

STATEMENT FROM PMSD BOARD PRESIDENT MR. RUSTY JOHNSON (dated January 8, 2020)

With the start of the New Year, our Board wants to reaffirm our commitment to negotiating a fair contract with the Pocono Mountain Education Support Professionals, the union which represents our support staff. We believe that a fair contract is one that balances the needs of our students, our staff and our taxpayers.

Our School Board Negotiating Team has reached out to union leadership with multiple dates for January negotiations, and we are pleased that January 15 has been accepted. We are also working toward getting an additional meeting on the calendar this month.

We are hopeful that progress can be made on negotiations and, in fact, intend to present two sound options for resolving the key issues that are preventing both parties from reaching an agreement.

Knowing emotions run high during negotiations and that myths and inaccuracies abound, we feel that it is appropriate to ensure the community understands the rationale for decisions made by our School Board and the mindful steps taken along the way. Therefore, we plan to immediately increase our communication with the public regarding negotiations through informational updates on the District's website – www.pmsd.org – and other means.

Once again, we are eager to work with the Pocono Mountain Educational Support Professionals and look forward to our next negotiation session on January 15.