

Dear Members,

Today marks 9 weeks of school and 5 weeks of bargaining a K-1 return to in-person instruction. In [last week's bargaining update](#), we gave a broad overview of negotiations and how our bargaining process works. **This week we want to follow up with how bargaining has been impacted by COVID and how LWEA members engage in our bargaining process.**

COVID Impacts to Bargaining

Our normal bargaining "life cycle" follows a pretty regular pattern. We bargain a CBA (Collective Bargaining Agreement) every 3 or 4 years. We use LOUs (Letters of Understanding) to modify the CBA throughout its duration as needed. We use DLM (district labor management) to find solutions when there's a dispute about if or how CBA/LOU language is being applied.

During COVID, we have been thrown out of our regular bargaining "life cycle." Since March we have signed 17 LOUs to redefine and clarify working conditions. The number and scope of these LOUs reflect the significant changes COVID has wrought on both how we work as educators and how we work with LWSD through bargaining to solve problems effectively and efficiently.

Though the pace and frequency of our bargaining has changed, key elements remain unchanged: our CBA remains in effect until August, 2021; LOUs clarify or change CBA language as necessary; and DLM continues as a forum for solving problems that can't be resolved at the building level. Additionally, LWSD-LWEA remain committed to using an IBB process to bargain.

LWEA Member Engagement in Bargaining

LWEA members participate in our bargaining efforts in different ways. LWEA surveys all members in advance of bargaining. LWEA leadership reaches out to members to seek information and data about their experiences. Members reach out to LWEA leadership with concerns. Some members serve on bargaining teams to negotiate on behalf of LWEA membership.

Members can always contact the LWEA leadership team or building reps with questions or concerns:

Concerns: if you have concerns about *bargained language (CBA or LOU) going forward*, please contact LWEA leadership. We will ensure that our bargaining team receives your concerns and input.

Issues: if you have questions or concerns about *the application of or compliance with current bargained language (CBA or LOU)*, please contact your building reps. Our Trust Agreement places value on relationships and collaborative problem solving at the school level. If your concern is of a personal nature and you prefer confidentiality, contact LWEA leadership directly.

When we bargain, LWEA membership is guided by certain norms:

- *Take the time to understand the "facts" that guide bargaining topics.* In the case of COVID-related bargaining, this includes understanding the guidance of public health authorities and experts regarding the safe return to in-person instruction.
- *Understand the laws that guide bargaining topics.* For COVID-related bargaining, this includes federal, state, county, and city health department mandates.

- *Consider the circumstances, opinions, and needs of all members.* LWEA has about 2,100 members.
- *Endeavor to find the common good* – for members and students – in our decision-making process.
- *Trust our bargaining team members and the IBB process.* Our team prepares by understanding what our membership needs from the bargain and learning about what the bargaining process entails. Trust in our bargaining team means that LWEA members don't lobby bargaining team members.

We would like to thank the members of our bargaining team for their participation. Team members have spent around 8 hours each week, over the last 5 weeks, preparing for or participating in bargaining, in addition to their normal teaching responsibilities. We appreciate their extraordinary commitment to our membership and our students!

In solidarity,

Howard Mawhinney and Katie Badger