



Daniel Fishbein, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

RIDGEWOOD

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Parent or Guardian:

In July, the Ridgewood Board of Education (RBOE) announced that contract negotiations with the Ridgewood Education Association (REA), which began in February 2015, were moving from official mediation through the NJ Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) to the fact-finding stage, also through PERC. Our first fact-finding session will be held on September 16, 2015.

During this time, the teachers and secretaries continue to receive their full salaries and benefits and work under the terms, conditions and protections of the expired contract that began on July 1, 2012, and ended on June 30, 2015.

It is important to remember that our teachers and secretaries are working within the contractually specified hours listed below and that drop-off and pick-up times at our schools must be followed:

- Elementary schools: 8 a.m.-3:35 p.m. PLEASE DO NOT DROP YOUR CHILD OFF PRIOR TO 8:35 A.M. AND PICK UP AT 3 P.M.
- Middle schools: 7:45 a.m.-3:20 p.m. PLEASE DO NOT DROP YOUR CHILD OFF PRIOR TO 7:45 A.M. AND PICK UP AT 2:55 P.M.
- Ridgewood High School: 7:40 a.m.-3:15 p.m. DROP OFF AND PICK UP WILL BE THE SAME

In addition, please understand that during this stage in the negotiations, teachers may decline to do some activities that fall outside of the contract. For example, they may decline to chaperone overnight/after school field trips, decline to participate or volunteer in activities that they had in the past, or may adhere to the 7.5 hour daily contract hours by arriving and leaving on time each school day. If any such actions occur that result in changes or cancellation of certain activities, school principals and other administrators will explain the reason why.

Many parents have offered to volunteer and take over these responsibilities. Some activities can be sponsored or supervised by parents, while others can't for various insurance and personal liability reasons. Please see your principal for guidance.

While changes to activities may be an unfortunate reality during this period, it is important to stress that the RBOE and REA are working towards an agreement that satisfies both parties. Throughout the State of New Jersey, negotiations are taking place between teacher associations and Boards of Education. The vast majority of contract negotiations, almost 80 percent, are not completed prior to the expiration of the preceding contract.

Finally, if the fact-finder is unsuccessful in mediating an agreement, both parties will present their "case," and a written report will be prepared that will be made public 10 days after they receive his non-binding findings.

Thank you in advance for your understanding as the RBOE and REA work through this process and complete the negotiations in the shortest time possible.

Sincerely,

Daniel Fishbein, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools