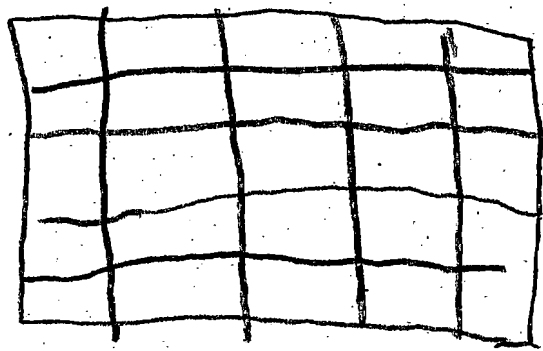
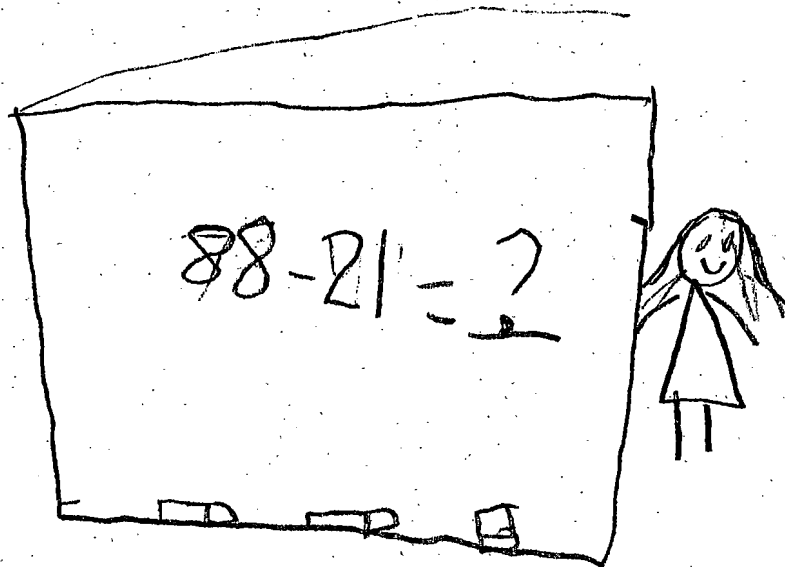


Student. I am in ~~_____~~ ^{Curry-Smith} grade. I am a Newton
in school. I miss seeing my teacher
~~_____~~
Thank you, ~~_____~~ I hope to be in school soon.



Dear Judge

I am a Newton student. I am
in [redacted] and I wish to
go back to school because I wish
to see my friends and teacher. It
gets very boring at home and there
is nothing to do. Also I will probably
miss a lot of camp. I will also miss a
lot of school subjects. I am sad that
we do not have school for a week,
and this is coming from someone
who would gladly take two days
off of school. Please help us get
school!

Sincerely,
[redacted]


Dear Judge Barry-Smith,

I'm [redacted] and I'm in [redacted] grade. I love school and am sad I don't get it. To me it feels like the teachers care more about money than us kids. When you decide to do a job you do it just like how I go to school. I don't just decide to not go to school so why do the teachers? It makes me feel unhappy. The teachers teach us to love learning and that aren't being very good role models. I have not gotten a normal year besides last year because of Covid and I was happy to keep it that way but then I found out I wasn't going to have school and I got very sad. I love school so why don't the teachers? I really hope I get school tomorrow after more then a week of nothing.

From

[redacted]

I
School!

I want to go back to school.


Sent:
To:
Subject:

Michael A Sullivan
Monday, January 29, 2024 7:35 AM
[REDACTED] Middlesex Clerks Office
Re: A plea: our children need to be in school (Newton, MA)

Follow Up Flag:
Flag Status:

Follow up
Flagged

Good morning:

Your e-mail has been forwarded to the Assistant Clerk in the session.

Have a good day.

Michael A. Sullivan, Esq.
Clerk of Courts
Middlesex Superior Court
200 Trade Center
Woburn, MA 01801
(781) 939-2810

Sent: Sunday, January 28, 2024 10:42:06 PM
To: Middlesex Clerks Office <middlesex.clerksoffice@jud.state.ma.us>
Subject: A plea: our children need to be in school (Newton, MA)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Hon Christopher Barry-Smith,

I write to you as a full-time working parent of [REDACTED] that go to elementary and middle schools in Newton, MA.

First, I thank you for your service. I am writing you this evening to ask that you please help us put an end to what has become a power struggle between the City and NTA to find a way to have our children back in school, learning, for Tuesday, Jan 30.

We are exhausted as parents and community members to continue seeing fines increase with no resolution/end in sight.

While I understand fines are being assessed to the NTA union, it does not seem to be making an ounce of a difference in resolving the issues at hand. Nor does the city of Newton seem to be able to find a resolution with the help of state-wide funding.

We need some type of court ordered directive that puts the children back in school.

... as Superintendent.

I am begging you to help put an end to the bickering and back and forth that seems to be continuing regardless of fees of "mediation." ENOUGH IS ENOUGH - our judicial system needs to step in and put an end to this and put our children back in school - where they belong as this age: learning.


As working parents, we are having to continue to worry about the mental health of our children with the unknown time of being out of school. The frequent questions of "Mommy, will I go to school tomorrow?" "I want to be with my friends and my teachers learning" is exhausting but moreover worrisome.

The amount of time, daily, we as a family are having to juggle childcare with our full-time jobs and friends is becoming overwhelming, exhausting and very reminiscent of the pandemic. We live in Massachusetts partially for the educational component and after this charade between the Mayor, School Committee and Union - I am deeply disappointed. Our children - our future - deserve better.

My husband and I bought our home in Newton before we were married in 2008 with the intention that we would hopefully one day have children go to Newton's public schools which were known for being the bedrock of the community. Now, in 2024, I look at the home we have built in this community and I feel more sadness than gratitude. Have we lost the sense of value towards educational?

Please, tomorrow put an end to this ping pong game that puts our children on the front lines feeling very confused about why this can't get resolved. We have a duty as adults to show our children how conflict can/should be resolved in our judicial system when the law is broken - not by setting an example by way of fines at this stage, with a "try again" option. This has gone on too long.

Thank you for your continued support and work on this case supporting our families and community.



Judge Christopher Barry-Smith
Superior Court Administrative Office
Three Pemberton Square
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Judge Barry-Smith,

We are writing today as concerned parents of [REDACTED] in the Newton Public School system.

To call this past week unsettling would be an understatement. We moved to Newton in [REDACTED] for a number of reasons including its location, transit and, most of all, its education system.

We have watched our children regress – all the way back to 2020. That is to say, it is feeling eerily like the early days of the pandemic, where everyone's schedules are disrupted with no end in sight. Our family is back to the days of compromised schedules, too much screen time and overall frustration. We are relying on grandparents, friends, and babysitters to help fill the days since both parents work full time. At least one of us has had to work from home every day this past week, even when we are supposed to be in our office. Every day, we have heard both kids melting down at least once – sometimes over the most insignificant things. It's hard to watch and rationalize what is happening with our kids, and I don't think we are alone.

