

Mediation Update – March 2nd, 2022

Dear SPFE Member,

Your SPFE bargaining team was in meetings with the district from 9am - 9pm today. We had discussions with the district about restorative practices, class size, schedule C for extra curricular stipends, special education workload, and finances.

In a big victory for Saint Paul students, we got the district to drop their demand to remove guaranteed recess from the contract! 🎉

We made progress on special education workload. We also reached tentative agreements on adult basic education, language for EA sign language interpreters, and building subs.

We had a frank discussion with the district about projected budget deficits. We voiced our concern that the deficit projections are inflated and rely on very cautious assumptions, which the district acknowledged. With an annual operating budget of \$750 million and over \$300 million in pandemic relief funds, we continue to believe the district has the funds to settle our contract.

While we are encouraged that the district is having conversations and showing movement on the issues of class size and student mental health supports, their proposals still fail to adequately meet student needs. In a presentation about class size, district leaders used business language about revenue and enrollment without any mention of what is in the best interest of students. We need to see more movement that benefits students.

On restorative practices, your bargaining team was excited to see recent data demonstrating restorative practice sites reduced racial disparity in dismissals. However, the district shared that they have no dedicated budget funds for RP sites that have completed the pilot process. We believe three years cannot be the end of a restorative practice investment in a school; there needs to be continued support and resources to continue the transformative work.

There's still time to settle a contract that gives students the supports they need and honors our work. Tell the SPPS school board to tell Superintendent Gothard and his team to put money on the table to invest in students and avoid a strike!

<https://secure.ngpvan.com/zolJpmRkHkm61GDOQh3C1g2?ms=memberemail>

In Solidarity,
Your SPFE Bargaining Team