



AT THE TABLE

The bargaining teams of the Brevard Federation of Teachers, school related personnel union local 1010 and school board met for three hours on August 6 to hear presentations from Associate Superintendent for Finance Judy Preston and Director of Compensation and Benefits Susan Standley. Ms. Preston gave an overview of the budget related decisions made during the 2009 Florida legislative session. Brevard public schools sustained yet another year of drastic cuts owing to the legislature's resolve to "hold education harmless." In many instances, funds provided by the state for 2009-10 are at 2005-06 funding levels. If it were not for the painful but commendable resolve of our Teachers to accept a two year pay freeze, the courageous decision of our school board to levy an optional .25 mill property tax increase, and the stimulus money being provided for the next two years by the U.S. government, Brevard's situation would have been dire indeed. The question begs itself: If the Florida Legislature does not provide a new source of revenue for our state, what will happen to our public schools after the stimulus money is gone? Ms. Standley described the status of the insurance benefits that are provided by the school board to its employees. As a self insured entity, the board pays any and all employee insurance claims out of a trust fund. However, the money coming into the trust fund is not keeping pace with the amount that is going out. With projections showing that insurance claims will continue to increase at a record pace, and if there is no increase in revenue, the trust fund will experience a \$12,000,000 deficit in 2010. Options to avoid this crisis that were suggested by Ms. Standley include increasing employee premiums and/or changing our insurance plan designs. After having time to digest and consider all the information presented during this bargaining session, the teams will meet again at 4:30 on Thursday, August 20, 2007 at ESF to continue discussion concerning the insurance deficit. Both presentations can be viewed at bftteach.org