

**Yuma Elementary School District Number One
Governing Board
Study Session**

The Governing Board for Yuma Elementary School District Number One held a Study Session on **February 24, 2026** at 5:15 P.M. in the District Administration Office, 450 West Sixth Street, Yuma, Arizona.

Members present: Mr. Keith Ware, President; Mr. David Ibarra, Vice President; Mrs. Lisa Anderson, Member; & Mr. Jeff Stoner, Member

Members absent: Mrs. Cori Rico, Member

Others present: Mr. Denis Ponder, Superintendent, and other Members of the Administrative Staff of Yuma School District One

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:15 PM.

Review and Discussion on the Proposed Compensation Packet for YSD# 1 –

Mr. Luciano Muñoz, Executive Director of Human Resources, and Mrs. Jamie Walden, Director of Budget and Finance, presented the proposed 2026–2027 Compensation Packet. The presentation and supporting information were previously shared with and supported by District Cabinet members and the District Compensation Committee. The Compensation Committee members were introduced, and Mr. Muñoz noted that all employee groups were represented, including: two middle school teachers, three elementary teachers, one other certificated staff member, one transportation representative, one child nutrition representative, one maintenance representative, two support staff members, and one administrator.

Salary Increase Recommendation

A detailed breakdown was provided of the proposed salary increases for FY 2026–2027. Board members engaged in discussion and asked questions regarding the proposal. During the discussion, challenges related to recruitment and retention were addressed. Teachers were identified as the District’s top priority. Additional conversation focused on hard-to-fill positions and strategies to retain highly qualified teachers, staff, and paraprofessionals.

Mr. Muñoz and Mrs. Walden concluded this portion of the presentation by reviewing the recommended salary adjustments and their projected impact for FY 2026–2027.

Group	Recommendation	Cost
Teachers / Exempt Employees	3% Increase	\$926,462
Exempt	3% Increase	\$269,124
Admin	3% Increase	\$143,620
Hourly Employees (Non-Min. Wage)	\$0.50, \$0.75, \$1.00 (Tiered Increase)	\$775,217
Hourly Employees (Min. Wage)	\$0.50 Projected increase (Jan. 2027) (Tiered Increase)	\$363,265
ESS Para Professional Change	Moving from 6.5 to 7 hrs a day per day & Increased range	\$ 46,405
Position Reclassifications	IST Reclassification	\$172,200
SLPA Reclassifications	SLPA Range Increase	\$ 49,200
Calendar Revision	Restore NWD	\$ 75,000
Total Cost		\$2,820,491

The Board Recessed at 6:50 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 6:55 p.m.

Insurance Benefits Recommendation

Mr. Muñoz and Mrs. Walden provided a detailed overview of the District’s current insurance plans and proposed changes. They reviewed and compared the individual and family plan options, including PPO 750, PPO 1000, and HDHP 2000. Board members discussed challenges and feedback received from employees, particularly concerns regarding the high deductible under the HDHP 2000 plan and the difficulty some employees have in affording upfront costs. It was noted that IMS coverage changes now require employees to meet their high deductible before qualifying for lower copays. A side-by-side comparison of the base plans; the High-Deductible Health Plan (HDHP 2000) and the Preferred Provider Organization (PPO 1000) was presented.

Additionally, it was discussed that Blue Cross BlueShield will remain the District’s medical carrier, and Personify will continue serving as the third-party administrator. Dental, vision, and life insurance benefits will remain unchanged.

A survey was distributed to all employees to gather feedback and determine plan preferences. Based on survey results and committee discussion, there was support for transitioning from the HDHP 2000 plan to the PPO 1000 plan to lower out-of-pocket costs for employees.

Funding

Funding to support both the Compensation Plan and the Proposed Insurance changes will come from:

- Inflation adjustment (conservative estimate): \$1,500,000
- Insurance savings: \$556,600

Total funding available: \$2,056,600.

Workers Compensation Insurance Recommendation FY27

Mrs. Walden provided a presentation and recommendation to transition the District’s workers’ compensation coverage from The Alliance to the Valley Schools Workers’ Compensation Group. The proposed change is intended to provide improved alignment and enhanced benefits for the District. It was noted that the Valley Schools Workers’ Compensation Group is a self-funded, non-profit risk pool serving Arizona school districts.

The meeting adjourned at 7:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Monica Navarro, Secretary to the Board

Keith Ware, President

David Ibarra, Vice President

Cori Rico, Member

Lisa Anderson, Member

Jeff Stoner, Member