

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Bill Olsen
Phone: 802 773-1900
Email: william.olsen@rcpsvt.org

RUTLAND CITY BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS REFUTES TEACHERS' UNION FALSE, EGREGIOUS LABOR CHARGE

RUTLAND, May 2, 2025--- Labeling the allegations as false and misleading, the Rutland City Board of School Commissioners (Board) has strongly refuted charges of unfair labor practices levied by the Rutland Education Association (REA) regarding the ongoing contract negotiations.

The REA claims the School District's issuance of Reduction In Force (RIF) notices last month was "interfering with, restraining and coercing employees in the exercise of their rights to collectively bargain and engage in concerted union activity."

"The REA has ignored its own contract in making these allegations against the Board," said Cathy Solsaa, chair of the Board of School Commissioners. "In fact, the District's RIF notices were issued in accordance with the latest REA contract, which requires that '[a] Professional whose original position is being reduced or abolished is to be notified as early as practicable in writing, but no later than April 15th.' The union knows this but chose instead to attempt to smear the Board, knowing full well the District's responsibility. This approach has less to do with fair contract negotiations and more to do with intimidation and public relations tactics."

The two sides currently are engaged in negotiations for a new contract for school district professionals, including teachers. The Board noted that if the REA contract demands were met, the District would be forced to reduce staff and programs going forward. The latest REA contract requires that notices for any staff reductions must be made in writing by April 15th.

"If the Board were to agree to the salary increases demanded by the REA, or if those increases were to be imposed by an arbitrator, those increases would have a significant impact on our ability to maintain current staffing and program levels under the approved budgets. Because we do not know what the outcome will be in these negotiations, we have to be prepared for all possibilities," said Solsaa.

Due to the unknown outcome of current negotiations and the impact a new agreement could have on the District's voter-approved budget, Superintendent Bill Olsen notified nine teachers on April

14th that their positions might be eliminated under a new contract. Nine other positions, currently vacant, would remain unfilled. Sending these notifications was necessary for the District to comply with its contractual requirements.

“We are not trying to nickel and dime our teachers. The Board has made an offer that provides fair compensation increases for professionals, maintains current staffing and program levels and lives within the budget passed by voters in March,” added Solsaa. “We are making another attempt at mediation very soon and, hopefully, we can move forward in good faith and agree on a new contract.”