

PRESS RELEASE ISSUED: February 19, 2019
Montgomery Township Board of Education

The Montgomery Township Board of Education and the Montgomery Township Education Association have been unable to reach a contract settlement after more than a year of negotiations and after exhausting mediation efforts with a State-appointed mediator. The Union's contract expired on June 30, 2018; however, the employees continue to work under the expired agreement and receive all of the economic and noneconomic benefits of that contract. As a result of the continued impasse, the parties must now participate in a formal fact-finding hearing.

The negotiations have stalled over the employees' contributions to their health insurance premiums. The Board has offered a highly competitive salary increase to compensate its employees for their valued contributions to the District's outstanding educational and extracurricular programs. Additional compensation was also approved for distribution to employees to help defray the cost of their statutory health care premiums. The Board also agreed to the Union's request to expand bereavement leave, to increase payment for summer duties, to restructure overtime for custodial maintenance employees, to provide flexibility in scheduling holidays during recess periods for custodial employees, to increase stipends for co-curricular advisors, to establish new support staff salary

guides, to increase stipends for head custodians and to create a new 10-month salary guide for secretaries.

The Union has demanded that the Board permanently assume a greater amount of the employees' mandated medical insurance premiums and the Board has been unwilling to agree to an unknown and potentially unsustainable liability that could cause the elimination of programs and the reduction of staff.

The State appointed fact-finder will now schedule a formal hearing, at which time the Board and the Union will submit their final proposals and evidence to support the reasonableness of their last offers. It is anticipated that the scheduling of a hearing and the issuance of a report by the fact-finder will take several months and extend well into the school year. The fact-finder has the authority to recommend the terms of a settlement to the parties. However, the recommended terms of settlement are not binding upon either party. The costs for the services of the fact-finder are the responsibility of both parties.

The Board remains willing to meet with the Union at any time in an effort to settle this contract dispute before the process moves on to a formal fact-finding hearing.