



LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

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A public statement regarding the impasse in negotiations between the Litchfield School Board and the Litchfield Support Staff Association

LITCHFIELD, N.H., JANUARY 11, 2019 -- After bargaining this past fall, the Litchfield School Board declared an impasse with the Litchfield Support Staff Association (LSSA) on October 22, 2018. The parties met with a mediator on Friday, November 30, 2018 in a good faith effort to resolve their differences. Despite this effort, the day ended with the parties unable to reach an agreement. The legal deadline to reach an agreement has now passed, meaning there will be no contract in place when the current agreement expires on June 30, 2019.

The main point of disagreement between the school board and the LSSA bargaining team is healthcare. Healthcare is available to full-time employees of LSSA. Of the 109 members of the bargaining unit, healthcare insurance is available to 16 members (less than 15% of the bargaining unit). The board seeks a change in the type of healthcare plan being offered from a traditional HMO to a consumer driven plan that includes deductibles. The proposed plan, managed by SchoolCare, encourages employees to consider the use of their healthcare dollars at the point of service.

The board also offered steps and wage increases (raises) to all members of the bargaining unit, although the final amounts were not resolved. There were several additional points regarding working conditions that were being negotiated by both parties. Many of these points remained unresolved when the mediation concluded.

What does this mean to our support staff employees? Because we are at impasse and the statutory deadline to reach an agreement has elapsed, the board is no longer able to bring a request for additional funds before the voters of Litchfield at the annual meeting. This means that all support staff employees who return to work next school year will be paid according to the current salary scale. Nobody will receive an increase in wages (or a "raise").

The Litchfield School Board does not like this situation at all. We know that our employees work hard for our school district and for the children of Litchfield. We know that life will cost our employees more next year. But, we also know the taxpayers of Litchfield have clearly told the board that we need to change the type of healthcare insurance we offer to our staff. The teachers understand this and have agreed to a change. It is our sincere hope that we will be able to reach an agreement with LSSA that also includes a shift in healthcare.

About Litchfield School District - The community of Litchfield supports public educational programming from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Imagine Greatness ~ Expect Success!

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