

Letters to the Editor
Times Leader
15 North Main Street
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania 18711

Dear Editor:

The members of the Greater Nanticoke Area Education Association have been in negotiations with the school district since 2005 and have yet to reach an agreement.

In November the teachers voted to accept the recommendations of a state-appointed Fact Finder in order to resolve the dispute. As stated in his report, "*The District is well-managed and maintains healthy fund balance levels...the District does not claim an inability to pay...*"

The GNA School District can afford to settle this contract with the teachers with no need for a tax increase. A fair agreement is well within the district's budget.

Remarks attributed to district negotiating committee chairman, Bob Raineri, are not only inappropriate but fly in the face of state bargaining law. Raineri is quoted as saying he will push for a public meeting with the teachers to explain the district's contract offer.

The union is in the process of filing Unfair Labor Practice charges against the district based on Raineri's coercive statements designed not to bring resolution, but to divide the union and undermine the leadership.

Section 1201.a of Act 195 specifically prohibits the employer, in this case the district, from coercing employees in the exercise of their rights under the bargaining law. It prohibits district from interfering with the administration of the union and it mandates that the parties bargain in good faith. Good faith bargaining means negotiating at the bargaining table, not in the newspaper; it is built on trust and the ability to discuss the issues without fear of reprisal.

The teachers are residents and taxpayers of the district with every interest in ensuring that the district continues to be strong financially. When this school district was in financial trouble a number of years ago, the teachers helped the community. We opened our contract and gave back raises. We took several years of wage freezes so that the district could get back on its feet financially. All the while, we were promised by the board that when the district recovered financially that would be remembered.

It is now time to stop political posturing and come to the bargaining table prepared to bargain in good faith on an agreement that is fair to the teachers and to the community.

Sincerely,



Barbara Zaborney, President, **Greater Nanticoke Area Education Association**