



## **Frequently Asked Questions Regarding a Potential Teacher Strike**

### **1) Q. Will schools be closed in the event of a strike?**

A. No. Fresno Unified will keep schools open, safe and functional in the event of a work stoppage.



### **2) Q. Now that FTA has voted to strike, when would a strike likely occur?** (Updated 10-11-17)

A. Unknown. A strike would occur after the completion of fact-finding negotiations. Dates for fact-finding are scheduled for November 6 and 7. After fact-finding, if FTA decides to strike, they are required to give reasonable notice to the District as to the date of their strike. Employees, parents and the community will then be notified.

### **3) Q. How can the District afford to pay substitutes \$500 a day during a strike?**

A. A teacher's average salary per day is over \$400. On days that teachers strike, they are not paid and cannot take paid leave. Contributions to their STRS retirement is reduced for each day they strike. This offsets the District's special rate of pay for substitutes in the event of a strike.



### **4) Q. If a teacher strike occurs, can parents still drop off their child at extended care before and after regular school hours?** (Updated 10-11-17)

A. Yes. Green Shack, ASES and paid extended day childcare programs will continue as planned. In the event of a work stoppage and for the safety of our campus, the district anticipates all other school activities, including athletics, clubs, tutoring, arts, and civic events, will be suspended.

### **5) Q. If FTA votes to strike, is every FTA member required to strike?**

A. No. Being a member of FTA does not require a teacher, nurse or speech language pathologist to strike. It is up to each individual if he/she chooses to join the strike.

**6) Q. If a teacher chooses to strike, are they paid by the district?**

A. No. If an individual chooses to strike, they will not be paid by the district for any day(s) they strike. A strike is a work stoppage and strikers are not paid. Retirement contributions to STRS are reduced for each day teacher strike.

**7) Q. Will FTA pay teachers during a strike?**

A. Unknown. See your union representative for that answer.

**8) Q. For days lost by a strike, won't we just make them up at the end of the school year?**

A. No. Fresno Unified will remain open, safe and functional in the event of a work stoppage so there is no reason to extend the school year or make up lost days.

**9) Q. If a teacher strikes, will they and their family still receive health care benefits?**

A. Yes. While strikers will not receive a salary if they choose to strike, they and their family will not have a gap in medical insurance coverage. However, there is a reduction to the District STRS contribution.

**10) Q. Can teachers use paid time off or sick time to cover missed salary during a strike?**

A. No. The District suspends all paid time off and sick time during a strike. The Superintendent or his designee may make exceptions.



**11) Q. Can employees who are not members of FTA take vacation, sick time or paid time off during a strike and be paid?** (Updated 10-11-17)

A. Yes. Contracts for our non-FTA labor partners clearly state employees cannot legally strike. While entitled to the leave provisions contained in labor contract language, if an employee is sick or has approved scheduled vacation or needs to use personal time, they may do so. However, if an employee is using any leave or vacation time and is physically seen supporting the strike, the employee may be subject to discipline.

**12) Q. Do I still participate in professional learning, conferences, Accountable Communities, and Buy Back Days in the event of a strike?**

A. No. They would all be cancelled.

**13) Q. Can other union partners join FTA in a strike?**

A. No. While unions can show their support in a number of ways, Fresno Unified is still negotiating with a handful of our other labor partners. Other bargaining units cannot legally strike until each one has exhausted the negotiations process, which includes mediation and the fact-finding process.

**14) Q. As a member of FTA, if I do not strike, what happens to me?**

A. If you come to work, the District will continue to pay your regular salary.

**15) Q. If teachers do not strike, can they be reassigned to another school site or classroom to support students in the absence of teachers or a substitute teacher?**

A. If a teacher chooses not to strike and remain on campus to support students, they may be asked to take on additional students or tasks. While it is unlikely but possible, a teacher may be reassigned based on the needs of the District.

**16) Q. As a student teacher, what does a strike mean to me?**

A. Student teachers should contact their college advisors. Questions regarding substitute teaching should be directed to Human Resources.

**17) Q. How long can a strike last?**

A. It's difficult to say, as Fresno Unified hasn't had one since 1978. That strike lasted eight days. Last year, Yuba City experienced a strike lasting seven days.

**18) Q. I'm being told that if I don't keep my child at home or support the strike, I may be deported based on my citizenship status. Is that true?**

A. No, Absolutely not. The district is a safe place for all Fresno Unified students and their families. That does not change in the event of a strike. The District's recent Safe Place Resolutions affirms that. The District will not facilitate or participate in any immigration activities at school sites or district facilities to the fullest extent allowed by law.

**19) Q. If a strike occurs, will community events be impacted?**

A. Yes. In the event of a strike, to ensure safety and security all events in/on district property, outside of regular scheduled school hours, are suspended including community meetings/events, youth athletic tournaments, health center access and Green Space activity.



**20) Q. There is a rumor that students will not receive official credits if teachers strike. They are panicking, especially our seniors. Is this true?** (Added 10-11-17)

A. No. Students who attend school during a strike will receive both academic and attendance credit. While potential finals for our middle and high school students may be delayed slightly, all students will receive semester credit and grades.



**21) Q. I am an hourly employee who is paid through an Extra Services contract. If I don't come to work during a strike I understand I won't be paid, but is that also considered work abandonment?** (Added 10-11-17)

A. Yes. You could be subject to discipline consistent with the District's policies around job abandonment.



**22) Q. Will IEPs have to be rescheduled in the event of a strike?** (Added 10-11-17)

A. Yes. Any scheduled IEPs during days of a strike will need to be rescheduled, as the student's teacher will likely not be present.



**23) Q. I am a teacher and planning on working through the strike. Can I receive the \$500 special rate of pay?** (Added 10-11-17)

A. No. Teacher compensation is determined by the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), which must be negotiated. This is not part of the FTA bargaining agreement.



**24) Q. I want to stay with my students but honor my FTA colleagues. Can I strike every other day?** (Added 10-11-17)

A. No. Intermittent striking is illegal.



**25) Q. I would like to substitute during the strike. Can anyone apply or are there specific requirements to become a substitute?** (Added 10-11-17)

A. To become a substitute teacher, applicants must hold a Bachelor's degree and meet at least one of the following in order to qualify for the Basic Skills requirement:

Pass the CBEST, pass the CSET (multiple subject plus writing skills exam), pass the CSU Early Assessment Program or the CSU Placement Exams, achieve qualifying score on the SAT or ACT, score 3 or higher on specific College Board Advancement Placement (AP) Exams or pass a Basic Skills Examination from another state.



**26) Q. If I choose to keep my child home during the strike, will his/her absences be excused?** (Added 10-11-17)

A. No. While parents may decide to keep their students home during a teacher work stoppage it is not considered an excused absence. Per Administrative Regulation (AR) 5113, students are excused from school for personal illness, medical/dental appointments, and funeral services for an immediate family member. With prior approval from site principal, court appearances and religious holidays can also be excused.



**27) Q. Students are asking if they are just going to be sent to the gym to watch movies all day. Is that the plan?** (Added 10-11-17)

A. No. The District is providing lesson plans and core subject curriculum that will be taught each day during a strike.

**If you have additional questions, contact Fresno Unified Human Resources at 457-3500**

Fresno Unified will provide updates to Frequently Asked Questions