

OPEN LETTER TO OUR COMMUNITY

Sept. 15, 2022

Open letter to our Ridgefield community:

When we voted overwhelmingly to strike, it was a decision that was neither easy nor taken lightly. It was one of the most difficult decisions each and every one of us has had to make as professionals. We know that the strike has been a difficult time for Ridgefield's families, and we join you all in hoping that it will come to a swift and fair conclusion.

We love our job and want to do the best we can, but it has become increasingly difficult to do the work we need to do to support students in learning and growing. As educators we give 100 percent, if not more, to our students each day, but it has become nearly impossible to do what we need to do with the little time we have. As we try to convey in our lessons to students, we needed to take a stand for our beliefs and to try to make changes.

Our strike is about allowing educators the time we need to do our jobs, allowing us to control how we provide educational interventions so that our students are academically successful, ensuring our students with special needs are provided sufficient staffing and supports and ultimately about treating teachers and other educators with respect.

Your outpouring of support has been overwhelming. Parents, students, retirees, and other school supporters delivered bottled water, cookies, and other treats each day we are on the picket line. Neighbors, businesses and the faith-based community have opened their facilities to allow us to serve lunches to students, gather during the day and allow for parking. One supporter even left us a basket of freshly picked vegetables from their garden. We have numerous thank yous to businesses, community groups, other labor unions and individuals. Undoubtedly, we will leave a name off of our thank yous by mistake, but please know how grateful we are for your support in every way.

On Wednesday, we voted no confidence in Ridgefield School District leadership. Many events even before the strike have led us to this point. We believe our proposal is fair and respects our work by allowing meaningful student interventions and the best quality instruction for our students. We hope, even after the eventual agreement of our contract is achieved, to continue constructive dialogue with our district in finding ways to improve our schools and ultimately our community. We remain united on the picket line for our colleagues and our students, and we welcome our community's help in building our schools for our students' future.

Again, we know this strike has caused stress and tension in our community. We join you in hoping that it will soon come to an end and that schools can re-open with better supports in place for our students and our educators. We have felt love and support from our amazing Ridgefield community during this time, and we cannot express our gratitude enough. With your help, we will continue to work towards making the Ridgefield School District truly premier.

Sincerely,
The Ridgefield Education Association