

Dear Members of the Mount Pleasant Teachers Association,

While the officers and I were able to catch many of you on Friday afternoon, I want to touch base again and provide some information about recent events.

I received a phone call from BOE President Chris Pinchiarolli on Thursday at 10:00 a.m. issuing a 24 hour ultimatum: agree to negotiate one aspect of the contract outside of negotiations- the High School schedule- or the Board would send a letter to the community characterizing the teachers as obstructionist. We asked for more time to consider the request. The Board denied the request and sent the Newslink after school on a Friday.

There are 2 important facts teachers need to know:

1. The District believes that writing to the community to make the teachers look like obstructionists is an appropriate bargaining tactic. It is not.
2. 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. This was recognized by the district when the sunset clause regarding block scheduling was negotiated and agreed upon mutually by the MPTA and the district in our current contract.

Rest assured that the MPTA initiated contract negotiations with the BOE in September. We have approached the Board in a variety of attempts to negotiate both formally and informally throughout the fall and winter. In December we presented them with an offer that included block scheduling and was fiscally conservative. The offer was fair and yet the BOE declined. Additional attempts to adjust and work with the district informally have not been acknowledged. The District has not been receptive to our efforts or offers. They have delayed the process. They have not made negotiating a contract - which includes block scheduling a priority. The MPTA has and we will continue to do so.

What can you do?

Do what you always do. Focus on the students. Continue to teach with courage and compassion.

As always, I'm proud to be part of a dedicated group.

217 Strong! Rise Up!

Respectfully, Virginia

If you are approached by parents, feel free to share that the MPTA would like to work with the Board to resolve this. It's a legal issue. And remind students that no matter what schedule is in place, we are always here to support them to be successful and reach their goals.

On Monday, I will be available from 7:45-8:45 a.m. in the HS staff room and 11:30-12:30 in my office across from the middle school cafeteria. I will also be available at CES from 3:30-4:30 in Carmen Bates' room. Please come and see me.

I also welcome any questions or comments via email on our new MPTA account mptastrong@gmail.com.