



Dear Parents and Members of the Mount Pleasant Community,

The Mount Pleasant Teachers Association would like to take this opportunity to communicate our position and to clarify the events leading up to the letter you received from the Board of Education on Friday, March 3rd. The MPTA is disappointed by the District's use of the community as a bargaining tactic.

First and foremost, the sole priority of the Mount Pleasant Teachers Association is to provide your children, our students, with an education that prepares them for the 21st century. The successful preparation of our students, both now and as they head into the next chapter of their lives, is of the utmost importance. With this objective in mind, the MPTA initiated talks with the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Susan Guiney, beginning in September 2016. The MPTA was eager to begin the negotiation process early to ensure a quick, reasonable, and smooth transition from one contract to another. At that time, the District said the Facilities Bond was their priority. We made it ours too.

After the successful passage of the Bond, the MPTA again reached out to Dr. Guiney and the Board to begin the negotiation process. The MPTA requested a meeting in late November and met with the Board President and the Superintendent on December 19th to make an informal proposal. This offer was respectful of the needs of students, community members, and teachers. It included adding the Block Schedule as part of the contract in the hope that an agreement could be reached before the end of the 2016-2017 school year. The Board declined our proposal on January 12th and both parties agreed to begin the process of formal negotiations. To date, the Board has met formally with the MPTA only once, on February 13th. Before entering the formal meeting, the MPTA extended a second informal offer, which was not acknowledged by the District. Following, both parties exchanged proposals and set future dates for negotiations. Our second meeting is scheduled for this Wednesday, March 8th.

Last week, on March 2, 2017, without any prior substantial conversations, the MPTA was issued an ultimatum. The President of the Board of Education stated that the MPTA had 24 hours to agree to roll over the Block Schedule agreement outside of negotiating a new contract. This agreement was to be made immediately or the Board would communicate to the community that the Teachers Association was putting the Block Schedule at risk. However, if the Teachers Association agreed to the Board's demands without negotiation, a different letter praising the Teachers Association would be sent out to the community instead. This agreement cannot be made separate from negotiations. While, the District claims that scheduling is the prerogative of management and shouldn't need to be negotiated as part of the contract, NYS law says differently. New York State Public Employee Relations Bureau (PERB) law requires that details of a teacher's schedule must be negotiated. This is a matter of law. The district acknowledged this when the sunset clause regarding block scheduling was negotiated and mutually agreed upon by the MPTA and the District in our current contract.

To be clear, the MPTA is not interested in a long and costly negotiation. With open minds and hopeful hearts, the MPTA remains committed to the students and families of Mount Pleasant and confident that the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools will continue to work toward a timely agreement that is both respectful of the community and of the Teachers Association. Bringing this contract negotiation to a swift conclusion is the right decision and will allow all involved to continue supporting and educating the students of Mt. Pleasant, our primary objective.

The next public Board Meeting is scheduled for March 8th at 7:30 pm in the Westlake High School Library. The MPTA believes in full transparency and we invite all community members to get involved and to stay informed.

Yours respectfully, The Mount Pleasant Teachers Association