Beyond that, the messaging on the news and social media have been in complete contradiction with one another. For us, as parents, it's all very confusing and depressing. It's hard to keep this from our kids, even though we try. Both the NTA and the City are claiming full transparency, yet that transparency seems to be contradicting accounts of the day. It's starting to feel like both sides are in their corners, and any understanding might be lost about what can be done and what is ultimately right. I want my kids to stand up for themselves. During disagreements, we have talked in school about flexible brains and rock brains. I'm worried that both parties at the negotiating table are navigating this dispute with the latter. If you're not familiar with this terminology, I recommend you speak with one of our wonderful elementary school teachers.

We realized during the pandemic, on a deeper level, how essential our teachers and schools are – and we continue to respect and appreciate all that they do. To be clear, we stand with our teachers. We all would not be who we are without teachers in our lives. What we do not stand for is this feeling of uncertainty and miscommunication.

Some of the stories that have been floating around include the following:

- we have heard this strike could last a while;
- all the fines in the world won't matter because the NTA has deep pockets and is now being backed by a number of third parties, and

All is to say, we do not know what is actually true, and this is all starting to feel very political in nature. We are losing focus on what matters – navigating this efficiently and effectively and getting the children back to school. We are fortunate to have found a village, but that being said my husband and I have spent a significant amount on unplanned childcare over the past week to make sure our kids are safe and cared for – for part or all of the day. We cannot imagine what families are doing to navigate who are not so fortunate.

I am writing you today for help. Our kids need to be at school. More fines and harsh words are not the way to solve the problem. Understanding, compromise and clear minds need to be the mantra of those involved in negotiations. Please, as a third party, please encourage our city representatives and unions representatives to work together and be a positive example.

As I write this, I would like to say that I would not like my letter published or quoted in any way. This is a one-to-one plea, and I cannot speak for other parents.

We appreciate your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Two Newton Parents

Sent:
To:
Subject:

Michael A Sullivan
Monday, January 29, 2024 7:34 AM
Middlesex Clerks Office
Re: Newton Parent - Judge Barry

Follow Up Flag:
Flag Status:

Follow up
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Good morning:

Your e-mail has been forwarded to the Assistant Clerk in the session with the judge.

Have a good day.

Michael A. Sullivan, Esq.
Clerk of Courts
Middlesex Superior Court
200 Trade Center
Woburn, MA 01801
(781) 939-2810

Sent: Monday, January 29, 2024 7:17:20 AM
To: Middlesex Clerks Office <Middlesex.clerksoffice@jud.state.ma.us>
Subject: Newton Parent - Judge Barry

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi! My name is [REDACTED] and my [REDACTED]. How can I send an email to Judge Barry about this ongoing strike in Newton? The two sides are not making any progress and our children (and parents) are feeling the impact. During Covid the Newton Mayor and NTA president could not agree on anything regarding getting the kids back to school and then Gov Charlie Baker stepped in. I believe Judge Barry needs to step in to help the situation - both sides need a "parent" to help end this situation. If you could send me his email I would like to email him directly thanks!

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sent:
To:
Subject:

Michael A Sullivan
Monday, January 29, 2024 7:37 AM
Middlesex Clerks Office
Re: Newton MA teacher strike

Follow Up Flag:
Flag Status:

Follow up
Flagged

Good morning:

Your e-mail has been forwarded to the Assistant Clerk in the session.

Have a good day.

Michael A. Sullivan, Esq.
Clerk of Courts
Middlesex Superior Court
200 Trade Center
Woburn, MA 01801
(781) 939-2810

Sent: Sunday, January 28, 2024 9:19:05 PM
To: Middlesex Clerks Office <Middlesex.clerksoffice@jud.state.ma.us>
Subject: Newton MA teacher strike

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in Newton MA. I'm contacting you about the ongoing teachers strike in Newton MA. Our teachers have been on strike since January 19. Middlesex Superior Court judge Christopher Barry-Smith has ruled twice on the case so far.

I'm reaching out to the court to ask Judge Barry-Smith to appoint a mediator between the Newton teachers association (NTA) and the Newton School Committee (NSC). Based on the opposing viewpoints and positions we are hearing, we as parents have lost faith that either side is negotiating in good faith. I think if Judge Barry-Smith can step in as mediator or appoint somebody into this role, it will help lead to a quick resolution to this impasse and get our kids back in school where they belong.

Thank you for your attention.

[REDACTED]

Sent:
To:
Subject:

Michael A Sullivan
Monday, January 29, 2024 10:47 AM
Middlesex Clerks Office
Re: Take actions for Newton teacher strike

Good morning:

Your e-mail has been forwarded to the Assistant Clerk in the session with the Judge.

Have a good day.

Michael A. Sullivan, Esq.
Clerk of Courts
Middlesex Superior Court
200 Trade Center
Woburn, MA 01801
(781) 939-2810

Sent: Monday, January 29, 2024 10:41:26 AM
To: Middlesex Clerks Office <Middlesex.clerksoffice@jud.state.ma.us>
Subject: Take actions for Newton teacher strike

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

As a citizen and parent in Newton, I would like to send a message to Judge Christopher Barry-Smith. 12k Newton kids are out of school as the result of the illegal strike organized by the teacher's union. The negotiation between the city and the union is getting hostile with no solution in the near future. Please take your action and use authority to bring kids back to school in whatever ways. As parents, we hear things from both sides and we don't know who is right or wrong. We rely on you to look at the facts unbiased to take swift action to bring kids back to school. They are the most vulnerable in this dispute between the adults. They need and deserve to be in school!

Thank you for your attention to this matter!

Sent:
To:
Subject:

Michael A Sullivan
Monday, January 29, 2024 12:43 PM
Middlesex Clerks Office
Re: Note from Newton 4th grader

Good afternoon:

Your e-mail has been forwarded to the Assistant Clerk in the session with Judge Barry-Smith.

Have a good day.

Michael A. Sullivan, Esq.
Clerk of Courts
Middlesex Superior Court
200 Trade Center
Woburn, MA 01801
(781) 939-2810

Sent: Monday, January 29, 2024 12:26:05 PM
To: Middlesex Clerks Office <middlesex.clerksoffice@jud.state.ma.us>
Subject: Note from Newton 4th grader

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Sent:
To:
Cc:
Subject:

Monday, January 29, 2024 12:58 PM

Middlesex Clerks Office, [REDACTED]

Re: Attention: Judge Christopher Barry-Smith

Good afternoon:

Your e-mail has been forwarded to the Assistant Clerk in the session with the Judge.

Have a good afternoon.

Michael A. Sullivan, Esq.
Clerk of Courts
Middlesex Superior Court
200 Trade Center
Woburn, MA 01801
(781) 939-2810

Sent: Monday, January 29, 2024 12:55:35 PM

To: Middlesex Clerks Office <middlesex.clerksoffice@jud.state.ma.us> [REDACTED]

Subject: Attention: Judge Christopher Barry-Smith

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Re: Emergency Action needed to address harm being done to children

I am writing to share the hardship and emotional distress that is being caused by the current strike and work stoppage by the public school Teachers of the City of Newton.

