

Teachers in the Harlem School District want you to know the facts

### **Teachers offered a proposal to get students back in school Friday.**

The union's proposal offered to send teachers back to school before the 24 hour period teachers need to vote on a tentative agreement. Even though the district can afford the proposal on the table, the administration did not accept the offer.

### **The union was ready to negotiate in April.**

The teachers tried to have conversation throughout the summer. Negotiations didn't start until June. Teachers didn't receive a detailed health insurance proposal until Wednesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, the second day of the strike. The teachers wanted to avoid a strike for the sake of our kids.

### **Over 120 teachers have left the district in the last three years.**

The teachers' proposal would help address this problem by making salaries more competitive with the surrounding area. Harlem must be able to recruit and retain quality teachers. The Harlem community deserves a stable school system.

### **Harlem has the lowest salaries when compared to area schools.**

Teacher salaries are higher in Rockford, North Boone, Belvidere, Rockton, Prairie Hill, and Hononegah. Harlem teachers are not asking to be the best paid teachers. We just want to keep our good teachers.

### **Teachers took a pay freeze and sacrificed for Harlem schools.**

Teachers didn't keep up with the cost of living as they agreed to 0%, 1% and 1.5% increases in the last contract. Teachers' health insurance costs went up 33% over that 3-year time period.

### **The school district is in great financial shape and teachers aren't asking for anything that would jeopardize that.**

The district has admitted they have \$10 million surplus. They will also receive millions in new state aid this year. The district has consistently underestimated the amount of money coming in and they have over estimated their costs. That's how they went from a deficit to such a large surplus in only 3 years.

**This strike was avoidable. The teachers feel it should have never taken place. We want to get back to work. Please contact the school board and help us build a stable positive environment for your children.**

For more information, check the HFT Web site. [www.harlemft.org](http://www.harlemft.org)