

## **Take Action!**

Attend upcoming info sessions to learn about our new tentative agreement

This Saturday 1/27, Noon-1:30pm [zoom only](#)

Next Wednesday 1/31, 5-6:30pm [zoom only](#)

Saturday 2/3, Noon-1:30pm at Grant HS

[Nominate](#) yourself or a coworker for a leadership role in our union! Nominations close Friday 1/26. Support PFSP at their practice picket, Saturday 1/28 at 1pm outside the rebuilt Benson High School (546 NE 12th Ave).

[Register](#) for "Philippine Labor Fights Back" webinar Sunday 2/4 at 4pm

## **Union Updates**

### **Tentative Agreement Reached**

On Thursday January 18th, after more than 10 months of bargaining, the SEIU bargaining team reached a tentative agreement (TA) on a new contract with PPS. Before the contract can go into effect, it must first be approved by a majority vote of our membership. Voting will take place within the next few weeks and we will have in person and online information sessions available prior to voting. If it does not pass, the bargaining team will return to the bargaining table to attempt to renegotiate a new TA.

Our TA includes retro pay, which means employees will receive back pay going back to July 1st, 2023. The new contract includes 8.5% wage increases effective July 1, 2023 for all nutrition service workers as well as a brand new step system. This means NS workers will be placed on a pay scale according to years worked in a position. For example, an assistant who is in their 5th year in the position would be placed at step 5. Each step represents a 2.5% increase over the previous. This will reward workers for years worked in a position at PPS up to 10 years. However, the entry level wage for NS assistants still only starts at \$18.72 which remains well under a living wage for Portland. Raises in years 2 and 3 will be 4% and 3% respectively.

Custodians will see a 6% raise effective July 1, 2023 which will bring the starting rate for a night custodian to \$20.37. Raises in the subsequent two years will be 3% each. All employees who have worked 15 years or more for the district will receive a 1% longevity premium added to their base wage.

The bargaining team also won health insurance for part time workers who work between 20 and 29 hours. The district will offer the same insurance options as full time employees, though the employee contribution will be 10% for employee-only coverage. PPS was not willing to offer affordable group plans for part time workers.

The TA includes time and a half pay for custodians who work when schools are closed due to inclement weather. NS workers will have the option of using their PTO during inclement weather

days. While the bargaining fought to close the disaster-pay loophole that prevents employees from receiving double-pay for working during a state of emergency (such as during last week's ice storm), the district refused to budge on this.

Under the new TA employees will have the right to at least 5 days notice prior to having their permanent work location changed. Previously in bargaining, the district had only been willing to offer 5 days notice before moving heads and leads, but the bargaining team refused to accept this clear disrespect toward NS assistants and night custodians. Ideally, employees should not have to worry about being moved schools at all, however PPS seems unwilling to hire enough staff to make this a possibility.

To address the effects of climate change in our workplaces, the union proposed at least one air conditioned break room per school. However, the district rejected this reasonable demand and was only agreeable to citing OSHA heat illness prevention rules, which will allow us to file a grievance if PPS is in violation of these rules. The new safety article also includes language which requires the district to create a safety plan when appropriate for employees who file sexual harassment complaints, and guarantees that the employee who files a complaint will not be required to move locations. Workers will also have the right to file grievances over discrimination.

These changes to the contract and more will be described in more detail in upcoming materials and at information sessions where you can ask questions to make an informed decision on whether to reject or ratify this TA. Although the TA falls short on some of our initial demands, the bargaining team recommends a yes vote as we believe it represents the best deal possible based on our current strength as a union. We are grateful for the support of the entire membership through this process. Without the engagement of all our members, whether by signing strike pledges, attending board meetings, or joining rallies and teacher picket lines to demand a fair contract, we would not have won the TA we have today.

