

JCPS: Teacher salary deal would cost \$25.4M

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A tentative salary agreement that has been reached between Jefferson County Public Schools and the county's teachers union would cost the district an additional \$25.4 million, the district said Friday.

The agreement — which still must be ratified by both the Jefferson County Board of Education and by members of

the Jefferson County Teachers Association — would give JCPS teachers not only experience-based step increases but also a 0.75 percent salary increase this school year, retroactive to the beginning of the fiscal year on July 1. Next school year, teachers would get a 1.5 percent salary increase in addition to steps.

In all, that would mean that teachers would earn between a 2.25-2.3 percent raise over two years in addition to step increases, JCPS said.

JCPS said the first year's step raises would cost \$7.9 million, while this year's salary raise would cost \$3.1 million. Next

school year, the district is saying the steps would cost \$8 million and raises would cost \$6.4 million.

But JCTA President Brent McKim disputed the total cost figure, saying that the step increases don't actually represent an additional cost to the district because they are offset by turnover savings from more experienced, higher paid teachers retiring and being replaced by less experienced and lower-paid teachers.

"They should not be adding the step increases without subtracting the turnover savings," McKim said.

"It's not intellectually honest to do that."

JCPS said the tentative agreement with JCTA was reached without entering mediation, even though the district and the union said earlier this month they were bringing in a third-party mediator, in large part because the two groups were far apart on their compensation proposals.

JCPS is still in negotiations with its other unions, but the district has generally had "me-too" agreements with the

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other unions, meaning it's possible the other unions could get commensurate raises.

Bo Johnson, a representative of the local chapter of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employ-

ees, said Friday that his union has requested dates for the next negotiation session but had not yet heard back.

JCPS spokeswoman Jennifer Brislin said that the district is focused on getting the agreement with the teachers union approved and then we will focus on the other negotiations.

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