

# School districts differ: one strikes, one teaches

HARRISBURG (AP) — This is a tale of two school districts. One, West York, has negotiated four teachers' contracts in six years without a strike. The other, Phoenixville, had two strikes in six years — including a 19-day school year that has left teachers out of work for a year later. In an effort to determine why one district had labor peace and the other peaceful negotiations, the Associated Press interviewed the superintendent, a school board officer and a union official in each district. Their comments revealed differences between the districts — differences that they explain nationally why some districts suffer strikes and others avoid them. West York, Phoenixville and all other Pennsylvania school districts are forced to negotiate with teachers under the state's 1970 Public Employee Bargaining Act. The law establishes a five-month negotiation timetable and permits teachers to strike when the timetable expires. This year, 15 teacher locals were struck in Pennsylvania, in 154 districts still negotiating. In six years of collective bargaining, there have been 234 teacher strikes, according to the state Education Department. West York and Phoenixville are largely suburban districts whose mostly white-collar workers work in York or Philadelphia respectively. Phoenixville also has some blue-collar areas and farms. West York has 157 teachers and 3,400 pupils, while Phoenixville employs about 200 teachers and has 4,100 pupils. West York teachers average \$12,437 in salary. The Phoenixville average is \$12,233. Both districts had tax increases to compensate for declining state subsidies and to pay for teacher pay raises. The interviews revealed that West York's teachers and superintendent have a high regard for each other, just during negotiations in their day-to-day relationships.

"Rather than work at it 30 days, we work at it 365 days," said Raymond Troxell, Jr., the West York superintendent. Phoenixville's superintendent said there are good daily relations between him and the teachers, and problems exist only during a strike. Two teachers interviewed said faculty members feel distant from the superintendent, rarely see him, and are never consulted about educational policy. "I don't think the day-to-day relationships have a whole lot to do with that contract negotiations," said Dr. Raymond Straub, Phoenixville's superintendent. Troxell of West York said he accepted collective bargaining from the beginning, and saw negotiations as a lever to bring about progressive change. Straub said he too accepts labor negotiations, but views them as a time-consuming hindrance that takes him away from educational duties. Troxell said he meets the first Wednesday of each month with teachers' union representatives to discuss anything the teachers want. Straub said he rarely meets in this manner, although teachers discuss specific problems with the district's fulltime labor negotiator. Troxell and the chief union negotiator said the superintendent spends considerable time in school buildings talking with teachers. Straub said he visits the schools, but teachers deny his claim that he spends time with them. The union president and another teacher said some younger faculty members had never met Straub. West York union officials said only two teachers filed grievances during six years of collective bargaining. Both were settled by school district personnel. Phoenixville teachers filed 38 grievances in six years, including eight or 10 that were settled by an outside arbitrator. About 10 were filed in the last year, mostly involving disputes over per-

sonal leave days or reimbursement for graduate credits, the union said. West York has no school board members at the bargaining table, because they're more subject to public pressure and may not be aware of all contract implications. Phoenixville had three board members at the table, and Lawrence Gould, the board president, admitted there was intense pressure from the public to settle during last year's strike. He added that board members should be at the table, since they have to face the public. Troxell, who teaches a labor relations course at Western Maryland University, said he took swift action seven years ago to prepare for collective bargaining in West York. He convinced the school board to finance a trip for himself and several administrators, who visited districts in other states that had bargained with teachers. "We looked for the pitfalls and then shared the information with the board," said Troxell. "We learned you have to build this idea of trust and fair treatment. We did that by saying negotiation is a means of sharing a genuine involvement in the school district. It's just a new way of reaching agreement in public education. It's a way of democratizing education." Troxell said this trust enabled teachers and the board to agree to iron out problems on class size after negotiations — rather than have the issue impede — a settlement. The issue has been a crucial point of dispute in other districts. The matter was discussed again and the school district decided to add a new first grade class. With the same first grade population, the effect will be to reduce class size this year. Straub, who attended college workshops in collective bargaining, said he didn't favor the concept. "I saw it would complicate the administration of schools," he said. "Which it has," said Gould, an aerospace engineer and

