

PENN HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

260 Aster Street

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15235

412-793-7000 – Telephone

412-793-1787 – Fax

www.phsd.k12.pa.us



Penn Hills School District Teachers Vote to Authorize Strike

Penn Hills - February 14, 2025 - Penn Hills School District has been made aware through media requests that the Penn Hills Education Association (PHEA) membership has voted to authorize a strike. Through this vote, members of the PHEA have authorized their leadership to call a strike; however, it does not mean that a strike will occur.

Penn Hills School District Administration and the School Board hope to quickly reach an agreement. We know this situation can be concerning, especially since it comes in the middle of the school year. The District is committed to transparent communication to students, parents, and staff throughout this process.

Penn Hills School District Administration has reviewed quotes given by PHEA leadership in [media reports](#) from this afternoon and would like to note the following facts:

- The District asked union leadership if they wanted to be involved in an exploratory meeting regarding teachers' health care. The District identified a plan that matches teachers' current benefits while saving over \$500,000 per year. However, PHEA leadership has refused to consider those kinds of competitive options for the teachers' health care plan.
- Additionally, the District did not propose changes in coverage for teachers or their families.
- Contrary to reports, future negotiating sessions are scheduled and the District wants to reiterate its willingness to reach an equitable agreement.
- "We aren't asking for anything outrageous; our asks are completely within the financial ability of the district," [said PHEA President Mark Wolfe](#). However, the PHEA's initial financial proposal sought a 10% annual salary increase, while the District has already offered over \$3 million in raises over four years.
- The District already has one of the highest property tax rates in Allegheny County. That makes it critical that fiscal decisions remain sustainable for taxpayers as the District remains in a five-year financial monitoring period under the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Chief Recovery Officer.

- PHEA leadership has rejected efforts to increase instructional days, despite Penn Hills operating at the state minimum of 180 days. By contrast, top-performing school districts recognize the value of additional instruction, with Mt. Lebanon (184), North Allegheny (184), Pine-Richland (182), and Fox Chapel (182) all exceeding the state requirement.
- PHEA leadership has demanded that some teachers have only six periods with students per day, further limiting instructional time. Out of a 7.5-hour contracted workday, teachers already receive a preparation period and a paid lunch. Union leadership's demands would further reduce instructional time, and Allegheny County academic performance data from 2022-23 shows Penn Hills School District students need more time learning, as reflected by these scores:
 - o Keystone Exam (Grade 11) Rankings
 - Algebra: 26th out of 39
 - Biology: 35th out of 39
 - Literature: 39th out of 40
 - o PSSA (Grades 3-8) Rankings
 - English Language Arts: 38th out of 42
 - Math: 38th out of 42
 - Science: 36th out of 42
- Among comparable school districts (2,000–4,000 students and a free/reduced lunch rate above 50%), Penn Hills ranks #1 in teacher salaries. Overall, teacher salaries rank 7th highest out of Allegheny's 43 school districts, with an average salary of \$90,527 for 191 workdays—significantly higher than [per capita annual income of \\$34,849](#).

The District has negotiated in good faith, striving to reach an agreement that is fair to our educators and fiscally responsible to the District, ensuring our schools' long-term stability. Our proposals have reflected a strong commitment to competitive wages, comprehensive benefits, and the continued success of our students. Despite these efforts, PHEA leadership has chosen to move toward a strike, increasing the potential for disruptions to our students, families, and the broader community.

We urge our community to remain informed, ask questions, and consider the long-term impact of a strike. Please continue to visit our [website](#) and social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter/X for updates. Information will also be communicated with local media outlets.

To Penn Hills School District families: Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our students and schools.

Sincerely,

Penn Hills School District Administration