF notices or pink slips?**

When districts come under hard financial times they may inform employees of the possibility of layoffs through the issuance of a pink slip, or RIF notice. Notices can be presented to teachers by certified mail, or in person. RIF notices must be received prior to March 15<sup>th</sup>.

**12. Who decides if there are going to be layoff notices issued?**

The decision is up to the SUSD Board of Trustees.

**13. Can they just put a RIF notice in my mailbox?**

No.

**14. Will all teachers who receive RIF notices actually lose their jobs?**

Not necessarily. CTA attorneys tell us that in the most cases, teachers who receive RIF notices are hired back before the start of the next school year.

**15. Can the teachers association negotiate layoff notices or layoffs?**

No. We do not have the authority to do so. We do have the right to negotiate the effects of layoffs.

**16. What will happen after I receive a RIF notice?**

The teacher/member has a right to request a hearing. A RIF packet, with all the necessary information will be given to the RIF'ed Teachers. When will I know if I am going to be rehired? It is hard to say right now. Hopefully, most teachers will know sometime in May.