

Nutley Teachers' Association

NUTLEY HIGH SCHOOL
NUTLEY, NEW JERSEY 07110

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board:

I will address myself to Mr. Williams' comments throughout my statement. As you probably know, our demonstrations the past few weeks revolve around the issues of teacher work-load, procedures for transfer and specialists, and most importantly, an effort to get back to the table to bargain these and other issues. We are not here to issue an ultimatum, but to show you how strongly we feel about this.

This year is a year when both the BOARD and the NTA agreed that we should make every effort to improve the employer-employee relationship in the district. Yet, the BOARD has taken a position that is unnecessary, demoralizing, and can only cause hard feelings.

I must first dispute some of the comments made by Mr. Williams. If the BOARD had attended the informal PERC hearing on May 18, you would have learned that the three issues that we have presented are fully bargainable.

This entire problem could have been resolved at that time.

Furthermore, we cannot accept the BOARD'S proposal to place these items under BOARD policy, because BOARD policy can change at any time, especially if this BOARD changes, as it could at any time. Many feel that the BOARD'S position is petty and makes no sense - among those who feel this way are both mediators who sat at the

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bargaining table and the PERC hearing officer.

Here again I must dispute Mr. Williams' statement. The New Jersey School Boards Association recommends that you not take this position and most school boards are following this advice. The BOARD has stated that their long-standing philosophy regarding these items in question will not change. If that is true, then we see no reason why the BOARD cannot bargain those items which, in part, reflect that philosophy and are legally negotiable.

The NTA has tried to bend and be flexible by making various proposals regarding these items. However, the BOARD'S hard-line positions have strained the labor relations once again.

In negotiations, there is give and take. However, this does not mean that the teachers will give and the BOARD will take. There must be some compromise.

Education is a humanistic business - one which cannot always be governed by strict rules and regulations. It will be a sad day in Nutley when all teachers check their watches and contracts before doing something for the children. Teachers in this district have always given of themselves without regard to time or contract boundaries. What a shame if all of that comes to an end and teacher morale falls apart as a result of some Pyrrhic victory for the BOARD. You cannot mandate morale, but you can control it by your goodwill. OBVIOUSLY, NUTLEY TEACHERS AND SECRETARIES CARE!

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September will be here before we know it. If an agreement is not reached by then, we run the risk of jeopardising a smooth opening of the schools. No one wants to see that happen, but there will be that risk if we have no contract. Therefore, it is extremely important that we get back to the bargaining table with a good faith attitude, ready to bend a little and work with what we have on the table now.

In closing, I have two things for you: A written statement requesting a meeting to negotiate and a grievance on behalf of myself and Elizabeth Lubenow, who on May 18 attended a PERC hearing and were denied one day's pay for attending. The pay was withheld on June 15 and according to the contract, here is our grievance - 10 days later. If the BOARD is sincere in trying to settle this dispute, they would have attended the PERC hearing and would not have deducted the pay of the NTA officers who did attend.