

School Board Comments

December 10, 2024

Good evening, members of the board, district leaders, and community members.

My name is Katie Lukins, I am an elementary school teacher in this district, and I'm the vice president of the Beaverton Education Association. I come before you tonight to speak about where we stand in bargaining and the critical decisions that lie ahead for all of us.

We have now entered mediation—a new phase in our efforts to secure a fair contract for educators, and ultimately for the students of Beaverton. While this phase can be viewed as a chance to bridge differences, I must share a candid observation: despite our team's best efforts, we remain unclear about what matters most to the management bargaining team.

In response to management's requests, we have repeatedly articulated our highest priorities. These priorities are rooted in the needs of our students, our educators, and our community. Yet, when we look at the proposals and the changes we've seen so far, there is far too much noise and far too little clarity. What we need is a spotlight on the critical elements that must be present for a deal.

The reality is this: come January, there will be real enemies knocking on our door. Challenges to public education, department of education uncertainties, and political pressures will test this district in ways we cannot afford to ignore. These are the forces that threaten our ability to protect our students and ensure they have the schools they deserve.

We do not need to be each other's enemies. In fact, we cannot afford to be. If we are to face these external threats and protect the students and families who rely on us, we must settle this contract—and soon.

BEA members have made it clear: we want to focus on protecting and supporting our students. But we can only do that if we can direct all our energy toward that shared goal. To do so, we need a fair contract that respects the work of Beaverton educators and our commitment to Beaverton.

This urgency cannot be overstated. Behavior at the bargaining table must change. It's time for management to signal, with clarity and purpose, what is most vital to them. It's

time for movement measured in feet, not inches. This is not the moment for small adjustments or symbolic gestures. It's time for meaningful progress.

We must focus on our shared values, so that great things can happen for Beaverton students and educators. But to make that happen, we need a genuine commitment from management to engage in this process with urgency, transparency, and good faith.

Let us settle this contract so we can turn our full attention to the challenges ahead. Let us settle this contract so we can protect the future of our schools, our students, and our community.

Thank you.