

STATEMENT STATUS OF FACT-FINDING

As a result of an impasse notice filed by the Chesterfield Education Association, the Association and the Board are now in a fact-finding process under the auspices of the Public Employment Relations Commission.

An initial meeting was convened by the Richard Gwin, the fact-finder, on October 11, 2018 for the purpose of mediation. The mediation did not result in settlement so a fact-finding hearing date will be scheduled.

At the mediation, the offer conveyed by the Board's team included salary increase percentages which are consistent with the Burlington County average. The Association's team did not accept the Board's offer.

Instead, the Association responded with a counter-proposal with salary increase percentages which are significantly above Burlington County average and which include significant new recurring costs to the school district above the salary increases. These new costs include longevity payments for all members and additional vacation pay and personal leave for support staff. The Association did not offer any significant economic concessions to the District in return though such concessions are typical in teacher negotiations.

The Association has taken the position that the District can afford the Association's demands because of an increase in State aid. While the District received additional State aid for the 2018-19 fiscal year, the aid has been allocated toward rebuilding education programs, capital improvements and maintenance. This allocation was necessary given the negative effects of years in which the District was severely under-funded by the State. Even with the additional aid, the District continues to be underfunded and there is no guarantee as to what State aid the District will receive next year.

Accordingly, additional State aid has been allocated to the following items which include: (1) upgrading security and school safety which includes replacement of cameras and upgrading software, and environmental testing related to installation of the gas pipeline in the community; (2) reinstating a library aide, hiring a special education teacher, a school counselor, a general education teacher, a part time gifted and talented teacher, a part time music teacher, and a part time curriculum and instruction secretary; (3) funding education program initiatives including a new social studies program, expansion of remedial and enrichment programs for students, development of a discipline plan and character education program, and provision of professional development; (4) piloting a 1:1 technology initiative in grades 5 and 6, and replacing failing classroom interactive boards for which parts are no longer sold; and (5) funding facility improvements which include remediation of safety hazards, such as the replacement of cafeteria tables which are broken, repair of HVAC/ERV units which, among other things, regulate the amount of fresh air being drawn into the building, beginning the replacement

of our lighting which is nearing the end of its life expectancy, repairing the walkway in front of the school, and addressing a water infiltration problem with the geo thermal vault unit which is essential to heating the school.

The District is interested in reaching a fair settlement with the Association. At the same time, the District must keep students in mind and ensure that education programs and facilities are properly funded and that we enter into a contract which is sustainable and will not result in future layoffs or an inability to provide programs and a safe environment for our children. Thank you.