



For Immediate Release

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NESHAMINY TEACHERS WILL RETURN TO CLASSROOMS FRIDAY, VOW RENEWED DETERMINATION TO WIN CONTRACT SETTLEMENT

Teachers Say They Will Continue To Push for Accelerated Talks Despite School Board's Rejection of Teachers' Offer To Negotiate 24/7

LANGHORNE, PA (January 19, 2012) —Neshaminy teachers announced Tuesday that they will return to their classrooms on Jan. 20 following a nine-day strike over the school district's refusal to work toward a contract settlement. As they returned to work, teachers called on the School Board to commit to an accelerated negotiating schedule. Teacher leaders said they are ending their job action in accordance with a Pennsylvania statute (Act 88) that limits the length of teacher strikes.

"The law requires that we call an end to striking for now," said Louise Boyd, president of the Neshaminy Federation of Teachers. "After the events of the past few weeks, we think it's very clear which side is refusing to compromise. We have a proposal on the table in which teachers are offering financial sacrifices in the millions. Even while we were walking the picket line, we reached out to the Board and offered a number of ways we could still reach agreement. They rejected each one."

The Neshaminy School Board canceled a Jan. 12 bargaining session, a move that brought hundreds of Neshaminy teachers to a nighttime vigil at Maple Point Middle School, the site of the scheduled talks. The Board has not responded to a Jan. 13 conditional offer by teachers to bargain around the clock for seven days and then submit to binding arbitration on unresolved issues following this process if both parties fail to reach a settlement during the round-the-clock week-long session.

“Intensive, very accelerated negotiating and arbitration are two of the usual solutions for longstanding bargaining stalemates,” Boyd said. “We’re disappointed that the Board keeps refusing to consider these paths to a settlement. But we aren’t fussy about how we get to a fair agreement. Teachers remain willing to explore any and all ways to reach a fair contract.”

Boyd said the School Board has offered to attend a previously scheduled negotiating session on January 26, 2012. “But we need more than the same old approach of unproductive bargaining sessions that are scheduled weeks or months apart, in which the Board does not offer any movement,” she said.

Boyd did not rule out a second teacher strike this spring. She said, “I hope it won’t be necessary. It’s the last thing teachers want. We remain hopeful this Board will decide to roll up its sleeves and work with us to reach an agreement.”

Boyd said teacher morale remains high in the wake of the strike, which drew sustained media coverage and a groundswell of community support.

“In the past few weeks, teachers have come together as never before, and we’ve had a lot of community support to hearten us,” said Boyd. “Yes, we’ve seen some name-calling and verbal and even physical attacks on teachers, but the pro-teacher messages and actions have been far more numerous. Students brought us coffee on the picket line. Parents called the School Board. Many families turned out to demonstrate with us. The overwhelming community support was truly appreciated.”

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