

SEIU Local 140 Newsletter 3.2.23

Take action!

- Fill out this [survey](#) about your experience with PPS during the recent snowstorm
- Attend the PPS board meeting Tuesday 3/7 at 6pm at McDaniel HS, 2735 NE 82nd Ave
- Join our membership meeting Saturday 3/11 at 10am at 525 NE Oregon St or online.
- In person steward training Saturday 3/18 from 9-5 at 525 NE Oregon St. Register here: <https://seiu503.org/members/get-involved/event-calendar/>
- Sign our [Petition to increase wages and staffing](#)

Snow Days and Disaster Pay Grievance

After a chaotic snow storm that took nearly everyone by surprise, many people either learned about the insufficient language regarding hazard pay in our contract or had another reminder about the district's failure to compensate their workers for going to their work under dangerous conditions. The storm on Wednesday wasn't predicted by the National Weather Service, who instead suggested we'd likely get a dusting. As the snow started dumping, eventually more in a single day than Portland has seen for 80 years, the commute home became a nightmare for many people including custodians who were at their schools doing their usual nightly cleaning when it started piling up.

The next two days, many custodians used paid or unpaid leave to cover while others chose to go to their sites. Nutrition service workers, many who live paycheck to paycheck, received no pay at all while schools were closed. According to our contract, custodians are allowed to use their leave to cover such situations if they believe traveling to work is unsafe, but otherwise are expected to go in for work as normal. Our contract language says that if both a state of emergency and an "All PPS Closed" day is declared—that includes "BESC/central operations"—then workers will get disaster time (double time) for coming to work. Even though all these conditions were clearly met, Frank Leavitt claimed in an email that "there is no Disaster Pay for today. Central Operations is still operating as are all employees on Hybrid or Remote work agreements."

Frank is using the loophole management used during the pandemic: that although the physical building of PESC is closed (except for the custodians who work there), the building is considered "open" because staff there are working remotely. If this absurdity makes you upset, union stewards Gabe and Aubz are leading an effort to collect testimony in order to file a group grievance against the district. Please fill out this [form](#) to share how you were affected by the

inclement weather and concerns you have regarding the district's refusal to pay people during unsafe events.

Bargaining Update

The bargaining team (Rae Schumann, Jim D'Arcy, Veronica Green, Dave Vecsi, Amy Silvia, Matt Resnick, Chris Walters, Gabe Penk, and Evan Paster) met with PPS management (represented by Roshni Sabedra, Whitney Ellersick, Frank Leavitt, and attorney Chris Duckworth) on Monday 2/27 for our second day of bargaining. We agreed on ground rules for bargaining which sets basic expectations for both sides to help guide the bargaining process.

Bargaining will take place from 2-5pm on designated days. All members are welcome to come observe sessions if they are off the clock. We won several sessions that we can use to prepare proposals without management being present. We also asked to record sessions, but management claimed it would prevent "open" conversation and refused to agree. PAT, however, has been recording their bargaining sessions with the district which can be viewed [here](#).

Nutrition Service Labor Management Committee Update

During the March 1st labor management meeting Amy Silvia asked Whitney about allowing nutrition service workers to use Emergency/ Personal Business Leave for the snow days. Whitney said the way the contract has been interpreted in the past they are not allowed to use it for snow days, and that we would need to change it during bargaining. When we pressed her to make an exception for these recent days she said she would look into it and get back to us by next Monday March 6th.

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SEIU Local 140

We are members of SEIU 503, sub-local 140 representing custodians and nutrition service workers at Portland Public Schools.

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