



Pittsfield Public Schools

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Interim Superintendent

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February 4, 2021

Dear Ms. Campbell and members of the UEP Executive Board,

We have reviewed your letter dated February 1, 2021. The following is our response to said letter.

In regard to the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), your assertion regarding the language and requirements contained therein are inaccurate. You have only quoted a portion of the MOA, which does not accurately reflect the agreement of the parties when viewed as a whole.

To address your concern that school committee members did not attend the reopening discussions, Superintendent Curtis was designated as the Committee's representative. Superintendent Curtis kept the Committee informed of the parties' progress throughout the process. If, however, the UEP wanted School Committee representation, the UEP could have simply asked. The Committee would have been more than willing to meet with the UEP if such a request had been made.

The assertion that the UEP was not provided advance notice is also inaccurate. A meeting was held on Monday, January 25, 2021 at 11:00am with MTA Representative Alex Lomaglio, UEP President Melissa Campbell, Interim Superintendent Joseph Curtis, and Interim Director of Human Resources, Linda Whitacre regarding the January 27, 2021 School Committee Meeting and the items on the agenda for discussion and vote. Additionally, the UEP president receives the School Committee Agenda by email, and this topic was clearly listed on the agenda.

The assertion that the Committee's deliberation "behind closed doors" in executive was in some way inappropriate is also inaccurate. As you are aware, unless the UEP specifically authorized the Committee to discuss the UEP's proposals in Open Session (which it did not), the Committee was legally prohibited from doing so.

As you are aware, PPS contracted with a third party named ATC, who employs certified industrial hygienists, to provide air quality testing in the school buildings. On September 9, 2020 the UEP received communication and access to the In-door Air Quality and COVID Study Report provided to the PPS by ATC. Carbon dioxide levels are taken in classrooms on a regular basis as well. Throughout the discussions, the UEP did not indicate that the testing was in some way inadequate or that further testing was necessary.

Again, as you are aware, the PPS is going to implement a COVID-19 testing process through the use of CARES Act monies as authorized by Mayor Tyler. In our opinion, this testing process will be more effective than the pool testing offered by the Commonwealth.

The Committee agrees to return to the more traditional, proposal-based method of bargaining to negotiate a new contract. We look forward to commencing negotiations.

In closing, the Committee made its decision based upon the available medical data related to both COVID-19 and student health and learning. In the Committee's judgment, it is no longer appropriate to continue in the remote only phase.

Sincerely,

Katherine Yon, Chairperson

Cc: Pittsfield School Committee
Press