



## **Collective Bargaining Agreement**

**Between**

**Southern Will County Cooperative for Special Education**

**And**

**SOWIC Council AFT/IFT Local 604 Teacher Assistants**

**2024-2028**

**Member Districts:**

**I CHANNAHON 17 | TROY 30C | LARAWAY 70C | UNION 81 | ROCKDALE 84 |  
I BEECHER 200U | ELWOOD 203 | PEOTONE 207U | WILMINGTON 209U | REED-CUSTER 255U |**

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## **ARTICLE I INTRODUCTION**

### ***1.1 Preamble***

This Agreement is entered into this 1<sup>st</sup> day of July 2024, is between the Governing Board of Southern Will County Cooperative for Special Education (SOWIC) as approved by the Board of Education of the Administrative District for the Southern Will County Cooperative for Special Education, Will County, Illinois (hereinafter referred to as the “Board”) and the SOWIC Council of AFT-Local 604 (hereinafter referred to as the “Union”).

### ***1.2 Recognition***

The Board recognizes the Union as the sole and exclusive bargaining representative with respect to rates of pay, wages, hours and other terms and conditions of employment for all full-time teacher assistants, specifically excluding full-time and regularly employed part-time teachers, speech therapists, psychologists, social workers, the Executive and Assistant Directors, coordinators/program administrators, secretarial staff, cafeteria workers, custodians and bus aides.

### ***1.3 Scope of Agreement***

It is the intention of this Agreement to provide for the rates of pay, wages, hours and other terms and conditions of employment full-time teacher assistants.

### ***1.4 General Principle of Negotiations***

- A. The purpose of this recognition is a mutual agreement between the parties to negotiate in a good faith effort.
- B. “Good faith effort” is defined as the mutual responsibility of the Union and the Board to deal with each other openly and fairly and endeavor to reach agreement on items being negotiated. It does not imply that either party will agree with, or accept, the other party’s proposals, or be compelled to reach agreement on specific topics.

## **ARTICLE II GRIEVANCE**

### **2.1 Definitions**

- A. A grievance shall mean a complaint that there has been an alleged violation, misinterpretation or misapplication of any of the provisions of this Agreement.
- B. All time limits contained herein shall consist of business days meaning days on which the SOWIC Central Office is open to the public for business and shall be computed by excluding the first day and including the last day.

### **2.2 General Provisions**

- A. A grievance may be initiated and/or conducted by
  - 1. A teacher assistant in his or her own behalf,
  - 2. A teacher assistant accompanied by a Union representative; or
  - 3. The Union as the representative of the consenting teacher assistant(s), as verified in writing.
- B. Every teacher assistant covered by this Agreement shall have the right to present grievances in accordance with these procedures. Nothing contained in this Article or elsewhere in this Agreement shall be construed to prevent any individual teacher assistant from discussing a problem with the Administration and having it adjusted without representation of Union representatives.
- C. The failure of a teacher assistant or the Union (in accordance with 2.1 B above) to act on any grievance within the prescribed time limits will act as a bar to any further appeal and the administrators' failure to give a decision within the time limits shall permit the grievant to proceed to the next step. The time limits, however, may be extended by mutual agreement.
- D. Any teacher assistant has the right to be represented in the grievance procedure. The affected teacher assistant shall be present at any grievance meeting. When the presence of a teacher assistant at the grievance hearing is requested by either party, illness or other incapacity of the teacher assistant shall be grounds for any necessary continuance of said hearing.

- E. In any instance where the Union is not represented in the grievance procedure, the Union will be notified of the final disposition of the grievance, should the Union so request.
- F. Hearings and conferences under this procedure shall be conducted at a time which will afford an opportunity for all persons, including witnesses entitled to be present, to attend and be help insofar as possible after regular school hours, or during non- teaching time of personnel involved. When such hearings and conferences are held, at the option of the Administration during school hours, all teacher assistants whose presence are required shall be excused, with pay, for that purpose.
- G. It is agreed that any investigation or other handling or processing of any grievance by the grieving teacher assistant or Union representative shall be conducted so as to result in no interference with or interruption whatsoever of the instructional program and related work activities of the teaching staff. The Union is responsible for the elimination of nuisance grievances.
- H. No material relevant to grievances shall be inserted in the teacher assistant's personnel file.