As a parent of [REDACTED] I am witnessing firsthand the emotional distress that is being caused. For example, my [REDACTED] year old has been in tears multiple times over the past 24 hours, as she feels hopeless and lost and unable to control what is happening to her. This is someone who has support of her parents and access to her friends, but still she is in distress. I can only think there are many more that are suffering in silence.

As the Judge, you have a unique opportunity to recognize that 12000 kids, without a voice in the matter, are being used and hurt by the current breakdown in the negotiations. Despite, wanting to support the teachers, ultimately, as this continues, I realize that it's the kids that should be the highest priority. The teachers are under no risk of direct harm, but the kids are. Yes, in Newton there may be families that can provide the support and care for their kids, but there are equally many that are unable to get their mental and emotional needs met and these most venerable are the ones we need to be laser focused on protecting.

bring a quick resolution, that the Department of Education and the Attorney General also recognize their responsible here, and see this as a crisis and use all means at their disposal to intervene on the behalf of these 12000 children.

Thank you



Sent: Monday, January 29, 2024 1:48 PM
To: [REDACTED] Middlesex Clerks Office
Subject: Re: Newton Teachers Strike

Good afternoon:

Your e-mail has been forwarded to the Assistant Clerk in the session with Judge Barry-Smith.

Have a good afternoon.

Michael

Michael A. Sullivan, Esq.
Clerk of Courts
Middlesex Superior Court
200 Trade Center
Woburn, MA 01801
(781)939-2810

[REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 29, 2024 1:44:45 PM
To: Middlesex Clerks Office <Middlesex.clerksoffice@jud.state.ma.us>
Subject: Newton Teachers Strike

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Afternoon-I am writing as a parent of a Newton North [REDACTED] student. We are pleading with the court to do more to ensure these kids are back in school.

[REDACTED] due to the strike, high school transcripts have not been sent out to the colleges who are waiting on them as part of the admission process. It is an incredibly stressful time for all.

I am also a public (state) employee who knows what it is like to go years with no contract. The difference is, we don't go on strike-the jobs we do are too important. Its just completely unacceptable.

I hope there is something more that Judge Barry can do that will ensure the kids are back in school.

Respectfully,

Sent:
To:
Subject:

Wednesday, January 24, 2024 8:33 AM
Dia S Roberts-Tyler
Fwd: Judicial System going wrong

FYI

Michael A. Sullivan, Esq.
Clerk of Courts
Middlesex Superior Court
200 Trade Center
Woburn, MA 01801
(781) 939-2810

Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 8:28:22 AM
To: Middlesex Clerks Office <Middlesex.clerksoffice@jud.state.ma.us>
Subject: Judicial System going wrong

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

How can Judge Christopher Barry-Smith in good conscience continue to fine the Newton Teachers. Does he truly know the lack of effort that the School Committee and the Mayor of the city has put forth to negotiate a contract. Does he not sure how they are just trying to make the teachers suffer to pay a fine as they sit there smirking. Did he ever ask where the \$55 million that the school superintendent stated to the teacher's union as the school committee that she sound (who knows how it was lost) in the school budget during a school committee meeting just prior to the discussions of a strike. How is judge Barry-Smith really being just for the people. How is it ok for the mayor of newton and the school committee to spend essentially millions on the attorneys to find the strike, but not offer to use that money to negotiate with teachers. Judges should ask questions and resolve answers prior to judgement and accessing fines. Schools in our country have unfortunately become a hazardous and dangerous work environment. The gun violence is just awful. Students attack teachers and other students because they know that the teachers aren't allow to consequence then anymore. Now, you are fining teachers because they are sticking up for themselves. The judicial system has been unjust with this scenario.

Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
Monday, January 29, 2024 10:09 AM
Dia S Roberts-Tyler
FW: Additional data - Re: Comment for Friday's Newton Public Schools hearing

Another one.

[REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 4:09 PM
To: Middlesex Clerks Office <Middlesex.clerksoffice@jud.state.ma.us>
Subject: Additional data - Re: Comment for Friday's Newton Public Schools hearing

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,

If helpful, see this analysis on the economic impact of the NPS strike on the community: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ZlcGC1rkDvadFE1CYo7ImcyhaRHOrxhiwa2RuYub3gk/edit#gid=0>

The cost is \$675,000 per day to the community, and this calculation only includes lost wages due to child care and emergency child care costs.

By the time we get to Friday, the cumulative cost to the community will have been over \$4 million.

Please take this impact into account with your ruling at the hearing on Friday. Thank you.

[REDACTED]

On Wed, Jan 24, 2024 at 9:12 AM, [REDACTED]

Hello,

I'd like to address this comment to Judge Barry-Smith for Friday's Newton Public Schools hearing.

Though we are not a party in the legal proceedings, the Newton Public Schools dispute is disproportionately affecting parents with young children who have few options for emergency child care. This is a true impact regardless of which side is at fault and cannot be addressed with the fines that are being imposed. It is a significant community-wide impact.

Please take this impact into consideration with any decision you make during Friday's hearing. I don't know what the right resolution is, but there must be at least an interim one, even if schools continue to be closed.

From:
To:
Subject:

Monday, January 29, 2024 9:18 AM
Dia S Roberts-Tyler
FW: Docket no. 2481CV00148 Comm.ERB v. NTA

Just FYI.

I think you mentioned you may show these to the judge.

There may be a few others you've received, I'm sure.

[REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, January 25, 2024 4:22 PM

[REDACTED]
Cc: Middlesex Clerks Office <middlesex.clerksoffice@jud.state.ma.us>
Subject: Re: Docket no. 2481CV00148 Comm.ERB v. NTA

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I just want you to know the impact of this case. It's so very personal.

Thanks very much for your response and attention.

On Jan 25, 2024, at 3:33 PM, [REDACTED]

Hello,

Thank you for this note. I appreciate your concern.

However, I must report that our Office and all of its employees are prohibited from advocating on behalf of, or even displaying favoritism for or bias against, any side in any matter whether civil or criminal.

I am sure you understand the necessity of Clerks Office employees to remain, and appear, completely impartial.

I do wish you the best during this difficult time.

[REDACTED]

As a parent, I am asking for your help and attention. I am alarmed and concerned about the strike in Newton. I have children in the public schools here, and while I have always advocated for educators as a parent and PTO leader, I do not support this strike. It is causing significant harm in our community and victimizing some of our most vulnerable populations. Also, apart from our new superintendent, I am **not hearing enough advocacy for our children** from stakeholders here in Newton. We need leaders to advocate for our children being in school and learning immediately. **Negotiations should only continue with our children in school and learning.** It is unconscionable to have them out of school. Can you please help?

Our city's 12,000 children, including my own, have now lost a week of school in a targeted long-planned strike that was organized with the backing and strategy of national interest groups like the Teamsters. Newton was already on the national radar and seems to have been selected for this action.

