



As you may be aware, the Tredyffrin/Easttown School District (TESD) has been negotiating with the leadership of its teachers' union, the Tredyffrin/Easttown Education Association (TEEA), since January 2017. Because these negotiations have not yet resulted in a settlement, the District and the TEEA have jointly contacted the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board (PLRB) to begin a process known as fact-finding. The goal of this update is to inform the public about the fact-finding process.

Fact-finding is an option for both sides to pursue when negotiations are at an impasse. In the process, the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board (PLRB) assigns a neutral, third-party person called a fact-finder to examine the positions of both parties and to make recommendations in the hopes of providing a pathway to settlement.

Questions and Answers Regarding Fact-Finding

Q: How does fact-finding process work?

A: Once the request for fact-finding is received and the PLRB appoints a fact-finder, he or she has 40 days to issue a report containing recommendations for a contract. After receiving the report, each side then has 10 days to notify the PLRB as to whether or not they accept the report in its entirety. During this initial 10-day period, by law the fact-finder's report is sealed from public review. If the report is rejected by one or both parties, it will be made public. Contained in the fact-finder's recommendations will be substantive details regarding each party's negotiating positions. No less than five days and no more than 10 days after the report is made public, each side must again inform the PLRB as to whether or not it accepts the report. The entire process lasts approximately 60 days.

Q. Is the fact-finder's report binding?

A. No. However, if accepted by both parties, the fact-finder's report is binding and becomes the contract. If the fact-finder's report is rejected, it still could be used by both parties as a framework for further negotiations which could lead to a successor contract.

Q. Could the teachers' union go on strike during fact-finding?

A. No. During the fact-finding process, teachers' unions are not allowed to strike. Based on the current timeline, there can be no strike between September 19 and the date that fact-finding is complete.

Q. Can teachers demonstrate their concerns in other ways during fact-finding?

A. Yes. Teachers have the right to engage in legal activities that show their solidarity and their desire to reach a new contract agreement. Some teachers may choose to wear their TEEA t-shirts or buttons to school. Others might forgo non-mandatory activities and events. The District will make every effort to minimize the disruption to students if this does occur.

Q. Could the teachers' union go on strike if the fact-finding process does not result in an agreed-upon contract?

A. Yes. We hope that the teachers will not make this decision and that both sides will continue to work together toward a settlement. Pennsylvania laws that govern collective bargaining do allow a strike to occur if a settlement is not reached. In this case, the union is required by law to deliver written notice to the District of an intent to strike no later than 48 hours prior to the start of any work stoppage.

Although fact-finding provides no guarantee of a settlement, it has worked to resolve disputes in other school districts. TESD remains committed to reaching an agreement with the following goals in mind:

- **ensuring the sustainable success of T/E's strong educational programs that benefit T/E students,**
- **providing fair compensation and benefits to T/E's professional staff, and**
- **respecting the financial impact of any contract on T/E taxpayers.**