### **2.3 *Grievance Procedure***

- A. Step 1: An attempt shall be made to resolve any grievance through informal verbal discussion between the grievant, teacher-supervisor and / or other persons against whom the grievance is lodged.
- B. Step 2: In the event that the matter is not resolved informally, the grievant or the Union shall file a written grievance within twenty-one (21) days of the alleged violation of this Agreement with the appropriate coordinator with a copy provided to the Director. The written grievance shall state the nature of the grievance, the specific clause or clauses of this Agreement which are alleged to have been violated and the remedy which is sought. The coordinator shall, within fourteen (14) days of the receipt of the grievance, confer with the grievant and/or his or her Union representative in an attempt to resolve the grievance. Within ten (10) days after completion of the conference, the coordinator shall render his or her written decision. Nothing contained herein shall prohibit the coordinator and the Union representative from meeting prior to the conference for the purpose of disclosing to each other the evidence upon which each intends to rely.
- C. Step 3: If the grievance is not resolved in Step Two, then the grievant or the Union may appeal the grievance to the Director within ten (10) days of the receipt of the Step Two answer. The Director will arrange for a meeting with the grievant and/or Union within ten (10) days of the receipt of the appeal. Each party shall have the right to include in its representation such witnesses and counselors, as it deems necessary to develop the

facts pertinent to the grievance. Upon conclusion of the meeting, the Director shall have forty-five (45) days or within 2 days of the second Governing Board Meeting in which to provide his/her written decision to the grievant and/or Union.

- D. Step 4: Within thirty (30) days of the date of the Director's decision, the Union may submit the grievance to binding arbitration under the Voluntary Labor Arbitration Rules of the American Arbitration Association (AAA). The Arbitrator shall follow the standard rules of the AAA and his or her decision shall be binding upon the parties; provided, however, that the Arbitrator shall not have the authority to amend, modify, nullify, ignore or add to the provisions of this Agreement. The Arbitrator's authority shall be strictly limited to rendering a decision on the issue or issues presented to him or her and the Arbitrator's decision must be based solely upon his or her interpretation of the meaning or application of the express language of this Agreement. Expenses for the Arbitrator's services and the expenses which are common to both parties to the arbitration shall be borne equally by the Board and the Union. Each party shall be responsible for compensating its own representatives and witnesses.

## **2.4 *Miscellaneous Provisions***

### **A. Exclusion of Remedies**

In the event a member of the bargaining unit commences a proceeding in any state or federal court or administrative agency against the Board and/or Administration charging the Board and/or Administration with an alleged violation of this Agreement, such remedy shall be exclusive and the said member shall be barred from involving and proceeding with any remedy by this grievance procedure unless a court of administrative agency remands the case back to the grievance procedure.

### **B. No Reprisals**

No reprisals of any kind shall be taken by the Union against any teacher assistant because of his/her participation or lack of participation in a grievance.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **WORKING CONDITIONS**

#### **3.1 *Work Hours***

- A Teacher assistants shall maintain the same daily schedule as is the policy of the school district and school building where the classes are located. However, the work day of teacher assistants will not be less than 7.5 hours daily, which is inclusive of a 7 hour work day and a 30 minute duty free lunch.
- B Any work performed at the request of a SOWIC Program Administrator beyond the normal workday that does not qualify as overtime shall be paid at the regular hourly rate of that teacher assistant.
- C A teacher assistant shall receive a thirty (30) minute duty free lunch during a full work day. At the discretion of the administrator, employees that miss lunch due to unforeseen circumstances will receive a replacement lunch the same day or leave early by thirty (30) minutes. No employee may make the determination to miss their lunch for any reason and be entitled to receive a replacement lunch or leave early by 30 mionutes.
- D The work year for the teacher assistants may be extended to include one-half day of orientation at the beginning of the school year and one-half day during or at the end of the school year as determined by the Director. Such days and/or time for in-service and/or training shall be scheduled when students are not in attendance and at the discretion of the Director.
- E Teacher Assistants are not required to be present during the evening session of Parent Teacher Conferences as applicable. On these dates, teacher assistants will be dismissed at their regularly scheduled time.

#### **3.2 *Job Descriptions***

Each teacher assistant shall be provided a job description at the beginning of the school year which may be changed at the discretion of the Director after consultation with the affected teacher assistant. When changes are made, a revised copy shall be provided to the affected teacher assistant.

#### **3.3 *Substitution***

In the event that a teacher assistant holding a valid teacher's or substitute teacher's license substitutes for a regular teacher, the teacher assistant shall be compensated at the teacher assistant's regular hourly rate plus \$5.00 per hour.

### **3.4 Training**

Training shall be provided for teacher assistants to ensure they properly meet the physical, mental and emotional needs of the students with whom they are assigned to work.

### **3.5 Seniority**

- A Seniority is the length of continuous service with the Cooperative and shall commence when a teacher assistant is officially hired by the Board on a full-time basis.
- B In the event that seniority between two (2) or more teacher assistants is equal, then seniority shall be determined by the date the teacher assistant signed his/her contract.
- C If a reduction in force is necessary, the teacher assistant with the least seniority will be dismissed first. Remaining teacher assistants may be transferred to meet the needs of SOWIC. The Director will have sole discretion in this matter.
- D Each school year, a list will be prepared by the Director showing the length of continuous service for each teacher assistant. A copy of the list shall be provided to the Union by February 1 of each school year.

