

## **Board of Education Negotiations Press Release - UPDATED December 22, 2017**

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The Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District Board of Education and the Ramapo Indian Hills Education Association have been unable to reach a contract settlement after more than a year of negotiations and after exhausting mediation efforts. The Board and the Union presented their final offers to the State-appointed fact-finder on November 28, 2017. The Union revised its final offer on December 21, 2017. The fact-finder has the authority to recommend the terms of a settlement to the parties. However, the recommended terms of settlement are not binding upon either party.

The Board's final offer included a 3-year increase for teachers of 8.88% and 8.34% for the educational support staff. The Board's offer to the teachers is well above the 3-year average percentage increase in teachers' salaries for Bergen County. Other 3-year increases include Midland Park at 7.8%, Waldwick at 8.7% and Wyckoff at 8.1%.

Comparable 2-year settlements include Glen Rock at 2.7% and Northern Valley Regional at 2.8% in each year. River Dell Regional settled a 4-year contract at 2.7% in each year with a non-pensionable stipend of \$1,250 per year for teachers at maximum who contribute to their health insurance premiums.

The Board proposed a salary guide structure that would increase starting salaries and provide a fair distribution of increases to all teachers by leveling out longevity and including the savings in the increases given to all teachers on the salary guide.

The Board also proposed increased reimbursement for continuing education for teachers, a compassionate care day bank to provide for the needs of family members and recognition of additional clubs and stipends requested by the Union. In return, the Board asked for some additional supervision for advisorships previously exempted from supervision, a fixed rate for testing coordinators and the elimination of scheduled preparation time for non-classroom teachers.

The Union's final offer included a 3-year increase for teachers of 10.66% with no change in the longevity structure and no opportunity to increase starting salaries or provide a fair distribution to all teachers and particularly, the junior staff. In addition, the Union proposed restructuring Chapter 78 in year 2 to reduce their maximum health care contribution from 35% to 22% that has an additional cost of approximately \$93,000, which results in an overall 3-year increase of nearly 12%. For the educational support staff the Union proposes a 3-year increase of 8.85% with the same restructuring of

Chapter 78. The Union's proposal far exceeds any comparable settlement in Bergen County, is unaffordable, and in future years is unsustainable.

The fact-finder has scheduled February 2, 2018 for the submission of post hearing briefs, following which he will issue a report with his recommendations for settlement of the new 3-year agreement.