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Post-Mediation Statement

Burlington, Vermont — Today, the Burlington School Board negotiating team entered into the mediation process with the overall goal of achieving a sustainable contract that allows the District to focus on a more efficient use of resources in support of complex student needs. After a nearly five-hour session with a federal mediator and representatives from the Union, no agreements were reached in any of the major areas separating the parties.

During the mediation, the Board proposed that the existing compensation model be replaced with a new, more sustainable model, to be developed collaboratively with the Union, and that would provide competitive salary increases for all teachers. The Board negotiating team came prepared to increase its salary offer, with the goal of ensuring a regionally competitive salary schedule. The Board also maintained that teachers' contribution to their health insurance be increased to help offset a 7.9% increase in health insurance costs. Currently, the District subsidizes 85% of teacher health insurance premiums for individual and family coverage.

Although the Board negotiating team indicated a clear desire to constructively engage, no change of position toward achieving a settlement was communicated by the Union. The Union then chose to terminate the mediation and dismiss the federal mediator. The parties now move to fact finding, the next step in the impasse procedure, which will occur later this spring.

School Board Chair Mark Porter said, "I'm disappointed that the mediation did not result in a settlement. Looking ahead to fact finding, we are confident that the Board's positions will secure a settlement that broadens student learning, preserves the District's status as an employer of choice for teachers, and is fiscally sustainable."

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