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The Pocono Mountain School District Responds to Erroneous Union Statement

The School District is disappointed and disturbed that the union representing its many fine employees, the Pocono Mountain Educational Support Professionals Association, would intentionally mislead its membership and the public about such things as the contents of the Fact Finders report and its position in negotiations. The following statements for the union made by Jessica Sabol, PSEA spokesperson, are outright falsehoods: “The fact-finding process concluded that the district’s projected savings are flawed when going with First Student. During the period covered by the First Student contract, the District’s taxpayers will be paying more for student transportation services than by keeping them in-house.” This statement is absolutely false and the union should be sanctioned for making such irresponsible and baseless assertions to the public.

The Fact Finder actually never disputed the District's projected savings. The District's projected savings are based on real and independently audited financial expenses. There is no disputing the basis for the school district savings.

During the Fact Finder “process” the union was forced to admit under questioning that the analysis and projections they presented were basically theoretical, because those projections were not based on all of the real, audited expenses for student transportation services, and the union selectively chose which expenses to include and which expenses to exclude from their calculations.

What is true is that contracting out will save approximately \$4.3 million each year over the course of the contract with First Student. What is true is that as each day of delay caused by the union’s refusal to enter into a new collective bargaining agreement that allows contracting out of transportation services is a day when savings to taxpayers are delayed and another day when all of the other employees in this bargaining unit are denied pay raises. When an employer seeks change

School District Responds to Erroneous Union Information

January 21, 2020

Page 2 of 2

that will result in savings, it is a common dirty trick of the union just to delay and to espouse false information. The union in this case is doing both.

The School District has proposed since May 1, 2019, more than 8 months ago, a way of keeping transportation in-house through a combination of salary freezes and benefit reductions that are calculated to save approximately \$4 million per year. Not only has the union not accepted that proposal, but it has not made any other counter-offer that produces savings that approximate what the School District would save through contracting out transportation services or implementing the salary freeze and benefit reductions.

The School District asks the employees to please read the Fact Finder Report and tell its union to stop misleading them and the community regarding the savings through contracting out student transportation services. It's time to move negotiations forward toward achieving a new support staff contract that is affordable for the taxpayers.

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