

COSTING PROPOSALS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

START EARLY. Verify the cost of the salary schedule and the proper placement of employees on the salary schedule with the district. You may find a discrepancy between the district calculations and your calculations. Do not automatically assume that the district is correct. In some instances we have found that the district has incorrectly placed people on their scattergram. Accurate costing for the current year is necessary to accurately project the cost increase of your proposals.

AGE THE SCHEDULE. Aging the schedule means moving every member down one step or one career increment for the costing of next year's schedule. Horizontal movement from lane to lane on the salary schedule is not normally included in the cost projections for next year.

EXCLUDE SPECIALS FROM THE COSTING. Individuals whose salaries are paid from sources other than the regular program (special education, chapter, tag, at risk) are not usually included on the scattergrams or in the insurance costing. If they are included in your costing, make a separate listing so that the total amount of costs for these employees can be identified.

USE THE ISEA/IASB SETTLEMENT REPORT. Both organizations agreed to use this joint Settlement Report. It is a guide to the items to be included in your cost estimates. The column on current costs should be completed as soon as possible. Phase I and II dollars which are paid to teachers are included on this report. Be certain that you include these salaries in your calculations.

ASSUME A LOW INSURANCE RATE INCREASE. You and the district will need to estimate a percent of increase in insurance rates for next year. If the district insists upon too high an estimate, you may agree to disagree. Near the end of the bargaining calendar the actual rates for the next year will become known at which time you may include them in your cost estimates.

BE ABLE TO COST QUICKLY AND ACCURATELY. This is essential for bargaining effectively. How will you know if you have received an offer worth accepting if you cannot do this? The use of a computer program will help in this regard. If you and the district use the same program, the process will be helped. You will need your computer person at each bargaining session and mediation. If you are not using a computer, it helps to cost several optional counter proposals before bargaining sessions or mediation.

KEEP TRACK OF TURNOVER SAVINGS. Each year projected costs are based on an assumption that every employee will return for the following year. This seldom actually happens. Maintaining copies of your Settlement Reports will enable you to compare the projected and actual costs for the year. Usually the actual costs will be lower unless your district is growing and adding staff. If your actual costs show a "turnover savings," you can argue that this money will help fund your proposals for the next year.

KEEP TRACK OF RETIREMENTS. Toward the end of the bargaining calendar, you may have people who have resigned or retired. Often this known turnover savings can be used to attain a settlement with your district or to convince an arbitrator that your district can use this money to fund your salary proposal.