

**Rumberger | Kirk**

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# From Budget to Bargaining Table: Financial Strategies That “Win” at Impasse

FSFOA

2026 June Conference

June 17, 2026



# Impasse Process

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The bargaining team and the board must understand the process before beginning to bargain.



# Pre-Bargaining Preparation

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- Prepare financial state of the union for the Board and both bargaining teams.
- Show four-year trend of your financial condition ratio.
- Explain impact of recurring raises versus bonuses.
- Learn what your neighboring districts are paying.
- Prepare for hearing like you want to win, and you are at war.

# Collier Historical - Detailed

School Year	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25
CCEA	4.30%	4.52%	2.75%	9.70%	12.50%	11.65%
Cost	\$9,000,000	\$11,500,000	\$7,500,000	\$16,800,000	\$25,700,000	\$24,000,000
Starting Salary	\$43,760	\$47,720	\$47,720	\$50,000	\$54,000	\$57,000

# FTE Benchmark District Starting Teacher Salaries, 2024-2025

District	Starting Teacher Salary
Seminole	\$50,000
Volusia	\$49,102
Manatee	\$49,702
St. Johns	\$48,602
Lake	\$49,500
<b>Collier</b>	<b>\$57,000</b>
St. Lucie	\$48,745
Marion	\$50,000
Sarasota	\$57,500
Clay	\$48,500
Escambia	\$48,300

Source: <https://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/edu-info-accountability-services/pk-12-public-school-data-pubs-reports/staff.html>

# FTE Benchmark District Average Teacher Salaries, 2024-2025

District	Average Teacher Salary
Seminole	\$56,650.19
Volusia	\$52,612.44
Manatee	\$55,486.07
St. Johns	\$52,576.76
Lake	\$52,214.87
<b>Collier</b>	<b>\$73,570.61*</b>
St. Lucie	\$54,802.15
Marion	\$54,849.45
Sarasota	\$72,299.44
Clay	\$51,214.97
Escambia	\$50,792.49
<b>State of Florida Average</b>	<b>\$57,373.61</b>

Source: <https://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/edu-info-accountability-services/pk-12-public-school-data-pubs-reports/staff.shtml>

# Benchmark Districts (State Leaders) Average Teacher Salaries, 2024-2025

District (#'s = State Ranking)	Average Teacher Salary 2024-2025
1. Monroe	\$74,497.19
<b>2. Collier</b>	<b>\$73,570.61</b>
3. Sarasota	\$72,299.44
4. Walton	\$66,226.45
5. Charlotte	\$64,471.87
<b>State of Florida Average</b>	<b>\$57,373.61</b>

