

CONNETQUOT TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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LORETTA POWELL
PRESIDENT

Thursday, January 24, 2008

Mr. Michael Kealey
President, Board of Education
Connetquot School District
780 Ocean Avenue
Bohemia, NY 11716

Dear Mr. Kealey:

Many members of the Connetquot Teachers Association attended Tuesday night's Board of Education meeting to listen to the discussion of the proposed changes in the bus/school day schedule for September, 2008. As members of the Connetquot community who are affected by such changes, they exercised their professional responsibility to give the Board meaningful input. It was apparent that night that not only teachers and administrators are opposed to any change from the current schedule, but also community members.

The Association knew that the time changes in the school day which were proposed by the BOE during negotiations would cause many problems due to the lack of buses and the cost of purchasing additional buses. The District's response at that time was adamant. It assured the Association that our concerns would be dealt with by the District in a timely manner. Clearly, that was not the case.

The Association is communicating to our members and community the following concerns presented by residents, teachers and chairpersons at Tuesday's meeting.

1. The present schedule for the schools allows exemplary success with our music program and any change would cause "devastating" effects.
2. Starting the elementary school day earlier will result in elementary age children being required to be at bus stops very early in the morning.
3. High school students will be required to start their school day 10 minutes earlier.
4. Many parents rely on their older children (i.e., middle school children) to be home before younger siblings for child care reasons.
5. Many coaches work in the middle schools and a change to a later schedule would adversely affect their ability to coach.
6. Middle school students who participate in after school activities will get home late which will interfere with evening routines, including completing homework and studying for exams.
7. Students in the middle schools who play junior varsity or varsity sports would not be able to do so or would have their education disrupted significantly in order to do so.
8. Parents vocalized that the proposed change in schedule was not worth the expense.
9. Community members expressed extreme concern regarding the cost effectiveness of spending considerable money to finance buses to accommodate a two minute increase per period in the middle schools. The ends did not seem in their minds to justify the proposed expense.

The Association also takes umbrage with the District's position that our grievance has caused this problem. The Association has the responsibility to protect our contract and will continue to do so. The grievance filed by the Association regarding bus lateness is not the catalyst for the proposed changes in schedules for next year. When the District demanded a seven hour day, it was their responsibility to ensure that the number of buses was adequate for its implementation. The Association did not demand a seven hour day and changes in the bus schedules. The District did!

The District's Administration had two and one-half years during the last protracted bargaining to plan for and prepare for implementing their demanded changes in our contract. Evidently, that was not done! Who is responsible for that lack of planning? What were they doing during that time?

It is the apparent lack of Administrative planning that appears to be the root cause of this problem. Blaming the Association for the proposed disruption is manipulative. Even now, we believe that any proposed "solution" such as starting the middle schools an hour later is insulting to all those affected. The Administration appears to wish to cover up their failure to deliver on many promises made to staff and the Association over the past year that this problem would be solved.

We call upon the Board of Education to investigate the lack of adequate preparedness that this problem represents. It is the Board who will be responsible to the community for the disruption the proposed plan will cause for students and taxpayers. It is only the Board that can solve this problem in a sincere and genuine way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Loretta Powell". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Loretta Powell
President

cc: Board of Education
Scott Lockwood
Alan Groveman
CTA Board of Directors