### **3.6 Vacancies**

- A The Director shall have sole discretion on all vacancies. Prior to making his/her final decision, the Director or his/her designee shall contact the affected teacher assistant and teacher for their input whenever practical.
- B Whenever a teacher assistant is interested in securing another position, he/she shall put the request in writing to the Director. In addition, teacher assistants shall have the responsibility of contacting their appropriate coordinator regarding any vacancies they can apply for if they are interested in another position.
- C Appointment of current personnel to vacant positions within SOWIC will be done upon the basis of the teacher assistant's qualifications, which shall include, but not be limited to, the teacher assistant's seniority, experience, educational training, the needs of SOWIC and the quality of the teacher assistant's past performance. This provision, however, shall not be construed to preclude the employment of an outside applicant to fill any vacancy. The Director shall have sole discretion on the decisions affecting vacancies.

### **3.7 Personnel Files**

- A There shall be one (1) personnel file for each teacher assistant.
- B Upon written request, a teacher assistant will have the right to review materials in his/her personnel file. Letters and materials which are confidential in nature, which consist of letters of recommendation used by the teacher assistant to secure a position, will not be available to the teacher assistant. Such review may take place under the supervision of the Director or designee.
- C No materials shall be placed in the personnel file unless the teacher assistant receives a copy of said material. A teacher assistant will have the right to answer such material, in writing, within twenty-one (21) calendar days and his/her answer shall be attached to the corresponding file material. A teacher's assistant's written answer must specifically relate to the particular material in question.
- D Each teacher assistant shall have the right to insert material relevant to his/her service in the Cooperative and add statements as to his/her qualifications as a teacher assistant. However, such material will be placed in the personnel file only if the Director determines it relevant. The insertion of such material in the personnel file does not indicate agreement with the content thereof by the Director or the Board.

### **3.8 Job Assignment**

Each teacher assistant will be given written notice of his/her tentative assignment for the forthcoming school year prior to July 15<sup>th</sup> whenever practical as determined by the Director. If changes are made in the tentative assignments, the affected teacher assistants will be notified of such changes by the Director.

### **3.9 Evaluation**

The Union and the Cooperative developed the evaluation system collaboratively which conforms to applicable state law. The evaluation procedure will follow the timelines, guidelines and forms found in the official Teacher Assistant Appraisal System.

The Union and the Cooperative will meet annually to review the evaluation tool and procedure upon request of either the Union or Cooperative.

### **3.10 Discipline**

Prior to imposing disciplinary action on a teacher assistant, SOWIC shall offer the staff member the opportunity to respond to the basis for disciplinary action with the option of the staff member to be assisted by a Union representative at the meeting at which disciplinary action may be taken. The meeting will be held as scheduled by SOWIC with or without the Union representative, so long as at least 24 hours' notice of the meeting is given to the staff member. In determining the level of discipline to be imposed, SOWIC recognizes the principles of progressive discipline, which include the following in normal progression and circumstances:

1. Oral warning with documentation given to the staff member and copied to the staff member's personnel file.
2. Written reprimand given to the staff member and copied to the staff member's personnel file. The reprimand shall contain a summary of the basis for the discipline.
3. Suspension, with or without pay, with written notice given to the staff member and copied to the staff member's personnel file. The notice shall contain the number of days of the suspension and a summary of the basis for the discipline.

The foregoing progression does not include all disciplinary actions which may be imposed and SOWIC reserves the right to depart from the normal progression as it deems appropriate in particular cases. Only procedural violations of this section are subject to the grievance procedure and not the substantive basis for the imposition of discipline.

Nothing in this section prevents temporary reassignment or the placement on paid administrative leave of a staff member pending the investigation of the staff member's conduct or performance and the final imposition of disciplinary action.

Nothing in this section applies to the evaluation process, the issuance of a remedial warning or to the non-renewal, reduction in force, or dismissal of a staff member under the provisions of the Illinois School Code.

## ARTICLE IV

### LEAVES

#### 4.1 Sick Leave

- A. Teacher assistants shall be granted the following annual sick leave, to be used in conformance with the law according to his/her annual employment with the Board. Sick leave days shall be granted in half or full days.

Years	Days per Year
1-2	11
3-5	14
6 - Thereafter	15

- B. Unused sick leave will accumulate to a total of two hundred forty (240) days excluding the annual sick leave allotment.
- C. Sick leave shall be interpreted as being personal illness, quarantine at home, or serious illness or death in the immediate family or household or birth, adoption placement for adoption or acceptance of a child in need of foster care. The immediate family for purposes of this section shall include: parents, spouse, brothers, sisters, children, grandparents, grandchildren, parents-in-law, sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, sons-in law, daughters-in-law, legal guardians and civil union partners.
- D. In the event that sick days must be used by a teacher assistant, the teacher assistant shall report the necessity to the appropriate Administrator of the School District to which he or she is assigned in accordance with that School District's policy.
- E. Teacher assistants shall be notified in writing, reported on their paychecks, as to the current number of sick leave days they have accumulated.