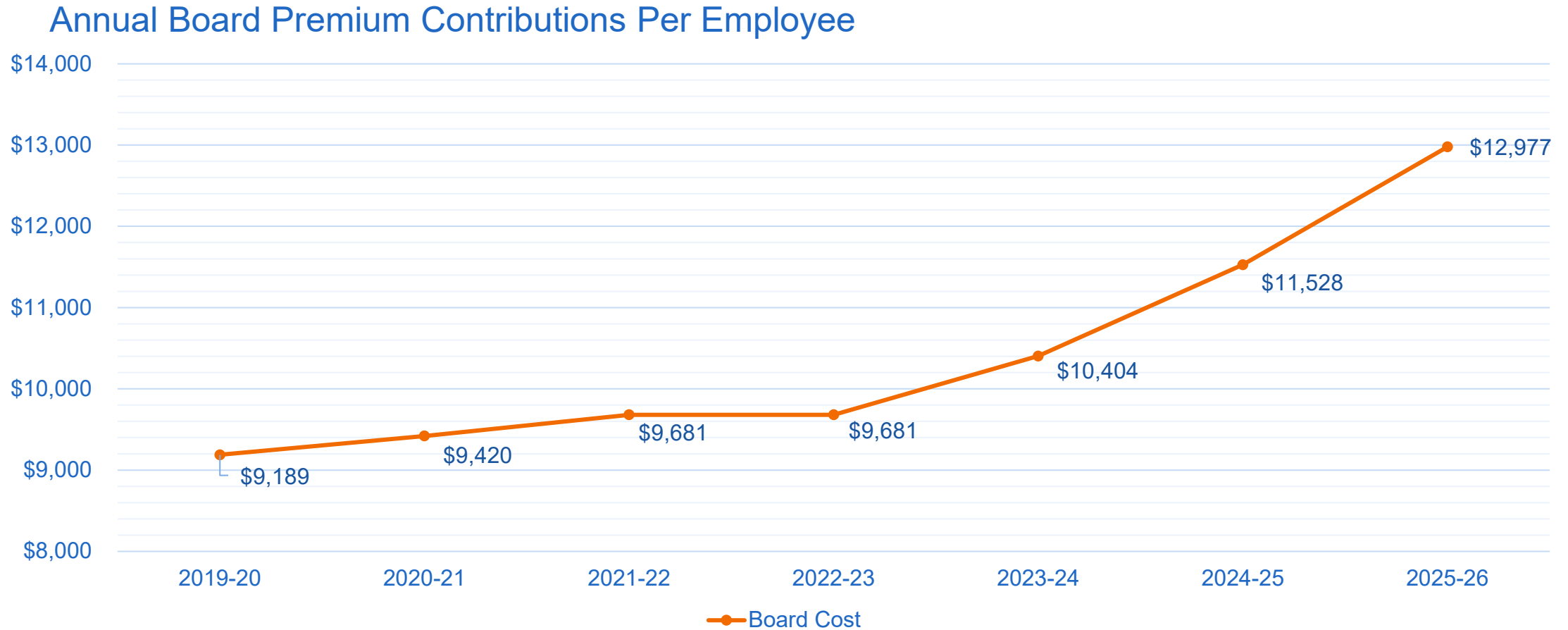
\*According to Union Data (NEA), the National Average Teacher Salary = \$72,030.

Source: <https://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/edu-info-accountability-services/pk-12-public-school-data-pubs-reports/staff.shtml>

# Growth In Voucher Program



# Rising Health Insurance Premiums



# Impasse Law

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Public Employees –  
Resolution of Impasses  
Sec. 447.403, Florida Statutes (2025)

# Union or Board Declares Impasse

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If after a reasonable period of negotiations..an impasse shall be deemed to have occurred when one of the parties so declares in writing to the other party and to the commission.

Sec. 447.403(1), F.S.



# Parties May Appoint Mediator

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When an impasse occurs, the public employer or the bargaining agent, or both parties acting jointly, may appoint, or secure the appointment of, a mediator to assist in the resolution of the impasse.

Sec. 447.403(1), F.S.

# Special Magistrate Appointed

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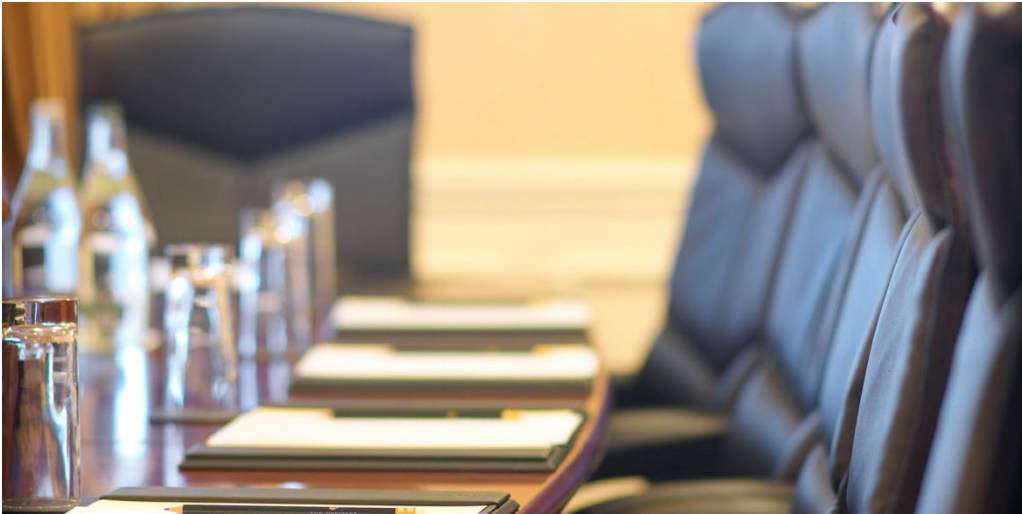
If no mediator is appointed, or upon the request of either party, the commission shall appoint, and submit all unresolved issues to, a special magistrate acceptable to both parties.