While Newton needs better funded schools, it's becoming clear that these teachers, some of the best-paid in the state, are being used for a larger message. The union, supported by the MTA, is making demands, not negotiating. They are walking out of negotiations instead of staying at the table.

With Teamsters leaning on their horns in our neighborhoods, a mayor who does not seem to be creating or accepting long-term financial plans that fund the schools, and a union demanding unsustainable funding strategies from our city, we are being bullied, along with our children. We need your help and intervention.

Yesterday, two teachers in NTA gear came to my door with a flyer of misinformation that included data about the private sector. I couldn't come to the door, because I was crying, as I despaired over this situation while trying to work. The teachers stood on my porch and talked and laughed and laughed. One of them was my young son's teacher from last year. He sat inside, listless, with nothing to do, listening to her talking in such high spirits even though children have paused their learning, test dates aren't moving, and our family days in June are vanishing. It seemed as though they didn't know or care about their impact. It was not a serious experience for them. The tactics, attitude and strategy here are causing serious damage in our community and to the respect for teachers we've always had and instilled in our kids.

We are in a crisis. Please use your role to take immediate steps to advocate for the children in Newton.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Sent:
To:
Subject:

Monday, January 29, 2024 8:20 AM
Dia S Roberts-Tyler
Re: NTA fines

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Thank you. I also have a petition signed by 1000 people in two days that I will forward to you later this morning. It takes no side except the children's.

Sent from my iPhone. Please excuse any typos.

> On Jan 29, 2024, at 8:03 AM, Dia S Roberts-Tyler <dia.Roberts@jud.state.ma.us> wrote:

>

> Good morning [REDACTED]

>

> I will forward your email to Judge Barry-Smith.

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: [REDACTED]

> Sent: Friday, January 26, 2024 7:15 PM

> To: Dia S Roberts-Tyler <dia.Roberts@jud.state.ma.us>

> Subject: NTA fines

>

> CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

>

>

> Can you please pass this information to judge. Thank you!

> I wanted to bring to your attention that I've been told from members of the Newton Teachers Association and Union that the fines you are imposing upon them for striking are being paid by the Massachusetts Teachers Association and possibly the national Teamsters Union because they have their own agendas. I don't have proof but the information came from a very reliable source, but you would need to investigate. Is this even legal? Because of this funding, I am told that the union is not afraid of fines over \$1 million.

> I cannot stress enough the devastating impact the strike is having on the students of Newton Public Schools. They are being deprived of their right to an education.. families of young children have to pay for extra childcare, parents have to fight over who is staying home to watch kids and discuss who's job is more at risk by staying home. Personally, my daughter is very anxious because she's missing her AP. Classes. AP exam dates are set nationally and she's not learning the material. This could impact her ability to get into the college of her dreams.

>

> I implore you to take immediate actions that enable schools to open TODAY. I also recommend you research as to where funding of fines is coming from (if it's illegal to be paid by state and national union organization).

>

> Thank you

Sent: Friday, January 26, 2024 10:51 AM

To: [REDACTED]; Dia S

Subject: Roberts-Tyler
Docket 2481 CV 000148

Follow Up Flag: Follow up

Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Madam Clerk,

I am a Newton parent who is dismayed that 12,000 students remain out of school today. My [REDACTED] cried last night when I told her there was no school today. The students are lost in what has become a national stand for unions with Teamster trucks blaring horns and politicians making stump speeches on the back of the Newton Public School students. One hundred percent of the parents I have spoken to feel the same way as I do, we support the teachers and we don't support the strike. Moreover, stop using the students as pawns and get them back in school. Parents are scared to express this in public.

With that being said, what I wanted to bring to your attention is the fact that some of the coaches, teachers and school administrators have asked students to join their protest. These are adults in positions of power over students and asking them to attend a protest is coercive and improper.

Part II, C. 5, sec. 2 of the Massachusetts Constitution imposes a duty to provide an education in the public schools. This is not happening in Newton.

[REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, January 29, 2024 4:02 PM
To: Dia S Roberts-Tyler
Subject: For Judge Christopher Barry-Smith- Newton Teachers Strike

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello Dia,
Thank you for taking the time to listen this afternoon and I would appreciate it if you would pass this message on to the Judge.

Dear Judge Barry-Smith,
I'd like to take a moment to tell you about my [REDACTED] is an exceptionally bright and charismatic [REDACTED] year old. He excels at sports, he has an emotional IQ higher than most of the surgeons I work with everyday, and a joke for everyone. When [REDACTED] was in kindergarten I knew something was wrong. He couldn't identify any letters. Everyone told me "he is so smart it's just the pandemic they are all behind!" I pushed very hard and finally got him tested. He is profoundly dyslexic. He now gets 5 days a week of additional support and we've been very happy with the strides he has made. He adores his teachers and doesn't even fight the additional work.

Of course that all changed on January 19th. In just two weeks I can see him losing reading skills. Skills that took him and the teachers months to master. I am now reaching out to everyone I can think of (including advocates and private schools) to make sure that these adult problems don't impact my child any further. I don't pretend to know (or frankly care at this point) if the Union or the Mayor is in the wrong here. All I know is that striking is illegal in Massachusetts and we are on day 7 of a strike. It is clear that neither side is going to budge without significant intervention from the state or some serious consequences. Please, can you help get the kids back to school?

One of [REDACTED] favorite books is "I Dissent" which is a children's book about Ruth Bader Ginsburg. We read it again last night and he asked me if there was anyone else like RGB that could help the kids get back to school. And as has become the usual [REDACTED] is the source of all my best ideas. So I implore you Judge, please help get these kids back to school any way possible. The damage is just too much for these little souls who depend on the consistency, education and joy that is learning. Thank you.

Sincerely,

January 29, 2024

Your Honor:

We are parents of children in the Newton Public Schools and taxpayers in Newton and we write as intervenors in Case 2481CV00148. We respectfully submit our attached personal letters detailing the effects to Newton's children and families caused by the ongoing Newton Teachers Association (NTA) strike.

We request that you read our letters and take our experiences to heart, and that you take into consideration the ongoing serious harm to children and families - which will only be compounded with the passage of time - and that you exercise your authority to reopen Newton Public Schools.

As the City of Newton and the Newton Teachers Association continue their negotiations over funding, this protracted strike is harming children enrolled in the Newton Public Schools more each day. Parents and children count on the schools being open. Working parents are faced with insurmountable childcare issues. Children depend on receiving hot meals at school and should not have to go through special hoops to get nutrition. Children with IEP's are not getting support services that they are entitled to. Children's social, emotional and academic development is and will continue to decline - all coming on the heels of the COVID pandemic, when our children were out of school for the better part of two years.

Our children's well-being requires schools to be opened immediately.