### **Working on a Holiday**

Custodians who came into work on MLK day to check their buildings should be granted holiday pay plus overtime pay and a minimum of 4 hours paid time, even if they worked less than 4 hours. Anyone who worked on the holiday should ensure they get 2.5x their regular pay for at least 4 hours in their next paycheck. If you believe you are not receiving your full wages, contact a union steward.

### **Leadership Nominations**

Nominations for leadership positions in SEIU Local 140 are open. [You can nominate yourself or others here!](#) We wanted to answer some questions about what these positions do and the responsibilities of union officers in case you are interested in getting more involved!

First off, you do not need to be an elected officer to be a leader in our union! Leadership can look like building trust with coworkers and standing up for your rights in the workplace. It can mean sharing information about union events, helping gather signatures on a petition, attending meetings, or helping plan actions and rallies. It can also mean becoming a steward and helping represent coworkers in investigations or filing grievances on their behalf. Members also help lead our union by serving on the bargaining team, labor management committees, writing our newsletter and maintaining our social media.

The executive committee is made up of 5 members: a nutrition service (NS) co-chair, custodial co-chair, NS representative at large, custodial representative at large, and a secretary/treasurer. Union officers serve for 2 years. While each position has a few specific responsibilities, in general, the exec committee helps guide the sublocal by facilitating membership meetings, helping raise member concerns to management, and improving the health and strength of the union overall. At a minimum, the executive committee meets once a month, usually on a weekend to plan for membership meetings, discuss upcoming events or actions, and stay up to date on issues and campaigns in the workplace.

Another important position is general council delegate. Delegates attend the SEIU 503 general council in August as voting members to help make decisions for the entire statewide local. Co-chairs are automatic delegates, but we get 1 delegate per 100 members, so approximately 5 delegates total for our sublocal. General council delegates vote on resolutions concerning policy and international issues, bylaws and member rights, and union operations. The time commitment for general council delegates is minimal since their main task is to attend general council which only occurs once every 2 years.

Anyone can run for these positions and no previous leadership experience is required. We especially encourage NS assistants and night custodians to consider running since they represent the majority of our members and are some of the most underpaid and overlooked workers at PPS. Nominations are open until Friday, January 26 and voting will begin February 17th. Let us know if you have any questions!

## **Local Solidarity**

### **PFSP Practice Picket**

PFSP is still in mediation fighting for a fair contract after their membership voted down two previous tentative agreements. The PFSP rank and file caucus is organizing a practice picket this Sunday 1/28 to show PPS they won't back down. Come out to support at the remodeled Benson High (546 NE 12th) at 1pm. Organizers chose to rally at Benson to recognize the [solidarity](#) of construction workers there who walked off the job in support of PAT in the fall. The choice of location also points out the hypocrisy of spending millions on new and renovated buildings when the workers who serve the kids inside are not even given proper training or paid a living wage.

## **International Solidarity**

### **SEIU 503 Signs onto Calls for a Ceasefire in Gaza**

At the statewide SEIU 503 board meeting January 13th, board members voted 18 to 6 with 1 abstention to sign onto a [petition](#) calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. [Members and staff](#) of SEIU across the country are also calling on SEIU International president Mary Kay Henry to publicly condemn the ongoing [genocide](#) in Gaza which has claimed over 25,000 lives including nearly 10,000 children since October 7th. Meanwhile, Biden is now facing a lawsuit in a federal court which accuses President Biden, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, and Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin of [complicity in genocide](#). Union members in the National Education Association are also demanding their union [revoke their endorsement](#) of Biden until the president secures a permanent ceasefire and stops sending military aid to Israel. SEIU has also already [endorsed](#) Biden in the 2024 elections.

### **Webinar on Philippine Labor Struggles February 4**

Join workers across the country for a webinar on the current struggles of labor in the Philippines on February 4 at 4pm. The webinar will feature labor leaders in the Philippines including the secretary general of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers who has faced severe [repression](#) in his work as a labor organizer. The webinar will also share updates on the ongoing struggles of transport workers facing the loss of their livelihoods. You can register for the webinar [here](#).