



BROADSIDE

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Before we break for holiday recess, I will share the most recent negotiations update. Since my last President's Column in the *Broadside*, the PEA and the district have met twice: November 29 and December 13. We also have our meetings scheduled for the beginning of next year: January 4, January 20, and February 1, 2017.

The PEA and the district are steadily moving forward in our conversations. I can assure you that our talks have been both positive and productive. We have done our due diligence in preparing for negotiations, and the district knows we are serious, focused, and determined to work toward negotiating a contract that our members will approve.

The PEA asked for and received an early start date for the negotiations process in the hopes that an early resolution might be forthcoming. The district is fully aware of our concerns and our commitment to ensuring that our members receive a fair and just contract. The PEA will not be deterred in reaching this goal.

At this juncture the main focus of our conversations has been the salary and benefits package. I can assure you that your concerns are being brought to the table. Salaries and benefits are not the only topics for consideration. We are also looking at other major areas of concern among our members.

I am being as transparent about this process as I can be, but I also recognize your frustrations at not knowing specifics right now. The Taylor Law which governs collective bargaining precludes the sharing of information. I am able to tell you that the PEA has presented a 177-page proposal containing irrefutable data to substantiate our position. It would not be wise to jeopardize the process by sharing out bits and pieces of that information which could lead to harmful speculation and gossip. I am in weekly meetings with either the district, the negotiations

team, or the Executive Committee. I am asking for your patience and your trust. I would be happy to answer any question that I can, either at a PEA meeting at your school or via email. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

I have received a few questions regarding the school calendar for next year. BOCES has not presented its calendar yet, but Dr. Putnam and I met to talk about the calendar on December 21. We anticipate that the BOCES calendar will be coming out in January. As you may recall, our contract stipulates that the PEA President and Superintendent of Schools must *agree* on the district calendar. I will let you know as soon as I have any more information.

Finally, I am happy to announce that Kevin Leisten (BT) will be our new *Broadside* editor beginning in January. After “advertising” for this position for many months, Kevin has answered the call and will be taking over the reins from Mary Bostwick, our interim editor. I appreciate Mary’s willingness to serve as interim *Broadside* editor until a permanent replacement could be found. Thanks, Mary, for your service to the PEA.

I wish each of you and your families a happy holiday season. May the New Year bring much good health and happiness to you and yours.

Together we are Union Strong.

Bob Young

PEA President

