

Galvis City Schools Collective Bargaining Simulation

General Instructions

Background

Galvis City School District (GCSD) operates on three-year collective bargaining cycles, which are traditionally renegotiated several months prior to contract expiration. These comprehensive collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) bring together negotiating teams from the school district's central administration, "the district," and the Galvis City Teachers Association (GCTA), "the union." The three-person negotiating teams are tasked with designing and proposing a deal to be presented to and voted on by larger constituent groups. In contrast to the national tension between teachers' unions and school districts, Galvis City's recent CBA negotiations have been collaborative and uncontentious. Despite this, Galvis City teachers have voiced concern at the disparity between GCSD's average teacher salary and that of neighboring towns. In the next CBA negotiation, GCSD and GCTA will be tasked with resolving this and other questions that have arisen amid a changing local environment and national political landscape.

Galvis City

These negotiations take place in Galvis City, a large city with roughly 450,000 residents. Galvis City has seen an influx of new residents in the past few years due to its low cost of living and favorable job prospects. The city routinely reports a higher median income, lower crime, and higher "livability," compared to peer cities. A key determinant of a city's "livability" is access to high-quality public education, something long considered to be a point of pride for Galvis City. However, the city has also faced a number of growing pains that cast a shadow on these positive qualities. In many ways a victim of its own success, Galvis City has experienced a minor tech boom and has welcomed a huge influx of young, highly educated transplants eager to take advantage of the cheap housing and inviting atmosphere for starting high-skill small businesses. As such, the local narrative has increasingly been a "tale of two cities": first, a post-industrial city struggling to provide jobs and services for those whose families have called Galvis City home for generations, now living in the shadow of a second, seemingly separate, booming city with a vibrant, wealthy, and educated transplant population.

The tension inherent in this "tale of two cities" has become apparent in local city politics. After nearly twenty years in office, former Mayor Melissa Morris announced she would not seek re-election, leaving the door open for a crowded field. In the subsequent mayoral primary election, a three-term city councilor and a young local activist narrowly finished in the top two. In the general election, the city councilor's message focused on the importance of education, their own experience growing up in Galvis City, and their vision for uniting all City residents. Despite this education-centered messaging,

the local teachers' union endorsed the city councilor's opponent, who campaigned on their ability to institute broad, bold reforms against a status quo that has left many in Galvis City behind. The city councilor won the election with 53 percent of the vote and now serves as Mayor.

National Context

Galvis City is no stranger to an active labor movement. The city was a manufacturing hub for decades, with private-sector union members representing a significant portion of its population. In fact, many of the city's post-industrial neighborhoods were previously hotbeds for labor activism. In the mid-1950s, public-sector unions were established in Galvis City. Nonetheless, since the local teachers' union, Galvis City Teachers Association, was first chartered in 1954, it has carried out only one strike: a five-day walkout in the 1970s.

GCTA is affiliated with the large national teachers' union, the American Education Union (AEU). Approximately 85 percent of Galvis City School District teachers are members of GCTA. Unlike other prominent teachers' unions in the country, AEU is considered more politically active than most public sector unions. At the height of their power in the 1970s and 1980s, both GCTA and AEU commanded a great deal of respect and were able to create strong, stable contracts that served as a model for collective bargaining across the country.

In recent decades, the power of public sector unions has been challenged by legislation and court rulings, best crystallized in the 2018 Supreme Court decision *Janus v. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees*.ⁱ Citing a First Amendment violation, the *Janus* decision struck down the collection of union fees of public sector unions from non-unionized members. Critics in the labor community feared this would create rampant issues of "free ridership," as non-unionized members were able to opt out of union membership while enjoying higher wages and the benefits guaranteed by unions through collective bargaining. The controversial decision led union supporters to worry about a decrease in union revenue and parallel losses in bargaining strength, with one report estimating that a national teachers' union would lose over \$28 million in dues in the first year of implementation alone.ⁱⁱ

For many teachers, however, trouble began well before the *Janus* decision. In early 2018, a grassroots movement known as "Red for Ed" had already begun in right-to-work states, where collection of non-member dues had always been illegal. Rallying teachers and supporters under the hashtag #RedforEd, this movement culminated in a two-week walkout by thousands of crimson-clad teachers in West Virginia, without national union endorsement and in bold defiance of state law. The movement led to a number of concessions from the state and fueled copycat movements under the same banner across the United States, especially in light of the *Janus* decision.

