



Pasco School District #1

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MEDIA STATEMENT

Sept. 11, 2015

We are very sad that another week has passed without Pasco students in school where they belong.

Both teams continued to bargain all week, with the assistance of PERC mediators. The District bargaining team was at every session at the mutually agreed upon time, they were prepared, ready to work, and they stayed until the mutually agreed upon time. The District continues to stand ready to bargain as we have since last spring.

We understand that significant human and financial resources must be dedicated to addressing the association's identified concerns regarding curriculum. The District also recognizes that authentic stakeholder involvement is essential to address this issue, including but not limited to parents and teachers. The District proposes to allocate at least \$3 million for curriculum adoption this school year, at least \$2.9 million next year, for a minimum total of \$5.9 million in the next two years. The District expects to commit additional resources based on the recommendations from the proposed curriculum review process. This is a process that teachers must be involved in.

Pasco teachers will be the professionals using the tools and they need to be involved in the process of vetting and choosing the materials they will use to do their jobs. Washington law and board policy provide for a curriculum adoption process where curriculum committees make recommendations to the Instructional Materials Committee and the IMC recommends curriculum for Board approval. The IMC, by law, includes teachers and parents. The longer we are out of school, the more difficult it becomes to meet the timelines the union seeks on curriculum adoption. The concerns of the teachers and community regarding curriculum are the District's highest priority.

Another consequence in this prolonged strike is that teachers have not officially started working within their 2015-16 contracts so they may be ineligible to receive a September paycheck and may also be responsible for paying for their own benefits this month. The four days they worked in August are considered supplemental, or Tier days. Their contract officially started on September 1, which is the day they went on strike. They haven't worked any day of the 2015-16 calendar to qualify for prorated pay. In the end, teachers will have to make up any missed days because state law requires 180 school days for students.

If an agreement is not reached this weekend, the District will provide training days for classified employees who have not worked during the strike to allow them to receive their September pay and benefits. They should not suffer financial consequences for a decision they did not make. Supervisors will be contacting affected employees with details on those trainings if that becomes necessary.

The prolonged strike is damaging many aspects of the District and community. We have learned that universities have pulled their fall student teacher placements from Pasco because school has not started. We are very concerned about children who need access to free and reduced meals, and the educational needs of all our students and especially the students in our special education programs. Families need to be able to plan for holidays, graduations, and child care. The District's contract offer to PAE is fair. It addresses the concerns of PAE members while being fiscally responsible and sustainable. We also recognize the need to provide a fair, competitive compensation package for teachers.

This has been a very difficult time for everyone. Teachers and all of the staff affected by this strike are our friends and our neighbors. We miss our colleagues and students. It's time to get back to school and so the healing process can begin in our community.