Another bargaining session was held today between the Polk Education Association and Polk County Public Schools district staff.

The session included a review of previous tentative agreements on both Para and ESP salary schedules and contract language. The tentatively agreed to permanent update to the Para sub pay is one major win for district employees who are consistently being asked to perform duties outside of their job description.

One point of contention was PEA’s proposal to move current Para network managers to the teacher network manager salary schedule as they perform the same duties on the job, lacking only a teaching certificate. “Our schools CANNOT function without our network managers,” says Stephanie Yocum, PEA president, who wants the district the acknowledge how important our IT staff are to the daily function of PCPS, many of whom do hold advanced degrees. Dr. Berrios, Associate Superintendent of IT, who did not attend today’s meeting. However, Teddra Porteous, Associate Superintendent of Human Resources for the district, relayed the opinion of Dr. Berrios, calling the PEA proposal of $45,172 “too rich,” despite many professionals around the county making this amount and more in private and public sector IT jobs.

Ms. Yocum went on to state, “It seems the district undervalues the role our IT professionals play, especially in this time of COVID, and the vital role technology plays in the education of our students. Schools come to a standstill when there is no internet and no technology.”

Another date has been set to review and hopefully wrap up the Para/ESP books for August 25th and will again be virtual through Teams and livestreamed through PEA’s YouTube channel at: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGE9V6YPsnGFrm-2ajwxrw

The Polk Education Association is the union representing teachers, paraeducators, and secretary-clerical personnel who work for Polk County Public Schools. Connect with PEA on Facebook and YouTube.