ⁱ *Janus v. AFSCME*, No. 16-1466, 585 U.S. ____ (2018).

ⁱⁱ Moriah Balingit and Danielle Douglas-Gabriel, "'Preparing for the Worst': Unions Brace for Loss of Members and Fees in Wake of Supreme Court Ruling," *Washington Post*, June 27, 2018, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/education/wp/2018/06/27/preparing-for-the-worst-unions-brace-for-loss-of-members-and-fees-in-wake-of-supreme-court-ruling/>.

A clash of anti-union sentiment and public support for teacher walkouts across the country led to contentious and prolonged collective bargaining disputes in cities like Los Angeles and Denver in 2018 and 2019. In both cities, with widespread public support and media sympathy, large swathes of unionized teachers walked off the job. Following state and mayoral intervention, unions and districts in both cities achieved contracts lauded by rank-and-file teachers as long past due but criticized by financial planners as unsustainable.ⁱⁱⁱ

Galvis City's upcoming negotiations will take place against this backdrop of polarization across the country.

The Current Situation

The last collective bargaining period, which took place three years ago, was no departure from what up until then had been a history of largely uncontentious, routine negotiations between the district and union. The negotiating teams from the GCSD and GCTA met and signed a tentative agreement after several rounds of negotiations. Both the GCSD school board and GCTA rank-and-file voted overwhelmingly to approve and implement the contract. This collective bargaining agreement included:

1. a 2 percent annual salary increase that was tied to yearly inflation;
2. an observation policy that required that principals observe all teachers at all schools once a year;
3. a standard "last-in, first-out" (LIFO) layoffs policy, wherein principals must determine layoffs solely by seniority;
4. a program that awarded teachers end-of-year performance bonuses of up to 10 percent of their salary based on student improvement on the state-administered standardized test.

Since this last negotiating cycle, there have been leadership changes within the GCSD and GCTA. The Galvis City School Board recently voted to replace former Superintendent Sam Solano with a new leader for the district after emails leaked where Solano criticized teachers active within GCTA.

Galvis City also recently elected a new Mayor, who earned a narrow victory in a crowded field after former Mayor Morris announced her retirement early last year. The current Mayor has expressed interest in acting as a convener and facilitator of collective bargaining agreements, as is helpful to the parties at the table.

As such, all parties are new to collective bargaining and are largely unfamiliar with other individuals across the table.

ⁱⁱⁱ Jennifer Medina and Dana Goldstein, "Los Angeles Teachers' Strike to End as Deal Is Reached," *The New York Times*, January 22, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/22/us/la-teacher-strike-deal.html>.

The Parties

These negotiations will include seven key participants, representing the two stakeholder groups and a facilitator. They are:

- **The Superintendent for Galvis City School District**, who was recently appointed by the school board; they were previously employed at the district and were selected for their desire to usher in innovation and reform in Galvis City.
- **The Chief Counsel for Galvis City School District**, who joins the district side of negotiations as a member of the new Superintendent's leadership team; prior to law school, they taught in Galvis City Public Schools.
- **The Chief Budget Officer for Galvis City School District**, who is new to the district, having had a long career in the private sector; they are also a member of the Superintendent's leadership team.
- **A Bell Harbor High School English Teacher, representing Galvis City Teachers Association**. They are a long-time teacher at Bell Harbor High School, a public school in the district considered to be one of the finest schools in Galvis City.
- **A McKinsey Middle School Math Teacher, representing Galvis City Teachers Association**. They teach at McKinsey Middle School, a low-income and high-need school that routinely struggles to boost student outcomes and retain teachers.
- **A Vice President from the American Education Union, representing Galvis City Teachers Association** and the American Education Union; they come to these talks as an expert consultant and to report results back to AEU leadership.
- **The Mayor of Galvis City**, who will serve as a facilitator for these discussions.

The Contract

The current contract is set to expire next month. Recent changes within both the district and the union have delayed the contract negotiations, which typically begin months prior to expiration.