#### 4.2 Personal Leave

- A. Each teacher assistant may be granted, upon approval of the Director (2) personal leave days (with pay) each school year. Personal Leave shall be non-cumulative; provided, however, that any unused personal leave days shall, at the end of the school year, convert to and be added to the teacher assistant's accumulated sick days. One (1) day of unused personal leave per year shall be rolled over to the following year. Any unused personal leave days that will result in any teacher assistant having more than three (3) personal days in any given year; will be rolled over to accumulated sick leave.

**Example:** Teacher Assistant A has three (3) personal leave days in 2020-2021 school year. In August of 2020, Teacher Assistant A is entitled to two (2) more personal leave days. Two(2) days will roll over to accumulated sick days and Teacher Assistant A still has three

(3) leave days. Personal leave days will not be granted during the first five (5) work days of school, last five

(5) work days, and for days immediately before or after a holiday or school vacation. Specific reasons may be provided to the Director covering unusual circumstances and/or emergency situations, whereby such requests may be considered for approval by the Director.

- B. Notification for a personal leave day shall be made to the Director using the proper format least five (5) working days in advance. In cases of emergency situations, exceptions may be granted.
- C. The employee shall not be required to give explanation of the reason for the leave unless such request violates Part B and / or C above.
- D. Requests must be made in writing to the Director.
- E. Personal leave days shall be granted in half or full days.

#### **4.3 Bereavement Leave**

Teacher assistants may use two (2) days, per incidence of death, per work year, for leave connected with the death of an "Immediate Family" member of the Employee without deduction from sick leave. ("Immediate Family" shall be defined as noted in Section 4.1 C Sick Leave.) Additional days may be granted by the Director, which shall be deducted from available sick days or, if sick leave is not available, deducted from salary.

#### **4.4 Jury Duty Leave**

A teacher assistant will be excused at full pay for the purposes of fulfilling jury duty.

#### **4.5 Pregnancy-Related Disability Leave**

- A. Any teacher assistant who becomes pregnant shall receive, upon request; a pregnancy related disability leave of absence. The request to the Director shall include a physician's statement certifying pregnancy.
- B. The teacher assistant's seniority is not affected by the pregnancy-related disability leave during the period of time mentioned above. However, for teacher assistants who have less than two (2) years of continuous service, disability leave in excess of accumulated sick leave may result in a loss of credit for evaluation purposes only for the school year if it is determined by the Director that the evaluation process cannot be adequately completed.
- C. The pregnancy-related disability leave shall be for a period of time as certified by the

teacher assistant's doctor.

- D. Teacher assistants may use accumulated sick leave during the period of pregnancy related disability.
- E. Advancement on the salary schedule will be allowed according to the following:
  - 1. If a teacher assistant works one hundred twenty (120) or more days of a school year, that full year will be allowed on the schedule.
  - 2. If a teacher assistant works less than one hundred twenty (120) days, no advancement on the schedule will be allowed.
- F. General Conditions Affecting Pregnancy-Related Disability Leave

Notification by the teacher assistant of her intent to return from a pregnancy related disability leave must be according to the following timetable:

- 1. Prior to taking the leave, the teacher assistant will inform the Director as to her anticipated date to physically be able to return to work, as verified by her physician, if a child care leave hasn't been requested.
- 2. Confirmation of the actual date that a teacher assistant is released by her physician to return to work must be provided to the Director, in writing, prior to said date. Whenever possible, a five (5) working day notice of the specific date to return to work should be provided to the Director so as to insure a continuity of instruction.
- 3. Teacher assistants who are returning to work immediately following a pregnancy-related disability leave shall return to a designated position within their classification as determined by the Director.

#### **4.6 Child Care Leave**

- A. Upon written request submitted to the Director by a teacher assistant, at least three(3) months before the leave is to begin (unless exceptions are granted by the Director), the Board will grant an unpaid child care leave under the following conditions:
  - 1. Child care leave applies to newborn babies or newly adopted children under the age of four (4) years old.
  - 2. Child care leave shall be for a period of time as approved by the Director and cannot exceed one (1) full school year.
  - 3. Salary, fringe benefits, and seniority accumulation cease at the commencement of child care leave. However, the teacher assistant may keep all insurance coverage in

effect during the leave period as long as the assistant makes the required premium payments to the District.

4. Advancement on the salary schedule will be allowed according to the following:
  - a. If a teacher assistant works one hundred twenty (120) or more days of a school year, that full year will be allowed on the schedule.
  - b. If a teacher assistant works less than one hundred twenty (120) days, no advancement on the schedule will be allowed.
5. If an approved childcare leave is approved prior to completing two (2) continuous years or service, the leave may result in a loss of evaluation credit for the school year if it is determined by the Director that the evaluation process cannot be adequately completed.

