

October 13, 2015

Dear PTSA,

The purpose of this letter is to communicate the reasons behind Meade High School faculty's decision to implement a work-to-rule policy. In light of the County Executive's ongoing refusal to fairly compensate its educators despite increasingly demanding workloads, we believe this action is imperative if we are to uphold the integrity of our profession as we strive to provide quality education to your children.

A primary concern is the county's refusal to honor the step increase schedule that we were led to believe was firmly in place and therefore a factor considered when we accepted our positions with Anne Arundel County Public Schools. We were not told that these step increases were subject to the decisions of a County Executive who consistently allocates only the state-mandated minimum level of funding to our school system. Even when he dared to exceed it, there were strings attached to keep any of it from local educators. It is indeed unconscionable that the county continues to advertise this step schedule on its website and in recruitment of new teachers, knowing that they had only one and a half step increases since 2009 ended. The proposed contract demonstrates the county's continued resolve not to honor step increases; as a result, we can expect to see the continuation of 30% faculty turnover as well as the placement of long term substitutes since we cannot attract highly qualified teachers to fill the vacancies.

A work-to-rule action simply means that we will continue to work but will do so strictly within the hours required by our contract. Specifically, we will work the following hours:

Monday 6:55 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Tuesday 6:55 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Wednesday 6:55 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Thursday 6:55 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Friday 6:55 a.m. - 2:10 p.m

Implementing a work-to-rule policy compels us to make thoughtful decisions about volunteering away personal and family time above what is required. The planning time allotted by our existing contract is insufficient to meet the excessive workload demands that have piled up over the course of the past several years. As a result, educators have been expected to use their personal and family time to meet the needs of our students. Some of the services typically performed by teachers above and beyond contract hours that will likely be affected are: after school extra help and tutoring; chaperoning special events such as homecoming dances, and sponsoring after-school clubs.

Many of us have had to take second jobs to compensate for the lack of salary increases while living in one of the most expensive areas of the country. Others feel the need to transfer to teaching positions in neighboring counties or leave the career altogether causing turnover rates to vastly exceed that of other school systems. These desperate actions do not benefit our student population. We are professionals who care not only about our students as people but as learners deserving of quality instruction. The stress of our finances coupled with workloads that exceed 50+ hours per week, puts students' education at risk. Therefore, at a minimum, we are compelled to express our frustration and dissatisfaction by adhering to a work-to-rule policy.

In the meantime, we are inviting you to show your support for your children's educators to be fairly and equitably compensated by contacting County Executive Steve Schuh with copies to the county council members. Email addresses are attached. We sincerely appreciate your support.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Meade High School Faculty

County Executive Steve Schuh: exschu00@aacounty.org

County Council members:

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