Sec. 447.403(2)(a), F.S.



# Resolution by Legislative Body

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However, if the parties agree in writing to **waive** the appointment of a special magistrate, the parties may proceed directly to resolution of the impasse by the legislative body pursuant to paragraph (4)(d). Sec. 447.403(2)(a) and (4)(d), F.S.

If waive Special Magistrate, the insulation period begins. (No Executive Sessions allowed.)

# Resolution by Legislative Body

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The legislative body shall take such action as it deems to be in the public interest, including the interest of the public employees involved.



# Hearings before Special Magistrate

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The special magistrate shall hold hearings in order to define the area or areas of dispute, to determine the facts relating to the dispute, and to render a decision on any and all **unresolved** contract issues.

Sec. 447.403(3), F.S.

# Preparing for Impasse Hearing

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- Research the Special Magistrate's prior recommendations and reports on PERC's website.
- Follow blueprint set forth in § 447.405, F.S. "Factors to be considered by special magistrate."
- Organize presentation so Special Magistrate knows what you want.
- Make sure you narrow the exact issues at impasse.
- Know your opposing counsel's style.

# Factors to Consider

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Section 447.405, Florida Statutes, requires the Special Magistrate to consider certain factors.

- Comparisons of annual income in local area in similar work;
- Comparisons of annual income in similar public employment of comparable size throughout the state;
- Interest and welfare of the public;
- Comparisons to other trades or professions; and
- **Availability of funds; trends are relevant even if FCR is above 5%.**

# What Not to Do

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- Do not assume preparation is unnecessary because the Board makes the final decision.
  - This may be true but a strongly worded recommendation from the special magistrate has political power for the union.
  - Preparation leads to better data for the special magistrate.
  - During an election year, anything is possible.
- Do not fail to cost out the union's proposals and demonstrate why they are not reasonable.
- Do not fail to show impact on next year's budget to the union and the Board members.

# Public Hearing

The legislative body or a duly authorized committee thereof shall forthwith conduct a public hearing at which the parties shall be required to explain their positions with respect to the rejected recommendations of the special magistrate.



# Public Hearing

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Who determines the format of the hearing?

- Time allotted for each side to present
- Oral argument or evidentiary hearing with witnesses
- Testimony? If yes, CFO is key witness.

# Public Hearing

Thereafter, the legislative body shall take such action as it deems to be in the public interest, including the interest of the public employees involved, to resolve all disputed impasse issues.

Sec. 447.403(4)(c)(d), F.S.



# Citizen Input During Hearing

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- (2) Members of the public shall be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a proposition before a board or commission.
- (3) The requirements in subsection (2) do not apply to:
  - (d) A meeting during which the board or commission is acting in a quasi-judicial capacity.

Sec. 286.0114(2), (3) and (3)(d), F.S.

# Agreement

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- Following the resolution of the disputed impasse issues by the legislative body, the parties shall reduce to writing an agreement which includes those issues agreed to by the parties and those disputed impasse issues resolved by the legislative body's action.
- The agreement shall be signed by the CEO and the bargaining agent and shall be submitted to the public employer and to the public employees who are members of the bargaining unit for ratification.
- What happens to the other tentative agreements during the impasse process?

Sec. 447.403(4)(e), F.S.

# Executive Sessions

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- Permitted until special magistrate's recommended settlement is rejected or until parties mutually agree in writing to waive the special master procedure. This is known as the “**insulation period.**”
- After that time, the Board becomes a neutral body for the purposes of the impasse process.

# Disclaimer

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The information provided during this presentation is not intended for legal advice. The presentation, and any handouts which may accompany it, provide general information on the impasse process and answers to common questions about this issue. Please consult an attorney to assure that this information, and your interpretation of it, is appropriate to your particular situation.

# Thank you!

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Leonard J. Dietzen, III, Esquire  
Rumberger, Kirk & Caldwell, P.A.  
101 North Monroe Street, Suite 1050  
Tallahassee, FL 32301  
(850) 222-6550  
[ldietzen@rumberger.com](mailto:ldietzen@rumberger.com)