



NEWS

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Julie Karant: 646-584-9001

Jake Lynn: 917-854-9663

SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION

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CONTRACT TALKS BEGIN FOR 3,000 SCHOOL DISTRICT WORKERS

Union Proposals Focus on Fair Wages, Protecting Health Care and Better Training

Philadelphia, PA – Negotiations for a new union contract covering 3,000 school district workers in Philadelphia began on Friday between 32BJ SEIU, one of the City’s largest unions, and representatives of the School District of Philadelphia. The current one-year contract, which expires on August 31st, covers school aids, bus drivers, attendants and mechanics; as well as building engineers, cleaners and maintenance workers in Philadelphia.

“The men and women who drive our kids to school, keep the schools running, safe and clean, deserve a fair contract,” said George Ricchezza, 32BJ District 1201 Leader. “With millions of dollars in new money available from the State, the school district has no excuse not to pay school workers what they need to support their families.”

32BJ members in Philadelphia are fighting for wage increases that stay ahead of inflation and securing quality health care benefits. Other goals include improved training, better equipment and increased hours for part-time workers and staff levels. School district workers provide a variety of critical services, including emergency repairs to school roofs, air conditioning and floors. They often function as first responders when students require emergency medical attention, break up fights, provide food and clothing for needy students and counseling for children who face difficult personal circumstances and emotional problems.

“Working families in Philadelphia, a city with one of the highest poverty rates, deserve better than poverty like wages,” said Mike Fishman, 32BJ President. “Philadelphia school workers, like those in other cities who are responsible for the well-being of our children, should be treated with respect.”

In 2007, 32BJ helped more than 2,300 commercial property service workers in Philadelphia secure a contract which provides a nearly 16% pay increase and ends premium sharing for family health care.

“We help keep students safe and focused on learning, so we deserve a fair share for our hard work,” said James Johnson, who has worked as a bus driver for 26 years for the Shallcross Day School in Philadelphia. “I make sure that children have my undivided attention when I am behind the wheel. We get kids to school on time and safely. We need a new equitable contract that allows me and my co-workers to provide for our families without any distraction.”

With 110,000 members in seven states, including 10,000 in Philadelphia, 32BJ SEIU is the largest property service workers union in the country.

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