To that end, we must intervene in order to offer the attached testimonies of parents and children to this Court. Please find our letters enclosed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Newton Public School Parents

January 29, 2024

Honorable Judge Christopher K. Barry-Smith
Middlesex Superior Court
200 Tradecenter Drive
Woburn, MA 01801

Dear Judge Barry-Smith,

My name is [REDACTED] and I have [REDACTED] children enrolled in Newton Public Schools. [REDACTED] their academic and social development has already been stunted by Covid-related school closures, the effects of which have been widely documented. If you spend time around children of that age, then you know that statistics aren't needed to readily observe their developmental challenges. Today will mark the 7th school day, and 11th overall day, since my kids have had any education, more time than an unplanned Christmas vacation week.

I read the published ruling from your court on January 26th regarding the current Newton teacher strike, and noted the absence of language regarding the impact on children. I do not know what the customary format is for Superior Court rulings and I apologize if I am uninformed, however that is why I am writing this letter upon receiving the disheartening statements this Sunday evening from both the City and the union that negotiations continue to stall.

My children have gone from the expected "Yay!" when the strike began and hearing at night on Thursday January 18th that the next day would be an unexpected day off, to anxiety and fear today hearing yet again that the adults are not in control of this situation and we don't know when school will start. They miss their teachers, their friends, and the routine of the school day. Although they're young and we do our best not to project our emotions onto them, they still have eyes and ears, and can tell when a situation is spiraling out of control.

This letter is to plead with you to have the welfare of children at top of your mind as you make decisions regarding the Newton teachers strike. I understand you are in a position judges may not enjoy being in: effectively making policy due to the unprecedented circumstances before you. I do not know enough about the law to recommend any specific course of legal action, nor is this letter meant to advocate for either side of this dispute. Negotiations can be unpredictable, and I understand it's difficult to forecast which incentives or penalties may or may not have their intended effect. I realize the City of Newton is operating within a budget; and also that the teachers union has the right to bargain for higher wages and benefits. This letter is solely to request that the children being impacted by these events are a priority in your evaluation of appropriate next steps.

Thank you for your consideration,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Your Honor,

We are [REDACTED] and our son [REDACTED] is a student at Newton South [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] has been diagnosed with autism right before his second birthday. He has significant communication difficulties, developmental delays, and is being medicated for anxiety that is often associated with autism. He thrives on routine. Because of his communication impairment, he has great difficulties making friends, and going to school and spending time with his classmates and teachers are the highlights of his day. We have to carefully plan his time off from school (vacations and holidays) to make sure that he is sufficiently occupied. [REDACTED] short term memory is not great, which makes learning more difficult. It is essential that he is in school as much as possible to reinforce what he has learned and ensure that he doesn't regress.

NTA's decision to go on strike has been devastating for [REDACTED]. He spends majority of his day on his iPad while we work, and has been becoming increasingly anxious, which results in excessive scratching of his skin to the point of bleeding and increased anxiety. He has regressed in some of his behaviors and learning. He doesn't understand why he can't go to school, and it is difficult to explain to him what is going on.

We support and love our teachers. During the previous contract negotiations, I personally created, printed and gave out flyers to parents urging them to pressure the Mayor to increase the budget allocation for the Newton Public Schools. I think our teachers do essential and very important work, and should receive a fair contract.

However, this time around, something went terribly wrong. While we agree with some of the union's demands (especially increased salaries for the aides), we do not agree that keeping students, especially vulnerable students like our son [REDACTED] out of school, is the way to achieve the goal of a fair contract.

We have been in Newton since 2007, closely following previous school committees and contract negotiations, and it is the first time when we feel that the majority of our School Committee, as well as our new superintendent, are reasonable, good, and capable people who want to make sure they do the right thing by the teachers and students. We have been appalled by some of NTA's antics and social media communications, vilifying the School Committee members, our superintendent, and even the Mayor (and we are not fans of this Mayor and didn't vote for her both times she was on the ballot). We think that all parties need to be treated with respect and given the benefit of the doubt.

This strike has shaken many parents' trust in the public school system. Listening to other parents, those who can manage to pay the tuition want to pull their children out of public schools and send them to private schools. But for many of us, a private school is not an option. I am afraid of what this means for our country's public school system when one of the best school

between the teachers union and the parents has been broken.

We strongly urge you to do all you can to return our children to the classrooms. Our children are suffering, but those most vulnerable NTA members who can least afford it - our son's aides, are also suffering because they are losing their wages for the hours that they are on strike. We believe that negotiations can continue while the kids are where they should be during the day - learning at school.

Thank you.

[REDACTED]

We are [REDACTED] and our children, [REDACTED] are students at Brown Middle school and at Newton South High School, respectively.

NTA's decision to go on strike has been devastating for both our kids. Instead of studying, [REDACTED] spends his days playing video games while we work. Routine has been always very important to him, and it's difficult for [REDACTED] to get back into the studying mode after a break. [REDACTED] is a senior and is waiting to hear from college admissions. The High school is supposed to send Term 2 grades to all colleges at the end of January, it's a requirement. Currently, due to the strike grade submission to colleges has been delayed and its effect on admissions could be detrimental. In addition, all seniors taking AP classes, including [REDACTED] are behind on the AP class preparation while the AP exams are administered at the same time for all high school students in the country. This gap in preparation time will affect their grades and future college courses they were hoping to get the credit for.

We support and love our teachers. I think our teachers do essential and very important work, and should receive a fair contract. While we agree with some of the union's demands (especially increased salaries for the aides), we do not agree that keeping students out of school, is the way to achieve the goal of a fair contract.

We have been in Newton since 2014, closely following previous school committees and contract negotiations, and it is the first time when we feel that the majority of our School Committee, as well as our new superintendent, are reasonable, good, and capable people who want to make sure they do the right thing by the teachers and students. We have been appalled by some of NTA's rhetorics and social media communications, vilifying the School Committee members, our superintendent, and the Mayor. We think that all parties need to be treated with respect and given the benefit of the doubt.

This strike has shaken many parents' trust in the public school system. We strongly urge you to do all you can to return our children to the classrooms. We believe that negotiations can continue while the kids are where they should be during the day - learning at school.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Your Honor,

I am writing to you as a concerned parent of two students enrolled in Newton elementary school regarding the ongoing teachers' strike. As the strike enters its second week, my family, along with many others in our community, continues to face significant challenges and hardships as a result of this illegal action.

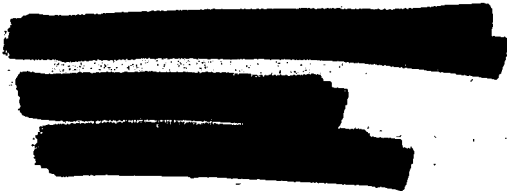
Both my spouse and I are working parents, and the sudden closure of schools due to the strike has forced us to scramble to find alternative solutions for our children's care during school hours. This disruption not only creates logistical difficulties for our family but also imposes emotional stress on our children. The uncertainty and instability caused by the strike are affecting their academic progress and overall well-being.

