



January 12, 2023

Dear Melrose Public Schools Parents and Guardians:

It has come to our attention that members of the Melrose Education Association (MEA) – representing teachers, classroom teachers, librarians, guidance counselors, school psychologists, adjustment counselors, special subject teachers, academic facilitators, instructional coaches, digital literacy teachers, physical and occupational therapists, and speech and language pathologists – are planning on taking a vote in the near future that may affect school operations beginning as early as tomorrow or next week. MEA leaders have not contacted any Melrose Public Schools officials about their plans or responded to a direct request for information, so the situation remains unclear, but we wanted to provide some information today so that parents and guardians can begin to make alternate plans for their children, if necessary.

Our understanding at this hour is that the MEA membership may be taking a vote in the near future to authorize the MEA Board to issue a strike order. If an illegal strike by the MEA appears likely, the School Committee and the Superintendent will have no choice but to close schools **for students only** when the strike occurs, including all after-school programs, extracurricular activities, and athletics. As of today, we intend to open schools, as usual, tomorrow and next week, but we wanted to alert you to the possibility that there could be a change, depending on the tactics that the MEA leadership decides to pursue.

We realize this uncertainty presents significant challenges for students and families, and we share your frustration. We encourage you to begin making alternate plans for your child, just in case we have to cancel any school days for students. We will keep families informed of any developments, and we will continue to communicate any updates.

It is important for families to know that our collective bargaining team has been meeting regularly with MEA leaders since last February. The School Committee is committed to negotiating a new three-year contract with the MEA that is fair to our employees, is in line with the economic realities facing the City, and meets the needs of our students and families. The School Committee requested mediation with Unit A, Teachers, in December to help the parties successfully reach a new agreement at the negotiating table. This afternoon, we received a Notice of Mediation from the Department of Labor Relations (DLR) and we have reached out to the MEA to start scheduling collaborative mediation dates.

We are hopeful that the leaders of the MEA will not resort to organizing a strike that would disrupt the education of our students.

Thank you for your patience and support. We will advise you of further updates via the district website. Please check it regularly over the next several days.

Kind regards,

Dr. Kukenberger



Superintendent of Schools