



**California Federation of Teachers**  
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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## **Berkeley Federation of Teachers Declares Impasse in Contract Negotiations**

**Teachers to hold press conference at Rosa Parks Elementary School  
on Friday at 3:30 p.m.**

On Friday, May 28, the Berkeley Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 1078 (BFT), declared impasse in their contract negotiations with the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) administration. "We are not happy about making such a serious declaration," says BFT president Barry Fike, "but after well over a year of negotiations we have reached agreement on but two relatively minor articles and a small handful of side letter agreements." If approved by the state Public Employment Relations Board (PERB), the declaration of impasse will result in a mediator being assigned to help with negotiations.

The BFT entered negotiations, says Fike, with a full awareness of the financial difficulties facing the BUSD in light of the state budget crisis. The BFT team was prepared to work together with the administration to reach creative solutions to bargaining issues with no extra overall costs to the District. "The district has shown itself to be unwilling to meet us halfway," says Fike. "It has been surprising and troubling to find that approximately thirty of the District's proposals would, if agreed to, take away protections and improvements for teachers gained in the past without producing any cost savings for the District."

The BFT is also extremely concerned about the situation at Rosa Parks Elementary School, where in the past week several teachers were notified that they would be involuntarily transferred next fall to other schools. This action and its fallout could result in close to half the staff leaving Rosa Parks. It followed on the heels of a petition last month to Superintendent Michelle Lawrence, signed by three-quarters of the school staff, requesting that she transfer the school principal. She refused to do so, and instead began to transfer teachers. The BFT is filing a grievance stating that the due process rights of the teachers involved have been violated.

"What's happening at the negotiations table and the mass exodus at Rosa Parks are reflective of the administration's general attitude toward teachers in the district," says Fike. "These are part of the same pattern: a refusal by the administration to treat faculty in a professional manner, to

listen to their concerns, and to take appropriate action that builds unity in a timely fashion.

Instead, the actions at Rosa Parks may well harm relationships between teachers and principals at other Berkeley schools. This is no way to maintain and improve a quality educational program for the children of Berkeley."

Fike will speak tonight at the BUSD School Board meeting, and at a press conference to be held Friday, June 4, at 3:30 p.m. in front of Rosa Parks Elementary School, 920 Allston Avenue. The Berkeley Federation of Teachers represents all the teachers in the Berkeley Unified School District. For more information call Barry Fike, 510-912-6448, or Fred Glass at 510-579-3343.

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