



A S H L A N D C I T Y S C H O O L S

Administrative Offices • 1407 Claremont Avenue/P.O. Box 160 • Ashland, Ohio 44805 • 419-289-1117 • FAX 419-289-4518

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Joint Statement from Board President, Dr. James Wolfe and Superintendent, Dr. Douglas Marrah on behalf of the Ashland City Schools Board of Education regarding contract negotiations with ACTA

We are disappointed to announce that, after many months of negotiations with the Ashland City Teachers Association, the parties have reached *impasse*, and will proceed to mediation.

Since June 12, 2019, the parties have met on numerous occasions in an attempt to negotiate a successor collective bargaining agreement. The Administration, represented by Superintendent Doug Marrah Ed.D., proposed very few issues during negotiations, identifying only the most impactful issues for consideration. The Board negotiation team consistently engaged in good-faith negotiations and worked very hard to reach a tentative agreement, even withdrawing several key proposals that it felt would result in a better educational environment for students.

The Board team fully discussed and carefully considered each and every proposal presented by ACTA. Substantial effort was undertaken to understand the basis for each proposal and to address the underlying concerns. After productive discussion, several items were agreed to tentatively. However, there were proposals that the Board team felt strongly that the Board of Education and community would not support.

The existing collective bargaining agreement between the Board and ACTA expired on June 30, 2019. While the Board has directed that the Administration shall operate under the terms of that Agreement, some provisions of the Agreement contained express language that specific provisions expired on June 30, 2019, unless a successor agreement was approved by that time. The Board has no choice but to honor the expiration of those provisions. The most important of these provisions extended the contractual school-day for teachers, which allowed for important meeting time and collaboration for teachers. A related provision afforded substantial compensation for working the extended school-day. These two provisions also automatically and expressly expired on June 30, 2019. Since the parties were unable to reach a new agreement before the new school year, the Board is forced to reduce the contractual work day for teachers. Further, the Board is without authority to continue to pay the associated compensation that related to the extended school day. While this will have minimal impact on the student instructional day, it eliminates the ability for staff to

engage in meaningful collaboration that improves the education of students. The Board is also very sensitive to the fact that the expiration of these provisions also impacts teachers financially. Further, the BOE has directed the Administration undertake any and all measures to ensure the smooth and safe transition back to the shorter contractual day, with special attention to parental and student concerns.

The Board was expressly prepared to continue the longer contractual day and the associated compensation in the firm belief that the longer day had a positive impact on students and the educational process. The Board also offered substantial, additional compensation in the form of incentives, stipends and modest raises on the base salary, all fully consistent with the BOE's explicit directive to maintain the long term financial stability of the district. However, the Board's compensation package, as constituted, was not acceptable to the ACTA negotiating team, nor was the compensation package presented by ACTA acceptable to the Board.

The Board of Education remains committed to the process of securing a new collective bargaining agreement acceptable to all parties. We appreciate the hard work already performed by the Administration and ACTA and make note that there was good discussion and much progress has already been made.

With the parties being at *impasse*, the parties will proceed to mediation with a mediator from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services.

Our district remains committed to serving our children, our greatest commodity.
We are Ashland Arrows!