



BENSALEM TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

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STATEMENT READ AT BOARD MEETING - WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2018

It is no secret that our District has faced some challenging budget cycles. Escalating healthcare and pension expenses, increases in special education costs, and the loss of revenue to charter schools have created a shared hardship among all parties. In spite of this, every day, we do what we can to fulfill our educational mission to provide a “first class education for the whole child that challenges and supports each student to discover a passion for learning while designing and achieving a personal vision of success.” Our teachers play an instrumental role in supporting this mission.

Given our economic challenges, however, the task of negotiating a contract with the Bensalem Township Education Association (BTEA), the union which represents our teachers, has not been an easy path. As of this week, however, that path is at least heading in a new direction.

The BTEA and the District’s Negotiating Team are about to begin fact-finding. This process involves the assignment of a neutral third party by the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board (PLRB) - Larry Cheskawich - to examine the School Board’s proposal and the union leadership’s proposal and provide a recommended contract. Both parties are then given an opportunity to accept or reject the fact-finding recommendations in their entirety. Oftentimes, if rejected, the fact-finding recommendations serve as a framework for new negotiations, and potentially a settlement. The fact-finding hearing will be on December 12, 2018. The fact-finder’s report will be issued no later than December 31, 2018.

Informational updates on negotiations will be posted on our website in a newly-created “Negotiation Update” section under the “About Us,” “School Board” section. In addition, we will utilize press releases and other community outreach activities to ensure that the individuals who ultimately will be paying for a contract – our citizens – understand this often daunting process.

A handout explaining fact-finding is available at the Dorothy D. Call Administrative Center. It will also be available at www.bensalemsd.org.

**PROVIDING A FIRST CLASS EDUCATION
FOR THE WHOLE CHILD**