



*Julia Timson, President  
Kim Wattenbarger, Vice-President  
Lee Houston, Secretary  
Velma Buck, Treasurer  
Robin Inman, Membership*

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Cumberland County Education Association  
FROM: Julia Timson, President  
DATE: Wednesday, July 25, 2018  
RE: Urgent update on collaborative conferencing

As you know, your Cumberland County Education Association (CCEA) has been engaged for more than a year with representatives of the board's management team in an effort to reach an agreement known as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). An MOU, for those not familiar, is an agreement between professional employees (teachers) and their managers (district administrators) pursuant to the Professional Educators Collaborative Conferencing Act (PECCA) governing terms and conditions of employment not otherwise expressly provided for in state law, including salaries, insurance, and employee grievances amongst other topics.

Persistently now for months management has refused to meaningfully engage in good faith despite CCEA's continued efforts to do so. In late June this failure seemed to culminate in the board's unilateral adoption of an insurance provision affecting all district employees, including those represented by CCEA in conferencing. If implemented, the board's provision would unfairly increase insurance premiums for those with family coverage by more than **25 percent**. For teachers covering a non-employee spouse, they would face a **six-fold increase**, or just over **\$3,400** in additional cost next year. Based on historic participation rates, CCEA believes the board's insurance increase could impact **40 percent of teachers**, and that's simply unacceptable when teachers haven't received more than a pittance of pay increase in years **despite thousands in new education dollars flowing from the state!**

When the teams met recently to resolve minor differences in their understandings regarding the already agreed provisions and to conclude conferencing on remaining topics including insurance, management blindsided CCEA with an ultimatum. At that session management refused to present the soon-to-be complete MOU to the board unless CCEA acquiesced to including the board's outrageous insurance increase in the MOU. Feeling coerced and facing the prospect of losing the MOU altogether, reluctantly CCEA tentatively agreed believing in the current climate it would be impossible to secure a more favorable agreement on insurance or anything else. Upon consultation with TEA and further reflection, however, CCEA regrouped and resolved to complete the PECCA process without further coercion.

At this juncture, CCEA does not know if management will return in good faith to conference insurance, compensation, and annual reopeners, but CCEA hopes it will. Until then, CCEA will continue doing everything under the law to ensure your employment rights are protected, and asks that you do the same by attending board meetings, staying current on conferencing, and most importantly, **voting for friends of education in next Thursday's primary election!**