

Counter Proposal #2 for 2026-2027

To: South O'Brien Community School District

From: South O'Brien Education Association

Date: March 18, 2026

The Association recognizes the district's need to remain within established financial parameters and is willing to defer broader compression adjustments at this time in order to maintain the 2% increase for all certified staff. We would, however, welcome the opportunity to continue addressing professional growth and long-term compensation alignment in future discussions.

As a low-cost and flexible support for staff, the Association proposes the establishment of a professional growth reimbursement opportunity. Under this approach, certified staff may be reimbursed up to \$100 per year for coursework or professional learning completed at an approved institution, with reimbursement provided upon submission of appropriate documentation. The district may establish guidelines regarding eligible institutions, qualifying coursework, and an annual submission deadline. This opportunity can be supported through existing professional development funding.

Ongoing professional learning strengthens instructional quality within the district and supports improved student outcomes, while also fulfilling state licensure requirements for continuing education. Meeting these expectations involves significant out-of-pocket costs for coursework and license renewal. This proposal does not create new pathways for advancement, but instead provides modest support for professional learning that is already expected and occurring through a more highly trained and knowledgeable teaching staff. The \$100 annual limit ensures that any impact remains minimal and controlled, while the district retains full discretion over eligible coursework and institutions.

This approach reinforces the district's commitment to investing in its educators while promoting individual professional growth, supporting continued learning, and maintaining flexibility and cost control.

The Association submits the following counter proposal:

Salary

- Accept 2.0% salary increase on current salary for all certified staff members.

Permissible Topics

- Accept that the district will continue to pay 100% of single, high-deductible health insurance premiums.

Handbook Topics

- Accept that the district will compensate teachers who have any unused personal days (minus one carryover day) at the rate of a substitute's pay.
- Request implementing a \$100 annual professional growth reimbursement for certified staff, supported by existing professional development funds, including available fund balance, and administered under district-established guidelines. This request would require a maximum annual expenditure of \$5,000 from Professional Development categorical funding.
- All other agreed upon conditions of contracts, plus non-negotiated articles and terms and conditions of employment shall continue as contained in the 2025-2026 Certified Staff Handbook, unless changes are agreed upon by both parties.

Wade Riley
3/20/26

Kim Poole
3/20/26