Parties have agreed to look at a minimum of five issues from the previous collective bargaining agreement: **changes to teacher salary, observation policy, layoffs policy, bonus pay, and incentive pay**. The last issue, while not covered in the previous CBA, was added to the public agenda after a request by the Superintendent, who has publicly advocated for measures that help the district recruit effective teachers into hard-to-staff subjects and schools.

This negotiation will take place over one hour, with the first fifteen minutes of the round dedicated to a caucus within members of the same negotiating team. The Mayor may choose to meet with each negotiating team during this time, if that team agrees. The remaining forty-five minutes should be spent all together, negotiating the five issues at hand. During the full group negotiation, parties may meet in smaller groups as is helpful and productive. The Mayor should facilitate the conversation and help the parties reach agreement.

At the end of the round, the negotiating teams are expected to submit one written agreement to the school board and union voting body to review prior to finalizing the next CBA. This written agreement may be in the form of a working agreement on a new contract in as much detail as possible, or a memorandum of understanding detailing why agreement was not possible.

If an agreement is not reached, then teacher salaries will be frozen at their current levels and other policies in the current contract will remain in effect.

This written agreement **must** be signed by:

- **The District:** the Superintendent and at least one other district negotiator (the Chief Counsel or the Chief Budget Officer)
- **The Union:** both Galvis City teachers

The Mayor and the union Vice President do not have to sign a final deal, though a written agreement will be more sustainable and easier for relevant constituent groups to approve with signatures from all seven parties.

School District Information

Galvis City School District vs. Neighboring Towns

	Galvis City School District	Beauville	Tulipton	Luffy Grove	Tabitha Heights
Student Population	49,947	12,331	88,125	33,560	28,560
# of Teachers	2,503	714	4,567	1,975	1,705
Average Teacher Salary	\$52,280	\$76,100	\$49,560	\$68,900	\$59,700
# of Administrators	285	83	301	112	136
Average Administrator Salary	\$104,560	\$190,250	\$84,252	\$137,800	\$179,100
Number of Teachers per Administrator	9	9	15	18	13
Percentage of Students Scoring Above Average on State Tests	57%	82%	42%	76%	84%
Percentage of Students with Free/Reduced Lunch	41%	14%	65%	23%	84%

Galvis City Schools Comparison: Bell Harbor High School vs. McKinsey Middle School

	Bell Harbor High School	McKinsey Middle School
Student Population	1,783	2,843
# of Teachers	108	118
Average Teacher Salary	\$54,400	\$48,890
Percentage of Students Scoring Above Average on State Tests	85%	38%
Percentage of Students with Free/Reduced Lunch	18%	68%
Percentage of Teachers Who Received an End-of-Year Bonus Last Year	80%	25%
Average Bonus Amount	\$7,400	\$4,000

Key Terms

This page includes broad definitions of key terms used in this exercise. General instructions and role-specific instructions may include more detail as these items relate to Galvis City.

- **Bonus pay:** Additional annual compensation based on performance; this could include performance of individual teachers based on student test scores or holistic metrics, school-wide performance, department performance, or other metrics as defined by a particular school district.
- **Collective bargaining agreement (CBA):** A contract negotiated between management (in this case, a school district) and a union; includes wages, work rules, and working conditions.
- **Incentive pay:** Additional compensation, either one-time or annually, aimed at incentivizing teachers to fill specific positions; this could include higher salaries for certain subjects (such as science or math) or specific schools where the district struggles to fill vacancies.
- **Last-in, first-out (LIFO):** Common provision in collective bargaining agreements that mandates layoffs be done by seniority; this means the last people hired are the first to be laid off.
- **Layoff policy:** Process agreed upon by the district and union for how layoffs are determined; seniority or performance are commonly used in these policies.
- **Observation policy:** Process agreed upon by the district and union for how often teachers are officially observed by school-level or district-level administrators; these policies may include frequency of observations, notification periods, and specification of whether observations are used for development and/or evaluation.
- **Salary:** Monetary compensation; does not include health insurance, retirement, or other benefits.
- **School district:** Governing body of public K-12 schools in a geographic area, usually city or county; school districts are typically led by a superintendent and are accountable to an elected school board.
- **Superintendent:** Highest-level administrator of a school district
- **Union:** Legally recognized collective of workers, which negotiates a common contract or collective bargaining agreement on behalf of its members; unions have elected leadership, and their purpose is to improve or maintain working conditions.