

SEIU Local 140 Newsletter 2.23.24

Take Action!

- Join our executive committee meeting on [zoom](#), Saturday 2/24 at noon.
- Send a [letter](#) to the PPS school board demanding they condemn the genocide in Gaza and offer support to Palestinian students and families.
- [RSVP](#) for our contract celebration party at Kingpins bowling March 25
- Next membership meeting is Saturday 3/9 at noon. Location TBD.

Union News

Back Pay and New Contract

Although PPS had initially indicated they wanted to distribute our back pay by the end of February, they are now stating that the “goal is to have it no later than the end of March.” Regardless of when PPS updates our payscale, we will be entitled full back pay going back to July 1. It is very important that you check your pay stubs to verify that PPS has paid you correctly. There have been reports from PAT members that PPS has made mistakes in updating teachers’ pay after they settled their contract. If you have any questions or want help understanding your paycheck, feel free to reach out to a union leader or steward.

PPS Budget Cuts

Last week, PPS announced that it would be facing a [\\$30 million shortfall](#) for the 2024-25 budget. This comes just months after a historic teacher strike demanding smaller class sizes, more student support, and better pay. While the district claims it will be looking to cut \$15 million from “central operations,” it is unclear whether that will be from administration and bloated departments like the \$2.3 million communications budget, or whether it will include maintenance, custodial, and other essential departments. In addition, PPS is looking to cut \$15 million from classroom positions including EAs, restorative justice specialists, library assistants, social workers, admin assistants, and more. Many of these cuts target classified positions represented by PFSP which recently voted to approve their latest tentative agreement.

Meanwhile, PPS also revised their assessment of Markham and Robert Grey Schools which have been closed since January’s ice storm. Rather than reopening mid-February as initially proposed, they will remain closed until at least August while students remain dispersed to other schools across the SW area. PPS [admitted](#) that many parts of the buildings were already in “poor shape” prior to the storm

including “old and worn” pipes, and pre-existing roof damage. Last year, the [Community Budget Review Committee](#) found that deferred maintenance costs district-wide were approaching \$1 billion.

Contract Celebration

Mark your calendars for March 25th from 2-5pm to celebrate our new contract. (March 25 is a paid holiday in return for working Presidents day.) We will reserve several lanes at Kingpins Bowling on 3550 SE 92nd Ave. Family, friends, and other PPS union siblings are more than welcome to join. Make sure you [RSVP](#) so we can ensure we have enough lanes and food for everyone!

Board Meeting

On Tuesday, the PPS board voted to ratify PFSP’s new contract, despite board members [acknowledging](#) that the \$20/hr wage floor set in the contract is not enough to afford to live in Portland. Referencing upcoming budget cuts, audience members held signs reading “invest in special education, not middle management” and “adaptive PE isn’t just ‘nice to have’ it’s the law.”

Following the contract ratification, the board voted unanimously to adopt a resolution establishing a timeline to sell the district headquarters site to Albina Vision Trust. However, DCU electrician Adam Mauer [expressed concern](#) that the district has not adequately investigated what relocating to a downtown office building will mean for maintenance staff who operate out of the warehouse at the current PEC location.

Local Union Officer Elections

The Local 140 Officer election timeline has been updated. Ballots will go out by email on March 12 and will be due by April 2. The Local 503 elections department is creating a draft ballot which will be reviewed by your elections committee before it is sent to members.

Local Solidarity

PFSP Featured in NW Labor Press

PFSP members were featured in this [NW Labor Press article](#) about their recent rank and file organizing successes. The article describes how PFSP built their strength over the last several months, with the contract action team holding rallies, meetings and other events to hold the district accountable and give members ways to get involved. After the rank and file voted down two tentative agreements, and new folks stepped into leadership positions within the organization, the union was able to finally reach a tentative agreement that met some of their core demands.

Reminder that you can pick up copies of the NW Labor Press during our monthly membership meetings.

PSU Classified Workers Represented by SEIU 503 Declare Impasse

After management failed to meet reasonable demands for living wages and job security during a mediated bargaining session on 2/22, the bargaining team for classified staff at Oregon's public universities [declared impasse](#). Most classified workers at PSU and Oregon's public universities are paid less than the food stamp eligibility threshold for a family of three. Management's proposals would lock in the losses these essential workers have suffered due to inflation until 2026.

The workers' other top priority is to protect union jobs. Management wants the ability to contract out union jobs to the lowest bidder and to eliminate the job protections of affected workers. The bargaining teams will continue to meet in the hope that they can reach a settlement before a potential strike as early as April 1st. Stay tuned for more updates.

Salem-Keizer Teachers Declare Impasse

The Salem Keizer Education Association (SKEA) also recently declared an [impasse](#) in their negotiations with Salem-Keizer Public Schools, bringing the teachers closer to a potential strike. The SKEA has stated that they feel the district's offer simply continues the status quo and doesn't address some of their most important demands such as those around workload and class-size limits, issues that were also critical during the recent PAT strike. Andrea Castañeda, the district's superintendent, claimed in a statement that the teachers' demands were "mathematically impossible" for the district to fulfill given their current funding levels. This is a familiar talking point used by PPS during the strike in November. While there is some truth to the fact that state and federal education funding is inadequate, school districts must also be transparent and accountable to the public in how they prioritize the money they do have. We will give updates on these negotiations in future issues.

Alaska Airlines Flight Attendants Vote to Strike

Flight attendants for Alaska Airlines voted to [authorize a strike](#) by a large majority if their negotiations with the airline don't reach an agreement. Flight attendants from several other airlines also recently voted to authorize strikes. The Association of Flight Attendants-CWA represents almost 50,000 flight attendants at 19 airlines.

International Solidarity

Stop the Plunder Action

On March 6, community members from labor, human rights, and environmental groups will call on the Oregon Investment Council (OIC) to divest Oregon Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) funds from companies that exploit the land, labor, and people of the Philippines. As public employees in Oregon our retirement accounts are invested in corporations that are complicit with human rights abuses in the Philippines, Palestine, and other countries around the world, as well as fueling the climate crisis. Some of these companies include Boeing, Tesla, JP Morgan, Oceanagold and Teleperformance. You can register to attend the meeting [here](#).

Labor Against the Climate Crisis

German transportation unions have called for a six day [strike](#) in coordination with the climate activist group Fridays for Future. The action is attempting to connect workers' struggles with the movement for action on the climate crisis by emphasizing the importance of public transit in meeting climate goals. As indicators of the growing climate emergency continue, such as the [nearly nonexistent ice](#) accumulation across the Great Lakes, it's crucial that organized labor builds connections with climate justice organizers and particularly given the long history of states and corporations attempting to pit workers and environmentalists against each other.