By now you may have heard that the Fact-Finder’s Report – a plan created to yield a contract agreement between the Coatesville Area School Board and the Coatesville Area Teachers Association (CATA) – was accepted by the School Board, but rejected by CATA.

The Fact-Finder’s report was developed by a neutral third-party, appointed by the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board. His goal was to provide specific contract recommendations that balanced the needs of both parties.

Parties must vote for the Fact-Finder’s report in its entirety. While the School Board valued the neutrality of this outside expert, it appears the teachers union did not. As a result, the School Board voted “yes” on April 11 and CATA voted “no” on April 12.

Both will be given the opportunity to vote for this report again in the next 5-10 days.

The “Myths vs. Realities” below are provided to clear up inaccuracies surrounding the Fact-Finder’s report.

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**Myths vs. Realities**

**Myth**
- The School Board has been the “primary barrier” to settling the contract.

**Reality**
- The School Board welcomed the Fact-Finding process and accepted his recommendations for a contract this week. It was CATA that rejected it.

**Myth**
- The Fact-Finder’s report was too “vague and unclear” for CATA to approve. CATA assumes he wanted both parties to go back to the negotiation table.

**Reality**
- This is never the case. Under the laws that govern collective bargaining, the Fact-Finder’s job is to provide a set of clear recommendations that will prompt a vote of “yes” or “no” for his proposal in its entirety, without need for clarification. That is why the School Board voted “yes.”

**Myth**
- The current language regarding control of the work day takes away necessary planning time.

**Reality**
- In a further effort to reach a settlement the Board offered a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to better define the intentions of the Fact Finder. This MOU was rejected by CATA and it appears was not even shared with all of its members.

**Myth**
- The School Board voted “yes” during a hastily-organized meeting.

**Reality**
- April 11 was a regularly-scheduled Board meeting, on the calendar for five months. Leading up to it there were numerous discussions between authorized representatives of the School Board and CATA. They begin right after the report was issued and continued up until the Board vote was taken. These recent discussions show the continued effort by the Board to reach a settlement.

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Myth
- The School Board and Superintendent have ignored requests to continue negotiations.

Reality
- The School Board’s chief negotiator was available continuously and responded to every one of CATA’s overtures. In addition, at the direction of the Board’s negotiation team, the Superintendent scheduled a meeting and met with CATA representatives to listen, brainstorm and discuss concerns. The Superintendent also was scheduled to meet again with CATA and the chief negotiators of both sides postponed that meeting. The Board has never refused a negotiations meeting with CATA.

Myth
- The School Board doesn’t value teachers.

Reality
- The School Board values our teachers. In fact, the School Board agreed to the Fact-Finder’s recommendation of a 3.5%, 3.0% and 3.0% salary increase for our teachers in each year of the contract. This was rejected by CATA.

Myth
- The Board wants to take away all planning time for teachers.

Reality
- The Board recognizes there are only 7.5 hours in the teacher work day and that the current contract only permits elementary students to be at school for 6 ¼ hours, and secondary students at school for 6 ¾ hours. The School Board has agreed to a planning period and lunch period every day for every teacher. The Board values our teachers and has a strong desire to have our teachers working with our students.

Approval of the Fact-Finder’s report provides a path forward for all parties so that we can all focus on Coatesville’s students. The School Board knows this, and voted to approve the recommendations. These recommendations present significant financial challenges to the taxpayers that the Board is willing to work hard to solve. Will CATA consider this carefully before they vote again? We certainly hope so!

Stay informed about Negotiations:
- Visit the “Negotiation Update” section of the District website at www.casdschools.org
- Connect with us on social media at www.facebook.com/coatesvilleSD/
- Attend School Board meetings