

August 19, 2016

Dear Evergreen Public School families:

This is to provide you information and an update on the potential of a work stoppage by members of the Evergreen Education Association (EEA) that could delay the start of the 2016-2017 school year currently scheduled to begin August 31, 2016.

Since March of this year, senior administrative staff members of Evergreen Public Schools have been negotiating with the three labor union bargaining units that represent 90 percent of the 3,200 employees of the district. In June, agreements were reached with two of the groups represented by the Public School Employees (PSE) of Washington. However, despite numerous bargaining sessions, an agreement with the EEA, which represents 1,800 certificated professionals (the vast majority are classroom teachers), has not been reached. The contract with EEA is set to expire on August 31, 2016.

Currently, the district has just finished a set of negotiation sessions, one that included a state-appointed mediator, attempting to resolve the issues that are keeping us from resolution. Evergreen Public Schools believe our teachers are the backbone of the district and have, and will continue to, offer fair local market wages, benefits and working conditions.

While the state legislature has been court-ordered to fully fund basic education, this has not happened. Instead, the state provides school districts only a portion of the funds needed to pay salary and benefits. Thus, every request above that basic allocation is funded from locally-voted on levy dollars derived from property taxes. It is a balancing act to ensure teachers are fairly compensated without asking for higher taxes from our community.

**The district has already offered a total compensation package to EEA members that exceeds what other school districts in Clark and Cowlitz counties offer their teachers, and is competitive (when the local cost-of-living is factored in) with our peer districts across the state.**

It is the goal of the district and the School Board Directors to come to a satisfactory resolution with EEA before school begins on August 31. If this does not happen, the options available as the negotiations continue are: school begins without a new contract, or EEA members vote for a work stoppage. If the EEA members choose a work stoppage, the 180 days of required instruction will begin once the work stoppage is over and the school year calendar will shift accordingly (i.e.: the final day of the 2016-17 school year will be later in June-much like snow days are added to the end of the school calendar).

We will continue to update you with our progress and also provide answers, within the guidelines of the mandated collective bargaining process, on our web site: [www.evergreenps.org](http://www.evergreenps.org). For a short recorded update, call 360/604-4134. Для получения информации на русском языке посетите веб сайт [www.evergreenps.org](http://www.evergreenps.org) или позвоните по телефону 360/604-4028. Para información en español, por favor visite la página web [www.evergreen.org](http://www.evergreen.org) o comuníquese al 360/604-4029.

Sincerely,



John Deeder, Superintendent