the Phoenixville board president. "A good deal of attention is paid at the administrative levels to collective bargaining. It's making us spend education dollars on labor work. A lot of people who were on the board resented the fact they could no longer deal with the teacher organization the way they had before. I think that has been overcome." While the superintendents' views differ, the greatest division of opinions is between the West York and Phoenixville teachers. "Cooperation. That sums up everything in one word," said Ronald Verdier, a physical education teacher and chief negotiator for the West York union. "Our superintendent is in the buildings. He's not the type to administer from the office. The basic aim of both sides is educating the children." Anthony Zabicki, the president of the Phoenixville teacher local, said a state survey revealed a negative teacher attitude toward the superintendent. "Most people in responsible positions in the district never come to teachers to discuss school procedure or policy," said Zabicki, a social studies teacher. "There's a lot of resentment among teachers because of this. It's more than dollars and cents. I don't think they care about us. Their attitude is, 'You're getting your money, you do your job and let us run the school district.' We deal with students every day. If there's anything that has to be done in the educational process, they should come to the teachers." Added Elaine Hutchinson, a Phoenixville science teacher: "The classroom is the most important place, but the teacher is at the bottom of the

totem pole." Paul McCleary Jr., a York attorney and vice president of the West York School Board, gave two reasons for the district's success in negotiations: "We hired a superintendent who knows how to handle people and we keep the board away from the negotiating table. I don't think the board can do without top administrators. And if board members were at the table, they would have more personality clashes with teachers." Teachers, board members and administrators at West York say the future of labor negotiations looks rosy. At Phoenixville, the picture is more uncertain. "The board is sitting back and looking at what we did — and trying to see what we can do to increase the probability of a peaceful settlement," said Gould. Verdier, the chief negotiator and teacher at West York, summed up the future by saying, "With the present administration and school board, I don't think we'll ever see a strike at West York."

## Mondale says Carter will deliver jobs

BARBERTON, Ohio (UPI) — Sen. Walter Mondale said yesterday President Jimmy Carter would provide a job for everybody who wants one and make "working people and their families No. 1 again." "Any administration that can't promise and deliver on full employment doesn't deserve to be in the White House," the Democratic vice presidential candidate said in a speech at a Labor Day parade. "That's where we will begin." Speaking to a blue-collar crowd, Mondale said inflation is "ruining America" and said the rising toll of jobless Americans "has got to stop. We've got to put people back to work." Mondale said if Carter is elected Democrats would have a moderate credit policy lowering interest rates and enabling more Americans to buy homes, and adopt a health plan to ensure a family's life savings is not wiped out by catastrophic illness, "just simple things we want to do in America." Mondale said he and Carter recognized the value of unions. "We want to put working people and their families No. 1 again." Mondale kicked off the fall campaign shaking hands with well-wishers along a parade route in Barberton, a blue-collar suburb of Akron which holds a big Labor Day parade. He flew to the West Coast later for a picnic in Alameda County, Calif., before traveling to Los Angeles for the night. His wife Joan, son Ted, 19, and he boarded a 1925 yellow and orange Packard to drive the parade route in Barberton. He left the car twice to shake hands with the crowd of more than 35,000 in sunny

but crisp weather, shook hands, kissed babies and joked with the crowd. Mondale delayed his departure from Washington to tour facilities at National Airport and visit with flight personnel from United and Eastern airlines, at one point departing from the hand-shaking for foot-shaking. When he poked his head under a compartment of the airplane where the radio crew was working, a crew member stuck a foot through the hole and Mondale heartily shook it. In remarks prepared for the City Park in Barberton, Mondale charged the Republican administration of President Ford had betrayed the working people by economic mismanagement. "On the record, they have failed." He detailed a number of areas of economic mismanagement including response to recession, inflation and rising fuel prices.

## Conversation program planned

Volunteers are needed to join the Conversant Club, an organization that helps foreign students learn better English. Interested persons may sign up in 305 Sparks. Student counselors meet 7:30 tonight in the Walnut Center. They are asked to bring preferred work schedules. For other information call 863-0465 or stop in 102 Boucke. Free U course description forms are due today and tomorrow in 223 HUB. The Young Socialist Alliance will hold an introductory discussion on "What Socialism Stands For" at 8 tonight in 365 Willard. The Hetzel Union Board will hold its first meeting of the term at 7 tonight in 222 HUB. The Engineering Undergraduate Council will meet 7:30 tonight in 207 Sackett. The United Federation of Star Trek Fans will hold its first weekly meeting 7:30 tonight in 75 Willard. The Rape Crisis Center will hold an introductory meeting for new volunteers at 7 tomorrow night at 108 W. Beaver Ave. Men and women are welcome and needed.

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## Pakistan dam collapses after villagers evacuate

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan (UPI) — The Bolan Dam, one of Pakistan's main sources of irrigation for the vast arid tracts of Baluchistan province bordering Iran, collapsed last night and washed away 26 villages, officials reported. Most of the 10,000 persons living in the villages in the Kachi district had been warned that heavy rains had strained the dam, and they moved to high ground, the officials said.

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