

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### Following Positive Progress Towards New Professional Agreement, Park County School District Prepares for Strike Following Backtracking and Inconsistent Communications from SPEA

Fairplay, Colorado – Although a New Professional Agreement was jointly created last week by the Park County School District RE-2 (the “District”) and the South Park Education Association (“SPEA” or “Association”), the District learned through the media today that the Association plans to strike tomorrow, October 14, 2019.

The New Professional Agreement was jointly created in order to recognize the Association following the expiration of the prior agreement in June. This new agreement was structured to provide several mechanisms for negotiating salaries and working conditions in the future. It further included immediate opportunities for the Board and Association to have conversations that would build an understanding of the District’s budget and financial projections, as well as develop a common language around understanding school finance. October 18, 2019, was identified as a time to start such conversations if the New Professional Agreement was ratified by SPEA and approved by the Board by October 17.

It is the District’s understanding that the Association is striking because they desire, prior to entering into the New Professional Agreement, to negotiate current year salaries above the across-the-board raises already provided to all employees. The Association took this unexpected position after the parties had previously agreed at the meetings last week to talk solely about the language provisions in the New Professional Agreement. Conversations about salaries and District finances were always a separate subject from the creation of the New Professional Agreement. It is unfortunate that the Association deviated from this agreed upon course towards a resolution.

As the District plans for the impacts that a strike would have on students, parents, coaches, classes, athletics, extra-curricular activities, and school operations, it has been in communication with parents and employees regarding the logistics for the same. As of this evening, the District has determined to cancel classes tomorrow and has communicated this to parents. No buses will run and all athletics and extra-curricular activities have also been canceled. Other school operations for staff will remain consistent with a regular workday. Because the District respects and values the rights of all staff to work in a safe and secure environment while others are exercising their right to strike, local law enforcement will be present to ensure that environment. The District recognizes the inconvenience that the strike will cause to all and will continue with these communications during this difficult time.

The District had been extremely hopeful that the dialogue for a New Professional Agreement would result in the recognition of the Association and the development of a path forward for

discussing all matters important to the parties, including salaries and benefits. Again, the Board is disheartened that the Association is choosing to strike rather than to move forward with a positive working relationship with the District that includes favorable avenues for SPEA to handle the salary negotiations that it desires. As the District moves through these uncharted waters of a strike, the Board will continue to keep the best interests of the students and all employees, as well as the financial well-being of the District, at the forefront.

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