**B. General Conditions Affecting Child Care Leaves**

1. If a teacher assistant intends to return for the beginning of the second semester of a school year, written notification shall be made by the teacher assistant to the Director by October 31 of the same year.
2. If a teacher assistant intends to return for the beginning of the first semester of a school year, written notification shall be made by the teacher assistant to the Director by April 1 of the same calendar year.
3. A teacher assistant granted a childcare leave shall be entitled to a teacher assistant position for which he/she is qualified.
4. Failure of a teacher assistant to notify the Director of his/her intent to return according to the provisions of this section shall be considered as a resignation provided the district notifies the teacher assistant in writing of this requirement at least thirty (30) days prior to the deadline.

**4.7 Sick Leave Bank**

- A. Any full-time teacher assistant shall be eligible to participate voluntarily in a "Sick Leave Bank." A teacher assistant who desires to participate in the Sick Leave Bank shall submit a written notice of intent to participate on a provided form. The notice shall be given to the Sick Leave Bank Committee, which will administer the provisions of the Sick Leave Bank, prior to October 1 of each year. Any teacher assistant on extended sick leave during the annual enrollment period is ineligible to join the Sick Leave Bank. Days awarded to a teacher assistant from the Sick Leave Bank shall not count toward district seniority credit or salary schedule advancement.

- B. Participating teacher assistants shall have deducted from accumulated sick leave one (1) day of credited sick leave each year for five (5) years as their initial contribution to the Sick Leave Bank. When the Sick Leave Bank Committee shall deem it necessary to replenish the Bank, participating members will contribute one (1) sick day from their accumulated sick leave. If a participating teacher assistant does not have a sick leave day to contribute for that year, then the sick leave day will be contributed at the beginning of the next school year without lapse in Sick Leave Bank eligibility. No teacher assistant who has submitted a notice of intent to retire will have a sick day automatically deducted.
- C. A participant may cancel membership by so indicating in writing directed to the attention of the chairperson of the Sick Leave Bank Committee. Cancellation of membership, regardless of reason, shall mean forfeiture of any claim to contributed days and benefits of membership.
- D. Authorized withdrawal by participating teacher assistants from the Sick Leave Bank shall be made only upon approval of the majority of members of the Sick Leave Bank Committee. The Sick Leave Bank Committee members shall be chosen by the Union. The Committee will consist of four (4) full-time teacher assistants. The Director or his/her designee will also serve on the Sick Leave Bank Committee. The decisions of the Committee shall be final and are not subject to grievance and arbitration procedures set forth in Article II.
- E. A participating teacher assistant may not apply for a withdrawal from the Sick Leave Bank until the teacher assistant has, in fact, depleted his/her accumulated sick leave and personal leave and has been absent for a minimum of twenty (20) school days with a catastrophic illness. Each withdrawal shall be no more than twenty (20) school days. A teacher assistant may apply for additional withdrawal, if necessary, upon depletion of the initial withdrawal. Under no circumstances will a total number of days used by a participating teacher assistant exceed fifty (50) days in any given year. Under no circumstances shall withdrawals from the Sick Leave Bank be used to extend a participant's sick leave beyond the school year in which the leave first commenced. A teacher assistant may not apply for future Sick Leave Bank withdrawals until he/she has completed one (1) year of active teaching service after use of the Bank.
- F. The Sick Leave Bank is available to teacher assistants who have exhausted all of their accumulated sick leave and personal leave and suffer from a personal illness, disability, or hospitalization of a "catastrophic" nature. Catastrophic refers to a life-threatening, extraordinary, or chronically debilitating medical condition and is not intended to include commonplace or ordinary medical conditions. Examples of catastrophic medical conditions include certain cancers and pregnancy/child-birth complications that are hazardous to the life of the mother and/or unborn child. In contrast, the flu, a broken leg, and routine pregnancies are not considered catastrophic medical conditions. Generally, catastrophic medical conditions must be considered both long-term in nature and require a long-term recuperation period. A physician's statement describing in reasonable detail the prognosis of the life-threatening, extraordinary, or chronically debilitating illness, along with a treatment plan and an estimated

return to work date, must be submitted with the teacher assistant's request to access the Sick Leave Bank.

