

3 December 2018

To The Teachers of Gompers Preparatory Academy,

The teachers at The Preuss School are deeply impressed by your courage in standing up for your right to engage in a collaborative activity by forming a union of your choosing and we fully support your decision. Please note that - '*Federal labor law protects your right to engage in such activity without fear of intimidation or retaliation.*' <https://www.nlr.gov/rights-we-protect/whats-law/employers/discriminating-against-employees-because-their-union>

We would like to share with you our experience prior to, during and after unionizing. It is our hope that you will feel some solace in our process, so we have attached our first newsletter, *U Connection*, which will give you the background information of how and why we unionized.

We can tell you, with sincere honesty, that the process was challenging but worth the effort. You will hear many reactions to your decision, some positive and some less so. In the end, this is *your* decision, *your* union. You will bargain for the things that are important to you and the outcome will be a contract that respects the spirit of both teaching and GPA. In our contract, we were able to codify everyday procedures, from class size to workspace, and it allowed us to have a voice in setting the process for evaluation. We were able to secure market value salaries and placed an emphasis on recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers. While teachers received many of the benefits of the new contract, it also helped administration with formalizing policies and procedures. More importantly, the contract we wrote and negotiated guarantees that we can continue to offer students the support we all know they need and deserve.

In a two year-span prior to unionizing, Preuss lost 40% of its teachers. Once we signed our contract, we lost none and teacher morale was very high. We had stemmed the high turnover rate and teachers felt more respected and valued. We understand your desire to put your students first and to feel validated in the work that you do at GPA. Our similar population of at-risk, underrepresented students need stability and their success is reliant on maintaining the strong teacher to student connections. Research tells us that students who have close, positive and supportive relationships with their teachers will attain higher levels of achievement, more so with students at-risk. A revolving door of teachers coming and going will do nothing to enhance this closeness. Forming a union can help maintain those close relationships that our schools' students rely on so heavily.

It cannot be overstated how positive all of our teachers feel about the decision to unionize. Even parents and community members have expressed their support and have recognized how valuable the decision has been to the long-term health of the school. We are optimistic that you are on the right path, and we would be happy to meet with you to answer any questions or discuss any concerns that you may have. We know it is a difficult decision, but we are behind you all the way.

In solidarity,

The teachers at The Preuss School