

Residents frustrated over teacher protests

14 Oct 2009 — Bucks County Courier Times

Neshaminy

Some called the union's actions intimidating. Union President Louise Boyd said the events were not disruptive.

Even though it's been a few weeks since Neshaminy teachers picketed the district's back to school nights, people are still talking about it.

During Tuesday night's school board meeting, several residents, many of them parents, expressed their frustration and disappointment in the union's protest.

One woman held a sign that read, "Can you spell economic replacement?"

And after they called the union's actions intimidating, union President Louise Boyd responded that the events were not disruptive.

"We are professionals who are loyal to both the union and the students," she said. "Our members clearly demonstrated + collective support + to each other, the profession and to the process of negotiation. (We're) not ashamed."

Boyd also addressed board President Ritchie Webb, saying, "We stand together and (we are) ready for real negotiations."

Webb responded that if she was sincere, he was willing to try to set up a meeting.

The teachers have been working without a new agreement since June 2008. The last bargaining session was in August. Webb previously said that the board wants to negotiate, but without concessions to health insurance, there was no reason to get together.

The board's position has been an annual 3 percent salary increase, including steps, and a requirement that employees pay 15 percent, 16 percent and 17 percent toward health care premiums over three years.

The board claims the union's proposal remains unchanged, with a request for a total 6 percent annual salary hike, including steps, and a requirement for no change to the medical insurance package, said Webb. Boyd has denied those claims, but she hasn't revealed the union's offer.

Rachel Canelli can be reached at 215-949-4191 or rcanelli@phillyBurbs.com.

"Residents frustrated over teacher protests" Bucks County Courier Times 14 Oct 2009: B4