

# The Schools St. Paul Students Deserve

## Why educators are willing to strike for them

### What are educators fighting for in contract negotiations?

The Saint Paul Federation of Educators top priorities include:

- Smaller class sizes so students can get more individualized attention. Students need that extra attention now more than ever during this pandemic.
- Increased staffing for mental health teams at every school. Our schools are experiencing a mental health crisis and especially need more psychologists, intervention specialists and social workers.
- More adults working with our students with special needs so they can get more one-on-one support.
- Fair and reasonable cost-of-living wages for our educators, especially for our education assistants and support staff, to keep them in the profession.

Learn more about the proposals at [www.spfe28.org/bargaining/the-time-is-now](http://www.spfe28.org/bargaining/the-time-is-now).

### Why are we here again? Will there be another strike?

The last two years have shown us students need even more support, not less. Unfortunately, SPPS leaders haven't budged in negotiations and even want to backtrack on the investments our students need.

Contract negotiations, which happen every two years per state law, began last May. The union offered 23 proposals in four public sessions before SPPS filed for mediation in November. Mediation has been ongoing since December.

Nobody wants to strike. But if the district won't move, the short-term sacrifice of a strike is worth it so our students reap the long-term benefits of the schools they deserve for years to come.

### Can the district afford it?

The money is there. With over \$300 million available in federal relief funds, the district can start investing in what parents and students want and need – and educators know works.

SPPS officials make grim financial projections each year, but end up running a surplus and adding money to the district's rainy day

fund. Last year, the district budgeted for a \$33 million deficit only to end the year with a \$22 million surplus.

Budgets reflect priorities. District leaders need to start listening to the experts – parents and educators – about what our students need.

### When would a strike begin?

A strike date is set for March 8 if educators can't get the right commitments from the district.

### If there is a strike, what does that mean for St. Paul students and families?

The school district will have to make a decision, but most likely they will close schools during the strike. Parents will need to find alternative options for their students.

We will have more information regarding child care, meal options and other resources for families available on our website closer to the strike.

### Will the district have to add extra school days if there is a strike?

Not necessarily. If the district falls below the minimum number of days middle and high school students need to be in school, the district could add days. However, there is no penalty under state law if the district doesn't meet those requirements.

### How can parents, students and community members help get the contract settled?

There are many ways you can stay informed and help SPFE get a contract that invests in students and honors educators!

- Sign [our petition](#) to get on our community allies list for updates.
- Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). Then retweet, like and share our posts.
- Write a [letter to Joe Gothard](#) and let him know it's time to invest in students and educators and avoid a strike!

We will continue to post updates and ways to support educators and families on our website.



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