- G. The SOWIC bookkeeper shall compile a roster of participating teacher assistant and shall submit its list to the Union President no later than thirty (30) days upon receipt of the information from the open enrollment period in any given year, or by November 1st. Additionally, the administration shall report any withdrawals to the Union President as days are withdrawn and awarded to a participating teacher assistant.
- H. The Sick Leave Bank Committee will meet prior to November 1 each year to review the status of the Sick Leave Bank.
- I. Any teacher assistant who is receiving disability benefits from IMRF or who is absent for illness or injury due to a work-related accident (which is compensable under the Illinois Worker's Compensation Act) may not avail himself/herself of any benefits of the Bank. Teacher assistants who are on Board- approved leaves of absence, except for a temporary disability leave, shall be ineligible to withdraw days from the Sick Leave Bank.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS**

#### ***5.1 Salary Schedule***

- A. The salary schedule shall be set forth in Appendix A, which is attached hereto and incorporated into this Agreement.
- B. Extended School Year (Summer School). Teacher assistants will be paid their hourly rate during extended school year hours.
- C. Teacher Assistants assigned on a full-time permanent basis to the Communication and Adaptive Behavior Program (CAB) will receive an additional stipend of \$0.50 per hour in recognition of specialized job requirements and training.

#### ***5.2 Payroll Procedure***

Teacher assistants shall be paid on the basis of twenty-four (24) equal installments.

#### ***5.3 Payroll Deductions***

Upon written request of a teacher assistant, the Board shall make deductions from the teacher assistant's paycheck for:

- A. Membership dues to SOWIC Council, A.F.T. – Local No. 604;
- B. Tax-sheltered annuity plans, i.e., Valic, etc.; and,
- C. Payroll savings plans.

Provided, however, that the maximum number of designated receiving agencies for such deductions for the entire staff shall not exceed ten (10) and further provided that at least three staff members elect to have payroll deductions for the same designated receiving agency.

#### ***5.4 Health Insurance***

- A. The Board shall contribute 80% of the annual single premium rate for single or family coverage for purchase of said health and dental insurance for current full time teacher assistants. All teacher assistants hired after June 30, 2016, will be offered participation in HMO coverage only with the option to participate in a PPO program by paying the difference in the premium.
- B. The Board shall contribute 80% of the annual single premium rate for each current full-time employee of a married or civil union status if both employees work for SOWIC and apply this amount towards family coverage. The employees will be responsible for paying for the balance of the cost of the family policy.
- C. The Board shall contribute 80% of the annual single premium rate in HMO only if hired after June 30, 2016, for each full time employee of a married or civil union status if both employees

work for SOWIC and apply this amount towards family coverage. The employees will be responsible for paying for the balance of the cost of the family policy with the option to participate in a PPO program by paying the difference in the premium.

### **5.5 Life Insurance**

*The Board shall provide a term life insurance policy in the amount of \$30,000.00 for all full-time teacher assistants.*

### **5.6 Recruitment Sign-On Bonus**

Teacher assistants newly employed by SOWIC during the term of this contract shall be paid a signing bonus of \$3000 in two installments as follows. The first installment of \$1500, shall be paid by no later than June 30 following completion of one full school term of employment. The second installment of \$1500, shall be paid by no later than June 30 following the completion of the second consecutive full school term of employment. Teacher assistants who complete their second consecutive full school term at the end of the 2024-2025 school term shall be paid \$1500 no later than June 30 following the completion of the second consecutive full school term of employment.

### **5.7 Recognition Benefit**

A onetime recognition benefit shall be available to the retirees who begin drawing Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund pension benefits immediately after leaving SOWIC and who have at least fifteen (15) years of full-time, consecutive service in SOWIC. Eligible teacher assistants will receive two hundred dollars (\$200.00) per year of full-time service in SOWIC. It shall be the responsibility of the retiring teacher assistant to notify the Director or designee in writing prior to April 1<sup>st</sup> of the year of his/her retirement and resignation in order to receive this benefit.

### **5.8 Mileage Reimbursement**

Teacher assistants shall be allowed to claim mileage reimbursement at the rate allowable by the IRS when their personal automobiles are used in the performance of assigned duties. Mileage reimbursement will be paid for travel to and from professional conferences outside of SOWIC.

### **5.9 Field Trip Reimbursement**

Teacher assistants shall be reimbursed any fees that they are required to pay to attend field trips during the course of the school day.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **EFFECT AND DURATION OF AGREEMENT**

#### ***6.1 Terms of Agreement***

This Agreement shall be in effect on July 1, 2024, and shall continue in effect until June 30, 2028.

#### ***6.2 Savings Clause***

Should any article, section or clause of this Agreement be declared illegal by a court of competent jurisdiction, then said article, section or clause shall be deleted, but the remaining articles, sections and clauses shall remain in full force and effect.

#### ***6.3 No Strike and Disruptions***

Neither a teacher assistant nor the Union shall ever, during the term of this Agreement, promote, sponsor, engage or condone any strike, concerted stoppages of work, refusal to render full and complete services to the Board, or any other interruption of educational services of the Cooperative for the duration of this Agreement. It is understood and agreed that any teacher assistant violating this provision shall be subject to discipline deemed appropriate by the Board. Additionally, the Board agrees that during the term of this Agreement, it will not conduct nor condone any lockout of its teacher assistants.

