



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What's at stake?

- a. There are several key union values at stake. Some of the issues on the table that have yet to be resolved include associate and professional staff salary, health insurance costs and retirement benefits. The retirement benefit discussion includes talk about both the IEASO Professional Staff pension and the Association Staff Retirement Plan.

2. Does IEA support pensions?

- a. Yes, IEA supports pensions. In fact at the 2021 IEA Representative Assembly (RA), IEA President Kathi Griffin said she and the entire organization support pensions. When asked by an IEA member, Griffin said, "We are supportive of pensions. That's who we are. We all have a pension. And we are a union, and that's what we support."

3. So why is the IEA going after IEASO pensions?

- a. It's unclear why IEA is going after pensions for IEASO members. We know that a pension is a promise and is also a sign of strong union values. We also know that the IEASO Professional Staff Retirement Pension (PSRP) is performing very well. It is currently estimated to be between 92% and 94% funded.

4. Has IEASO offered to make any concessions during the bargaining process?

- a. Yes, IEASO has offered to make concessions during this current bargaining process.

5. Does IEA have the funds to meet the contract requests of IEASO?

- a. Yes, the IEA is financially sound. Thanks in part to concessions IEASO members have made over the years including: adding more steps to our salary schedule, taking little to no wage increases over the last decade (1% - 2% annually) and doing more work because of declining staff numbers.

6. How long have IEA and IEASO been bargaining for?

- a. The two sides have been bargaining since November 2020 and had more than a dozen bargaining sessions to date.

7. What is mediation?

- a. Collective bargaining mediation is a voluntary process that happens when a neutral, third party assists the two sides in reaching a new contract. IEASO and IEA are currently in mediation.

8. If IEASO decides to go on strike, what steps does the union need to take?

- a. IEA members are governed by the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act (IELRB) and have different requirements for legally going on strike than IEASO does. That's because IEASO is regulated by the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). Under the NLRA, IEASO can go on strike as soon as the contract expires. Our current contract expires on Sept. 1, 2021.

9. What is NEASO and how is it related to IEASO?

- a. NEASO is the National Education Association Staff Organization and is a sister union to IEASO. NEASO members work in Washington, D.C. for IEA's parent organization the National Education Association (NEA). NEASO members have voted to authorize a strike, but are not currently on strike. You can support NEASO through their website strike.neaso.org.