

Rochester Education Association
Office of the President
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Press Release

Beginning Wednesday, January 24, 2024, and each successive Wednesday until a contract settlement is reached, teachers in Rochester Public Schools will leave work as a group at the end of the contracted workday. This does not mean teachers are walking out, it just means they are going home on time. This action will serve as a reminder of all the work that teachers do beyond their contracted hours.

Rochester teachers provide a world class education while supporting students who are struggling with more mental health issues than ever before. We work hard every day to be the best, often sacrificing our personal time to prepare innovative lessons, provide additional help for students that are struggling, and to keep up with grading. We routinely work beyond our contracted hours, and many of us spend significant amounts of time doing schoolwork in the evenings, on weekends, and during school breaks. We do this because we are consummate professionals and want to do the best job for our students that we possibly can.

Many teachers are exhausted, and some struggle to make ends meet financially. I am concerned about the number of teachers that must take a second job because their teaching salary isn't enough to support their family. I am also concerned about the number of teachers who have indicated they are at or near their breaking point and may need to leave teaching.

Rochester teachers believe that recruitment and retention of high-quality educators is vital to continuing to provide a world class education in Rochester Public Schools. A competitive salary schedule will assist our Human Resources professionals greatly in attracting and keeping these educators.

Rochester teachers believe smaller class sizes contribute to a world class education system by providing more one-on-one attention for students. Students feel safer and more willing to participate in a meaningful manner when class sizes are smaller. Smaller class sizes make it easier for teachers to conduct more hands-on lessons. Small classes give students the opportunity to:

- Ask questions as they arise and receive answers from the teacher straightaway; ask follow-up questions if there's still something that they don't understand.
- Share their thoughts and ideas and get feedback on them from their peers and the class instructor.
- Contribute to the learning experience of their peers.

This leads to improved understanding and increased engagement from the whole class.

Please reach out if you have any further questions.

Vince Wagner
President, Rochester Education Association