#### ***6.4 Meetings***

The Director or designee will meet monthly, during the school year with up to two representatives of the Union Executive Board to discuss matters relating to the implementation of this Agreement. The schedule for the school term will be established and the Director and the Union President. Rescheduled meetings will be by mutual agreement between the Director and Union President.

#### ***6.5 Complete Understanding***

The parties acknowledge that during the negotiations which resulted in this Agreement, each had the unlimited right and opportunity to make demands and proposals with respect to any subject or matter not removed by law or by specific agreement of the parties, and that the understandings and agreements arrived at by the parties after the exercise of that right and opportunity are set forth in this Agreement. The terms and conditions set forth in this Agreement represent the full and complete understanding between the parties. The terms and conditions contained herein may be modified only through the written mutual consent of the

parties.

## **6.6 Changes**

The terms and conditions of this Agreement may be altered, changed, added to, deleted from, or modified only through voluntary, mutual consent of the parties in a ratified written amendment.

## **6.7 Previous Agreements**

It is agreed that this Agreement contains the full and complete content between the Board and the Union on all bargaining issues. All prior agreements, including any written and/or verbal commitments, on any issue shall be subject to and consistent with the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

## **6.8 Board Authority**

The Board, on its own behalf and on behalf of the electors of the District, retains and reserves all powers, rights, authorizes, duties and responsibility conferred upon and vested in it by the statutes and Constitution of the State of Illinois and the United States, along with the decisional law by the courts, provided that such rights and responsibilities shall be exercised in conformity with the provisions of the Agreement and the rules and regulations of the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act.

## **6.9 Deductions on Behalf of the Union**

- A. By September 15<sup>th</sup> of each year, the SOWIC Council shall certify to the Cooperative in writing the amount of annual membership dues, assessments and fees (collectively referred to as "dues") to be deducted from bargaining unit employees who decide to become dues paying members of the SOWIC Council. This certification shall be accompanied by a list of the employees who have individually authorized such deductions in writing. The Cooperative shall deduct from regular pay of such employees the amount of dues certified by the SOWIC Council on a schedule agreed to by both the Cooperative and the SOWIC Council. The first dues remittance each September from the Cooperative will include the following information: job title, worksite location, employee identification number, work e-mail address, date of hire, and, if on file with the Cooperative, the home and cellular phone numbers, and home email address. In addition within ten (10) business days from date of hire, the Cooperative shall provide to the SOWIC Council via email, the same information about new employees. The aggregate deductions of the employees shall be remitted in an Excel file to the SOWIC Council on a monthly basis together with a statement identifying the amount deducted from each employee. Deductions shall remain in effect until the Cooperative receives notice from the SOWIC Council that an employee

has revoked or changed his or her authorization in writing in accordance with the terms of the authorization. Employee requests to authorize, revoke, cancel or change authorizations for payroll deductions received by the Cooperative shall be directed to the SOWIC Council.

- B. The SOWIC Council shall indemnify and hold harmless the Cooperative, the Cooperative's Board and its members, officers, agents, administrators and employees from and against any and all claims, demands, actions, complaints, suits, grievances, attorneys' fees, costs, expenses or other forms of liability or losses directly or indirectly resulting from, by reason, or by connected with any Cooperative action arising from this Section.

