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Ramapo-Indian Hills Education Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Union votes ‘no confidence’ in local school board ***RIHEA: “We cannot support a board that doesn’t make its staff a priority”***

RAMAPO-INDIAN HILLS- In a closed meeting earlier this week, the Ramapo-Indian Hills Education Association (RIHEA) expressed their frustration and discontent with the Ramapo-Indian Hills Board of Education through a vote of no confidence. The Association took a vote in the wake of the Board’s unwillingness to settle a fair and equitable contract with the dedicated employees of the RIH school district.

“The Association has been negotiating in good faith throughout the entire process and even offered major concessions in order to adjust the salary guides to attract the best and the brightest for our students while stopping the mass exodus of qualified teachers leaving the district,” said John Gaccione, RIHEA Negotiations Chair. “However, this Board seems to forget that negotiations are a two-way process.”

The vote came on the heels of a December formal fact finding hearing, where the Association alleges that the Board continued to make unreasonable requests for additional sacrifices and concessions from the staff. At the root of the issue is the Board’s unwillingness to offer meaningful relief of health benefit costs, while the Association maintains that its own proposals simply look to keep in line with surrounding districts’ health benefits offerings.

“The Board consistently over-budgets its’ spending while underestimating the amount of state aid they receive, leaving them with a large surplus,” Gaccione continued. “This means the Board has more than enough money to settle a contract without raising taxes. The simple truth is the Board does not value its employees for their dedicated work.”

The RIHEA represents over 300 staff members in the Ramapo-Indian Hills school district, including teachers, instructional aides, technology specialists, administrative assistants, custodians, and security guards. The RIHEA’s contract expired in June 2016, forcing the staff to work under an expired agreement for over a year and a half.

“The men and women who dedicate their lives to the students of the Ramapo-Indian Hills and make the district successful deserve a fair contract,” Gaccione stated. “We simply cannot support a board that does not make its staff a priority and continues to make a conscious decision to drain its most valuable resource.”

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