We understand the importance of advocating for fair treatment and adequate compensation for educators, but we believe that such advocacy should not come at the expense of our children's education and the rule of law. Given the fact that the current offer from the Newton School Committee is already very competitive and places Newton among the top tier school districts in Mass and even in the entire US, we feel very frustrated that the NTA is not willing to compromise and decided to use students and parents as leverage to reach their goals. As members of this community, we urge you to take a definitive stance and uphold the rule of law by imposing tough measures on the Newton Teachers Association.

We trust in your commitment to justice and the well-being of our community, and we hope that you will consider the profound impact of this strike on our families and our children's futures.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction covers the signature area, obscuring the name and any handwritten notes or dates that might have been present.

To His Honor Judge Christopher Barry-Smith,

I write to you today because of the total and utter feeling of defeat and despair. I am a Newton mother of two boys [REDACTED] who are enrolled in the Newton Public Schools. My husband and I work full time and endlessly (I work 7 days a week myself) to be able to live in this wonderful city. We chose Newton because it is a safe city with excellent public schools. It is not too much of an expectation for the right to an education for our children. Fresh off of Covid closures the wounds are still not healed but here we are again. Our younger son had school shut down in March of his Kindergarten year, he could not yet read and still is behind emotionally and academically. Our older son struggled socially and academically as well and is finally finding his footing in [REDACTED] I fear this closure may result in a setback after gaining momentum for the first time in years. Society as a whole cannot function if children are shut out of school. There is a reason Massachusetts, the Commonwealth I am from and of the 3rd generation in my family, has deemed teacher strikes illegal. This is a slippery slope and other unions will watch closely and hopefully not follow suit. We cannot have our kids miss more valuable school time. They are being used as pawns in some sort of horrific game of 'chicken', it is transparent and heartbreaking. This past week has been disruptive, exhausting and defeating. Day to day we do not know if there will be school and therefore cannot plan accordingly to continue working and contributing to society which is our end of the deal as the adults. How are the taxpayers, who need to work to pay taxes, supposed to navigate this time? How many kids are glued to screens while the parents work? How is this acceptable at any level?

I support our teachers and I want them to have a fair contract, they deserve whatever the city can actually afford to give them and then some. I fear the Union leadership is steering them in the wrong direction.

[REDACTED] able to go meet with Mayor Fuller this past week. She was glad to explain to us the budget and how the process works. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I care deeply for our children and educators and it affords me a seat at the table to speak with teachers and elected officials. I want to be as informed as possible and not jump to any conclusions about anything in this situation. I am not coming from an uninformed point of view, I am very much in tune with what is transpiring.

[REDACTED] this city holds all my respect and reverence. This strike is tearing our community apart. This is not a game yet all parties are playing with approximately 11,000 children's overall well being and right to education. Please consider the very real people affected by this strike. Please help us get our children back where they belong and where they have every right to be, in the classroom.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration given to getting our children back in the classroom as they have the right to be.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

To Whom It May Concern,

The past two weeks have been filled with anxiety and helplessness for our family and so many others in Newton. While the teacher strike loomed, we had to explain to our child that he might not be able to go to school for an unknown amount of time. During the strike, every day hearing impassioned rhetoric leading to hopeless negotiations, we would come back to our child to tell him, "still no school, not sure when". Within the first day of no school, my child was missing his friends, his teachers, and his routine. This was no celebratory snow day- it was an upheaval of one of the most important parts of his life and his community. He will often talk sadly about what they would have been doing if they were in school, what activities the teacher had planned, their recess games. All the while, we have heard talks of parties walking out of negotiations mid day.

My spouse and I have been anxious, sleepless and angry as we scramble each day to take care of our child and provide him with even a bit of structure or socialization. Unfortunately because of our work, we cannot do enough. I have a job where vulnerable people depend on me, and it seems particularly hard to leave my child each day in this position.

I cannot imagine single caregiver households' stress during this time. I cannot imagine those employed by NPS whose families depend on their income and don't know when they are coming back to work.

I think to our family and community, this feels like some version of the pandemic- social isolation for our child, inadequate child care and what feels like an inability to meet his emotional, social, and educational needs every day, fractured community, and no clear end in sight. Please do whatever is in your power to allow our kids to be back in school where they belong. They have already missed over a week and it's so unfair to them and those who love them.

Sincerely,

A Newton Public School Parent

Dear Judge Christopher Barry-Smith,

I cannot express enough the urgency that is needed to open the doors of all Newton schools. Our children are scared, nervous, out of routine, missing their friends and teachers, and most of all **missing the education they deserve**. Parents are feeling pressure to continue work while simultaneously find childcare and provide their children safety (physical and emotional) on a daily basis. We do not find out until the night BEFORE if we will have to scramble for childcare the next day. I'm sure you can imagine the amount of stress and anxiety this situation has put on our families.

A topic close to home is the families with students with disabilities. These families and students heavily rely on the school services that are legally mandated to receive during the school year – speech therapy, physical and occupational therapy, behavior therapy, special education / teaching services, etc. etc. These children are the true victims of this whole situation, and their parents are greatly hurting. My son receives speech therapy services 3 time per week, and I have already seen a decrease in his expressive language. Please picture these children who cannot entertain themselves during these days out of school, can't use their muscles and voices without the help of school therapy, and can't progress their already delayed skills without the services they are mandated to receive on their Individualized Education Plans.

PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE make an immediate mandate that every school be open while the negotiations continue. The students need to be in school, have the RIGHT to be in school. Please make this ruling in favor of our children.

Sincerely,

A thick black horizontal bar redacting the signature of the sender.

Honorable Judge Christopher Barry-Smith
Middlesex Superior Court
200 Tradecenter Dr.
Woburn, MA 01801

Dear Honorable Judge Barry-Smith,

My children are enrolled in the Newton Public School system and as we enter a third week without school, I am becoming increasingly concerned about the impact this is having on the children in our community.

Unfortunately, we have been here before back in 2020 when COVID struck and schools were closed. We are well aware of the damage that this caused for so many young people. Fortunately (and unfortunately I suppose), the current situation is a human made conflict, meaning we can take action ourselves through the appropriate means to resolve. I am writing this letter simply to ask you to, once again, use your judgement and whatever means possible to help end this strike, so our children can get back to school and back into an environment that has and will continue to help them grow.

Thank you for your consideration and for your efforts to bring this strike to an end.

Sincerely,

One of many concerned Newton parents

[REDACTED]

January 27, 2024

Honorable Judge Christopher Barry-Smith
Middlesex Superior Court
200 Tradecenter Drive
Woburn, MA 01801

Re: Newton Teacher Association Strike

Dear Judge Barry-Smith:

As concerned parents of Newton middle school students, we write to respectfully request your attention to the pressing matter of expediting the return of our children to school, regardless of the negotiation status.

We understand the complexities surrounding the ongoing contract negotiations between the Newton Teachers Association and the Newton School Committee. However, regardless of the status of these negotiations, we urgently request your prioritized focus on facilitating the prompt return of students to the classroom.

While we respect the legal processes involved, we were deeply disappointed by the decision to lower the daily fines for the Newton Teachers Association. The illegal nature of the strike is a cause for concern, and we appeal to the court to uphold the law while mitigating any potential harm to the 11,000 students and their families in our community. The closure of our schools and the denial of essential services are matters of great concern.

