



# GENERAL TEAMSTERS LOCAL UNION #174

Affiliated with the INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

14675 Interurban Ave. South, Suite 303, Tukwila, WA 98168-4614

phone (206) 441-6060 or (800) 221-9952 • fax (206) 441-4853 • e-mail local174@teamsterslocal174.org

Rick Hicks  
Secretary-Treasurer

October 30, 2017

Seattle School Board  
2445 3rd Ave. S  
Seattle, WA 98134

Seattle School Board Members,

At this point, you are well aware of the current ongoing labor dispute between Seattle school bus drivers, who are members of Teamsters Local 174, and First Student. This labor dispute remains at a boiling point, with no progress whatsoever made over the past several weeks.

As you know, First Student is the Seattle School District's subcontractor for student transportation. You hired this company, and you negotiated and then signed a contract with them to provide yellow bus service for students in the City of Seattle. At the time that this contract was signed, the Seattle School Board was well aware that healthcare and pension issues had not been addressed in the labor agreement that was reached between the Teamsters and First Student in 2016. You knew this because we, Teamsters Local 174, told you.

And yet, despite your knowledge that this issue would surface again in the summer of 2017, you did not negotiate anything into your contract with First Student that required them to provide healthcare to the school bus drivers, nor did you provide them with additional funding for that purpose.

First Student had and continues to have a vested interest in maintaining the Seattle School District's business. They own bus lots within the city limits, and they have a fleet of school buses stationed here. You, the School Board, had an enormous amount of leverage to require appropriate benefits for employees as part of the contract. But you did not do this.

Now that this issue has – predictably – led to a labor dispute that threatens to erupt and cause a major headache for Seattle families, you have collectively shrugged your shoulders and claimed that you are powerless to do anything in this situation. With the notable exception of School Board Director Betty Patu, no member of the Board has even deigned to meet with the Teamsters to discuss our concerns.

First Student drivers are angry – angry enough to go on strike at a moment's notice. This entire situation was so avoidable, and yet here we are on the brink of a strike that would be catastrophic for Seattle families who rely on First Student drivers to get their children to and from school every day.

The responsibility to fix this problem lies not just with First Student, but with the Seattle School District that pays them for their services. You and the rest of the Seattle School Board have the ability to put pressure on First Student to resolve this situation – significantly more pressure than the gently-worded “good people on both sides” letters that have been made public up to this point.

Parents of children in the Seattle area are keenly aware of your culpability in this issue. None of us will not take kindly to seeing the School District throw up their hands in defeat as their transportation contractor runs riot, refusing to abide by the National Labor Relations Act by negotiating fairly with their unionized workforce.

Parents of children in the Seattle School District want the people who transport their children every day to have healthcare. They want them to have retirement benefits. They want them to be treated with dignity and respect.

It is your job to ensure that all of your outsourced vendors adhere to the requirements of the Seattle School District, rather than acting like the Walmart of public education.

We hope that you will use your position to help resolve this situation before it leads to a strike. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

TEAMSTERS LOCAL UNION # 174

  
Rick Hicks  
Secretary-Treasurer

RH: mh