



## SEIU and PFSP file for Mediation with PPS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: PORTLAND, OR – **On Friday, November 3rd PPS workers represented by SEIU Local 503 and Portland Federation of School Professionals (PFSP) AFT Local 111 have both separately, formally sent the Employment Relations Board a request for Mediation.** This escalation provides the parties with assistance in reaching an agreement and, if an agreement is not reached, begins the legally mandated timeline for a potential strike. SEIU and PFSP combined represent over 2,000 classified staff who work in classrooms, clean our schools, and feed our students.

Members of SEIU and PFSP are united in their commitment to improving the safety and health of our schools, and both Unions have bargained for months, without success, to make PPS a safer place for students and staff. Classified staff in both unions are among the lowest paid District staff, resulting in serious understaffing and a degraded learning environment. As we work concurrently to reach our respective bargaining demands, we stand united with one another, and with the Portland Association of Teachers (PAT), representing the teachers currently on strike.

### Representation Breakdown

**SEIU Local 503** represents Custodians and Nutrition Services Workers

**PFSP** represents Educational Assistants, School Administrative Assistants, Library Assistants, Route Planners, Special Education Compliance Clerks, Campus Safety, Paraeducators, Sign Language Interpreters, Physical and Occupational Therapists – approx. 70 classifications in all.

### Bargaining Updates

**SEIU Local 503:** Custodians and Nutrition Service workers keep PPS school children safe and healthy at school, but low wages fuel high turnover rates. Insufficient staffing of both Nutrition Services and Custodians impacts children in the classroom and during lunch, as Nutrition Service workers struggle to ensure that all are fed. Our fight for safer and healthier schools for kids began back in February 2023, when the parties first met to bargain. Since then, SEIU has seen little progress at the bargaining table as the District struggled to address key issues of cleanliness, safety and understaffing. As of June 30th, Nutrition Service workers and Custodians are working on an expired contract; because of a lack of meaningful progress at the bargaining table, SEIU Local 503 formally sent the Employment Relations Board a mediation request.

**PFSP:** PFSP began bargaining in April with the belief that one job should be enough: that PPS has a duty to pay its employees at a rate that allows them to see their families, engage in

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communities, and honor the dignity of our labor. In a pre-bargaining survey PFSP members reported that currently nearly half of our members have had to work second, or even third, jobs to make rent, pay groceries, and pay for basic utilities. Nor are our PFSP members safe at work. Nearly 25% have been injured due to chronic understaffing and a lack of adequate training. PFSP members have been working without a contract since June 30, and will be heading into mediation because the District has not adequately offered our members answers to our demands for safety, training, and compensation.

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