We want to emphasize the importance of not setting a precedent that could be interpreted as acceptable leverage for negotiations in other districts or essential services. The reliability of essential services, including police and fire, is paramount for the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we trust that you will consider the urgency of our request to ensure the prompt return of students to school.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

January 28, 2024

The Honorable Christopher Barry-Smith
Judge of the Middlesex Superior Court

Dear Judge Barry-Smith:

I was in second grade when my neighbors [REDACTED] told me that my parents were Santa Claus. I vividly remember running out of the [REDACTED] house, across my yard and into my mother's arms. With tears streaming down my face I asked her the simple and direct question: "Mom, are you and Dad Santa?". My mom paused and reluctantly, but dutifully answered "yes".

I realize now what made that moment so jarring for me; it was the realization that the magic of Christmas was not real.

Similar to how my second grade self believed in the magic of Christmas, I believed in the magic of Newton schools. Based on the tone, tenor and lack of urgency shown by the NTA throughout their work stoppage, I know now that the magic is not real.

This cohort of children has already been fundamentally damaged by two years of Covid shutdowns, closed schools and the inadequacies of hybrid schooling. They are now being damaged again by a union whose demands are solely focused on what is good for their members rather than what is good for the children of Newton.

Teachers chose their profession. They can choose another profession if this one no longer suits them.

Children cannot choose to be anything other than their age. They have no agent in this dispute, yet the teachers are using them as leverage.

Please use your role, and the law, to protect the children of Newton.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Judge Christopher Barry-Smith
Middlesex County Superior Courthouse
State of Massachusetts

Dear Judge Christopher Barry-Smith,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am parent of two children that are in the Newton Public School system. [REDACTED] I am writing to you because I don't think there has been enough discussion around the impact that this is having on our children. With all of the talk about "negotiating in good faith" and finger-pointing between the NTA and the Newton School Committee, we have lost focus on what matters most here, which is the education of our children. There is a reason why it is illegal in Massachusetts for teachers, police, and fireman to strike. It is because there are essential services to our community. By striking, they are inflicting damage to our community. I want to tell you the impact that this strike is having on my two children.

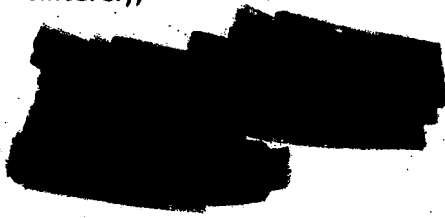
My youngest [REDACTED] is struggling to learn to read and is working with a speech therapist since he is falling behind the other children in the class. In addition to working with a speech therapist, he gets special reading assistance at his school due to the great work by his teacher which has identified his needs. I am concerned that he is going to fall further behind the class and it is going to impact his ability to read. And you can't learn if you can't read. He is suffering

My [REDACTED] grader also struggles with reading. We recently received his MCAS scores and he received the "Partially Meeting Expectations" distinction meaning that he is falling behind his peers. We can already see it impacting his learning. We have recently engaged with his teacher (who is a highly motivated and involved teacher I want to mention) to get him extra help in a smaller group setting. We were starting to make progress and then this strike hit. My wife and I are doing our best to help him during this time but we both work full time jobs and cannot spend the necessary time with him. I am worried that he too will continue to fall behind. He is suffering.

Our kids need to go back to school. I don't know what other tools you have at your disposal to enforce compliance with the law and get our schools open, but I employ you to think about our children when you consider your decisions moving forward about the fines and whatever else you can do to get our schools open.

The damage to our children is already great and rising by the day. It is needs to stop.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Enclosure

Date: 1/27/2024

The Honorable Judge Christopher K. Barry-Smith
Judge of Middlesex County Superior Court
200 Tradecenter Drive
Woburn, MA 01801

Dear Judge Christopher K. Barry-Smith,

My name is [REDACTED] a parent to two elementary school children, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in Newton, MA. The current Newton Teachers Association (NTA) strike has now extended to over a week and has, and continues to have, a detrimental impact to my children and other children in the broader Newton Public Schools community.

In particular, my older son has had a significant amount of time out of in-school learning in his formulative development years in elementary school when factoring in the two years lost during the pandemic. We have spent significant time and resources just helping him catch up and hit his stride again. I know many parents share this similar predicament and are frustrated that they are out of school again driven by this strike, which will create regression in our children's growth and development that are essential in this formulative stage of their lives.

Along with the negative consequences of stunted academic growth, I can already see the angst on my children's faces and anxiety growing from being alienated from their friends and school community – the longer this perpetuates, there will be real concern about social re-integration which will cause further undue harm for this generation of young children.

Respectfully, I am sharing the above to provide a voice from the Newton community and one that also has a deep appreciation for the Newton teachers and Newton Public Schools, having graduated through this public school system myself many years ago. I love and respect the great work that our teachers perform for our community – they perform essential and much appreciated work, but we really need our children back in school, in-person and learning, immediately. The Newton Teachers Association and Newton School Committee should continue to negotiate in good faith, but we should not have the children used as leverage and sacrificed while this is happening.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

I am writing to you both as a mental health professional who works with local kids and teens, and as mother of children in both an elementary and middle school in Newton.

In my role as therapist in Newton, I have quickly seen the impact this strike has had on my clients. I have seen an increase in anxiety, sleep issues and depression. Many clients have expressed this is reminding them of the uncertainty of Covid school closures bringing up traumatic memories. Clients with disabilities rely on the structure of a day to day schedule. This strike has been devastating for them.

As a mother, I have also seen some concerning ramifications of the strike both in my own home and my friend's homes. My child in elementary school has not been wanting to leave the house and see friends. We have not seen this since Covid. I can see that she is suffering. I am worried about her and what more days out of school could mean for her.

My middle schooler and his friends have all had disrupted sleep patterns despite all of us trying to keep a set schedule for them. In all of them this has led to mood changes and low frustration tolerance.

Our children need and deserve to be in school. They have endured enough trauma by missing so much school during Covid. The daily social interactions and being part of a community are VITAL to their development and mental health.

I hope you will consider the concerning impact the strike is having on our children and make recommendations accordingly. We cannot and should not have to go anymore days without school.

[REDACTED]

Dear Judge,

In the ongoing work to resolve the Newton Teacher's Strike, please take into consideration the experience and needs of families of children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN). The denial of ongoing education and resources to CYSHCN has an outsized and extremely harmful impact that needs to be acknowledged and considered.

My background is as a public health administrator. I have a master's in health care policy and management from the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] as a lead administrator on improving integrated care. During this time, I worked directly with parents, nurses, front office staff, doctors, etc. to understand what it took to support the health and progress of CYSHCN. In regards to your role in this strike, the important facts to know is that the networks to support CYSHCN are extremely broad and complex. The caregiver's role to manage these networks during the best of times is laborious. Finally, education is as important as the child's healthcare team in relation to their long-term health and ultimate progress. As a visual example, please see an image of a care map below of all the people/organizations that support one child created by Cristin Lind, mother of a CYSHCN. School is in red text in the upper left-hand corner.

