

Herricks Teachers' Association
Statement to the Herricks Board Of Education
February 28, 2013

While the HTA does not believe in making public statements, I feel it is necessary to set the record straight.

1. The HTA offered the school district a proposal that would have reduced the negotiated increases by 3% over two years. The HTA also offered to delay salary increments for two years. These actions would have resulted in a cost saving of approximately 2.8 million dollars, a cost saving which the district did not dispute. The HTA was willing to open up a negotiated contract in order to help the District's finances. The HTA took just such an unprecedented step and made a good-faith effort to find a common ground. To characterize the negotiations in any other way is disingenuous.
2. This give-back offered by the HTA meant that each individual teacher would have given back \$8,000 to \$10,000 in already negotiated increases.
3. The salary reductions would have been part of a two-year contract extension. For the 14-15 school year, the proposal was for a one percent increase, effective February 1, 2015, which was an increase in actual dollars of one-half percent. For the 15-16 school year, the proposal was for a one percent increase, but a delay in step increases until February 1, 2016. With regards to salary, the HTA believed that these increases would have enabled the District to stay within the 2% tax levy cap. This fact was not disputed by the District.
4. To lower payroll even further, the HTA suggested a retirement incentive, which if enacted, would have further helped the District to meet the 2% tax levy cap.

It was the District that told the HTA that they would not agree to a contract extension. As stated by Mrs. Turner in the article, "... she and

Mr. Gounaris weren't willing to save money in the 2012-13 budget in exchange for a two year contract extension." She also stated that, "We weren't willing to bend on another thing."

The HTA's Professional Negotiating Committee (PNC) made-up of representatives from each school building as well as the HTA President, Executive Vice President, and the Secondary and Elementary Vice Presidents followed the procedures as outlined in the HTA Constitution. As a democratically elected union, this negotiations procedure was agreed to by a democratic vote of the membership. Do not think we are a divided union. This membership overwhelmingly approved the last contract, reelected me as President last May, nearly unanimously, and approved nearly unanimously a Memorandum of Agreement to the contract so that the District could implement the state mandated APPR regulations.

Because we care about the Herricks school community and our members, for over two years we have met with the Board's representatives for countless hours, to try and work out a compromise that would be advantageous to both parties and would be ratified by the membership of the HTA. Unfortunately, both sides were not able to reach an agreement.

The HTA hopes the Board of Education and Dr. Bierwirth approach us for what could be difficult but potentially very fruitful negotiations for all involved. Meanwhile, we will continue working on providing the top-flight education the residents of Herricks have come to expect.

Thank you.