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Contact: Dianne K. Shibe, President, MSEA

msea@mseak.org/907-521-4685

Mat-Su Education Association Condemns School Board Tactics

PALMER- The Mat-Su Education Association strongly condemned the actions of the Mat-Su School Board and Superintendent Randy Trani as devastating to the bargaining process and detrimental to securing a contract for Valley educators.

Last week, the Mat-Su Borough School Board made a “last, best offer” in contract negotiations to the Mat-Su Education Association Bargaining team. Members of the team believed they would have an opportunity to evaluate the proposal, discuss the terms with its membership, and provide an answer, as well as a counteroffer if necessary. Instead, Superintendent Trani short-circuited the process by contacting every single teacher in the MSBSD with the terms of the contract and published editorial pieces in major news outlets with bias opinions.

“We have been bargaining in good faith for over 18 months,” said Dianne K. Shibe, President of the Mat-Su Education Association, “These actions erode what little good faith remained between our team and the school board. More than anything, this makes me sad that this new superintendent would blindside the educators he was hired to lead before we even had a chance to work with him.”

“If these are the tactics and practices we can expect from the superintendent and the school board, we are going to have no choice but to take decisive action,” said Shibe. “There is a lot of frustration, anger, and disappointment among our members right now. To be treated this way while also navigating teaching during a pandemic is salt in the wound.”

If the school board stands firm and will not continue to bargain, the Mat-Su Education Association will move forward with a strike vote of all MSBSD certificated employees.

“A strike vote is the last and least desirable option we have left,” said Shibe. “I know every single member would rather be working with students and doing the best they possibly can under these circumstances, but we will exercise our rights, use our collective power, and do everything we can to secure a contract that is actually fair to our educators.”

The MSEA bargaining team remains committed to finding a contract solution that does not require a strike vote.

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