## APPENDIX A

Years	2024-2025 Hourly	2024-2025 Annual Salary	2025-2026 Hourly	2025-2026 Annual Salary	2026-2027 Hourly	2026-2027 Annual Salary	2027-2028 Hourly	2027-2028 Annual Salary
1	\$ 19.00	\$ 23,940	\$ 19.75	\$ 24,885	\$ 20.50	\$ 25,830	\$ 21.25	\$ 26,775
2	\$ 19.21	\$ 24,205	\$ 19.95	\$ 25,137	\$ 20.74	\$ 26,132	\$ 21.53	\$ 27,128
3	\$ 19.47	\$ 24,532	\$ 20.17	\$ 25,414	\$ 20.95	\$ 26,397	\$ 21.78	\$ 27,443
4	\$ 19.71	\$ 24,835	\$ 20.44	\$ 25,754	\$ 21.18	\$ 26,687	\$ 22.00	\$ 27,720
5	\$ 19.95	\$ 25,137	\$ 20.70	\$ 26,082	\$ 21.46	\$ 27,040	\$ 22.24	\$ 28,022
6	\$ 19.95	\$ 25,137	\$ 20.95	\$ 26,397	\$ 21.74	\$ 27,392	\$ 22.53	\$ 28,388
7	\$ 19.95	\$ 25,137	\$ 20.95	\$ 26,397	\$ 22.00	\$ 27,720	\$ 22.83	\$ 28,766
8	\$ 19.97	\$ 25,162	\$ 20.95	\$ 26,397	\$ 22.00	\$ 27,720	\$ 23.10	\$ 29,106
9	\$ 20.00	\$ 25,200	\$ 20.97	\$ 26,422	\$ 22.00	\$ 27,720	\$ 23.10	\$ 29,106
10	\$ 20.25	\$ 25,515	\$ 21.00	\$ 26,460	\$ 22.02	\$ 27,745	\$ 23.10	\$ 29,106
11	\$ 20.50	\$ 25,830	\$ 21.26	\$ 26,788	\$ 22.05	\$ 27,783	\$ 23.12	\$ 29,131
12	\$ 20.89	\$ 26,321	\$ 21.53	\$ 27,128	\$ 22.32	\$ 28,123	\$ 23.15	\$ 29,169
13	\$ 21.04	\$ 26,510	\$ 21.93	\$ 27,632	\$ 22.61	\$ 28,489	\$ 23.44	\$ 29,534
14	\$ 21.19	\$ 26,699	\$ 22.09	\$ 27,833	\$ 23.03	\$ 29,018	\$ 23.74	\$ 29,912
15	\$ 21.45	\$ 27,027	\$ 22.25	\$ 28,035	\$ 23.19	\$ 29,219	\$ 24.18	\$ 30,467
16	\$ 21.72	\$ 27,367	\$ 22.52	\$ 28,375	\$ 23.36	\$ 29,434	\$ 24.35	\$ 30,681
17	\$ 21.99	\$ 27,707	\$ 22.81	\$ 28,741	\$ 23.65	\$ 29,799	\$ 24.53	\$ 30,908
18	\$ 22.19	\$ 27,959	\$ 23.09	\$ 29,093	\$ 23.95	\$ 30,177	\$ 24.83	\$ 31,286
19	\$ 22.42	\$ 28,249	\$ 23.30	\$ 29,358	\$ 24.24	\$ 30,542	\$ 25.15	\$ 31,689
20	\$ 22.65	\$ 28,539	\$ 23.54	\$ 29,660	\$ 24.47	\$ 30,832	\$ 25.45	\$ 32,067
21	\$ 22.94	\$ 28,904	\$ 23.78	\$ 29,963	\$ 24.72	\$ 31,147	\$ 25.69	\$ 32,369
22	\$ 23.43	\$ 29,522	\$ 24.09	\$ 30,353	\$ 24.97	\$ 31,462	\$ 25.96	\$ 32,710
23	\$ 23.67	\$ 29,824	\$ 24.60	\$ 30,996	\$ 25.29	\$ 31,865	\$ 26.22	\$ 33,037
24	\$ 23.92	\$ 30,139	\$ 24.85	\$ 31,311	\$ 25.83	\$ 32,546	\$ 26.55	\$ 33,453
25	\$ 24.19	\$ 30,479	\$ 25.12	\$ 31,651	\$ 26.09	\$ 32,873	\$ 27.12	\$ 34,171
26	\$ 24.46	\$ 30,820	\$ 25.40	\$ 32,004	\$ 26.38	\$ 33,239	\$ 27.39	\$ 34,511
27	\$ 24.74	\$ 31,172	\$ 25.68	\$ 32,357	\$ 26.67	\$ 33,604	\$ 27.70	\$ 34,902
28	\$ 25.02	\$ 31,525	\$ 25.98	\$ 32,735	\$ 26.96	\$ 33,970	\$ 28.00	\$ 35,280
29	\$ 25.32	\$ 31,903	\$ 26.27	\$ 33,100	\$ 27.28	\$ 34,373	\$ 28.31	\$ 35,671

**2024-2025: Increase over 2023-2024-Steps 1-10 \$1.50 per hour, Steps 11-20 \$1.75 per hour, Steps 21+ \$2.00 per hour.**

**2025-2026: 5% increase**

**2026-2027: 5% increase**

**2027-2028: 5% increase**

**This Agreement is approved and executed on\_\_\_\_\_.**

**Governing Board of Southern Will County Cooperative for Special Education (SOWIC) with the approval of the Board of Education of Troy Community Consolidated School District 30C, Will County, Illinois, as Administrative District for the Southern Will County Cooperative for Special Education, Will County, Illinois.**

**By:\_\_\_\_\_ Attest\_\_\_\_\_**  
**Its President, SOWIC Its Secretary, SOWIC**

**SOWIC Council-American Federation of Teachers – Local No. 604, AFT/IFT, AFL-CIO**

**By\_\_\_\_\_ Attest\_\_\_\_\_**  
**Its President Its Secretary**

**Approved by Troy 30C, Administrative District for Southern Will County Cooperative for Special Education**

**By:\_\_\_\_\_ Attest:\_\_\_\_\_**  
**Its President, Troy 30C Its Secretary, Troy 30C**