



# Prospect Heights School District 23

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September 16, 2015

Dear Prospect Heights School District 23 Families, Staff and Community:

As you are aware, yesterday, the Prospect Heights Education Association (PHEA), the union that represents our 150 teachers and educational support staff, walked out of negotiations and called for a strike. Schools were closed today, Wednesday, September 16, and will remain closed on Thursday, September 17. At this time, no additional negotiation sessions have been scheduled. We will continue to provide daily email updates to allow our families to plan accordingly to ensure that our students are safe and productive during this unfortunate disruption to their education.

Salaries continue to be the primary issue resulting in this impasse. PHEA is seeking compensation of 4.5%, 4.5% and 4.25%, which is unsustainable based on the District's financial condition. The raises are not commensurate with the raises of the community, nor the consumer price index. PHEA's solution has encouraged the Board to dip into the District's Education Fund reserves to fund their salary increase. This is unacceptable. Education Fund reserves are designed to cover one-time, unforeseen events or unexpected expenses that may occur as a result of local or state issues that are beyond the Board's control, much like families must have extra funds set aside to cover emergencies. While we respect our teachers and greatly value their contributions, we simply must live within our means. The Board has proposed salary increases of 3.25%, 3.25% and 3%, and 1.75%, 1.75% and 1.5% for high wage earners over \$90,000, which we believe are fair, equitable and fiscally responsible.

PHEA has also demanded that the District return to a salary schedule, which the Board is opposed for two key reasons:

- First, rather than linking compensation to learning outcomes, salary schedules guarantee annual raises through a step-and-lane system based only on years of service and educational degrees.
- Second, salary schedules are inflexible to ebb and flows in the economy, locking the District into guaranteed raises even in the face of an uncertain financial climate.

The Board's foremost concern is to continue to provide the quality education the community has come to expect, while also serving as good stewards of limited taxpayers resources.

The Board of Education is grateful for the many calls and emails calling on both parties to resolve their differences and to put the needs of our students first. We will continue to provide daily email updates on the status of our negotiations and thank you for your ongoing support of District 23 schools and students.

Sincerely,  
Mari-Lynn Peters, School Board President

Please contact us if you would like this communication translated into your native language.  
Por favor, póngase en contacto con nosotros si desea que esta comunicación traducido a su idioma nativo.  
Prosimy o kontakt, jeżeli chcą Państwo by wiadomość ta została przetłumaczona na Państwa język ojczysty.