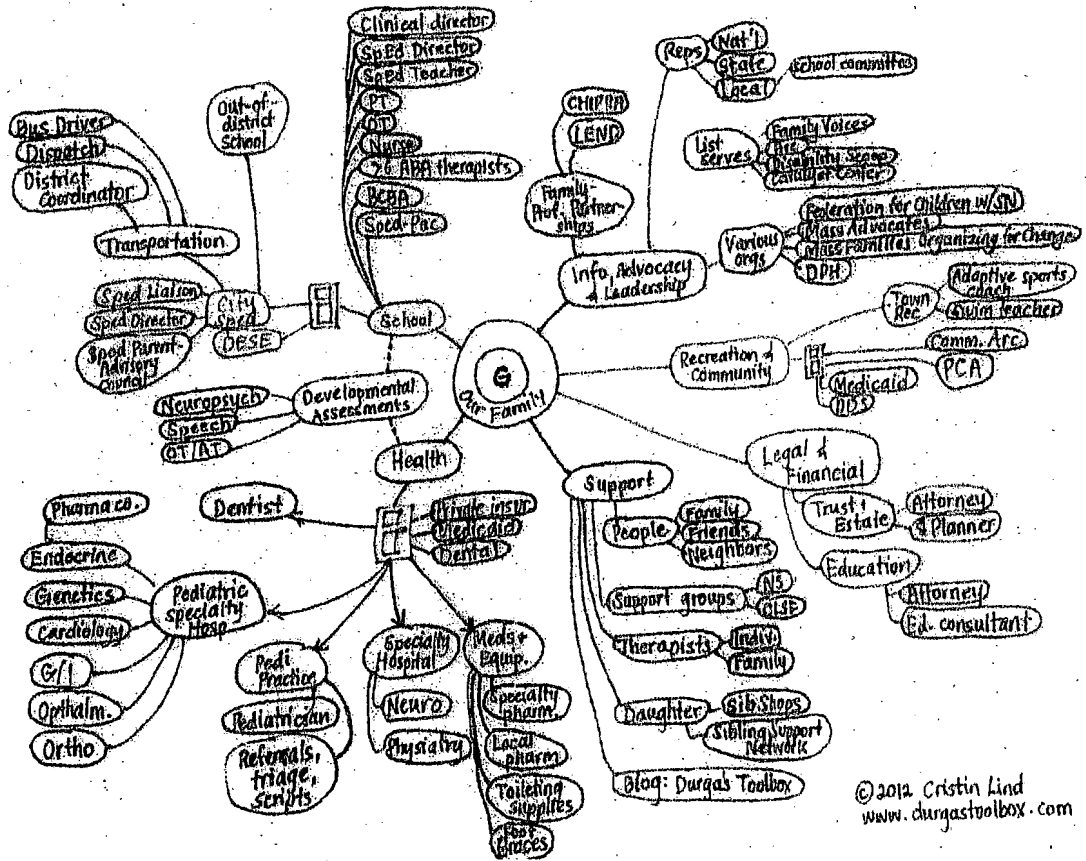
As communicated in the Boston Globe article "As the Newton teachers strike drags on, students with disabilities struggle being out of school" published this past Friday (1/26/24), families of CYSHCN are experiencing outsized costs during the Teacher's Strike. Educational progress can be lost extremely quickly for these kids. Stability and routine are essential to their ultimate health and progress. The current state of no school for CYSHCN during Newton's Teacher Strikes is creating long term harm and health consequences. Please support any action or resolution that disconnects contract negotiations to all Newton children's access to school and education. Where the rubber meets the road, please do whatever is possible to re-open school and prioritize CYSHCN.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]
Newton Resident

Disclosure: I have a [REDACTED] grader in the Newton Public School system, but am not a parent of a child with special health care needs. I write this letter based on my knowledge as a public health professional and experiences working at [REDACTED]

Supporting Image: A visualization of the network to support a child with special health care needs. School is depicted in red text.



From <https://www.childrenshospital.org/integrated-care/care-mapping>

I am writing to you as a Newton resident and mother of a [REDACTED] grader. I am supportive of Newton teachers and agree that they should be receiving fair wages in a fully funded school system. However, I am deeply concerned with the lack of progress in contract negotiations between the NTA and the Newton School Committee. I am hopeful that both sides will come to an agreement by Sunday night but fear this is wishful thinking, as the past week has made me feel that there is no urgency on either side to come to a resolution.

I worry for all children having this uncertainty and disruption, but I can only speak to my family's experience. My daughter was approved for an IEP [REDACTED] the strike occurred. I am desperate for her to be back in the classroom and to receive the accommodations she needs to access the curriculum. As a mother, I worry about all the lost time and how this will compound for and make her educational gap grow. She needs to be in a structured learning environment where she is being taught by professionals, not by working parents utilizing apps on a tablet.

I implore you to use whatever means available to you to help the negotiations move forward in a productive and timely manner. There is no "winner" in this situation, there needs to be compromise so that our children can get back to school.

Thank you for your time,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

1/28/2024

Dear Judge Barry-Smith,

I am writing to you as a parent of 3 children in Newton Public Schools and also a [REDACTED] in the Newton community. I am extremely upset about the strike and the time my kids and so many other children in Newton have spent out of school.

My children have spent the last 10 days essentially doing nothing. My husband and I have both continued to work as usual and our kids are home on screens playing video games and socializing with friends. They're bored and all 3 have told me how much they want to return to school. There are multiple families I have encountered at work who have shared details of the stress of taking time off from work to stay home with their younger children. Thankfully some of them have been able to find some day programs that have popped up to provide activities for the kids to join.

I do not take anyone's side in this argument. My only concern is for the kids. It's not fair that they are the ones who suffer because the adults can't agree on money. My kids deserve an education and to be at school. Please do whatever is in your power to insist that they return.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

January 28, 2024

Judge Barry-Smith:

I am writing to provide some perspective on the impact of the Newton teachers' strike on children and their families, to hopefully reinforce the urgency of a new approach that would get children back to school immediately. I am a resident of Newton with two children in NPS, one in [redacted] grade and one in [redacted] grade. I have two broad points that I wish to make:

Additional days of school closure will contribute to substantial learning loss, well beyond what would be expected from the first week

While the first five days of school lost to the strike were considered as "snow days" and did not alter the school calendar beyond what was anticipated, we are now at a time when each additional day will add days to the school calendar when low attendance would be expected. Many families have already made camp or vacation plans for the week of June 24, often having made non-refundable deposits, and many already have plans for February or April vacations. I cannot speak for all families, but as a family with two working parents, we had to make summer decisions last month when camp slots opened up to ensure that our kids would have some place to go over the summer. I would anticipate that many families will not send their kids to school on some of the additional days, whether they be during the week of June 24, vacation weeks, or weekends. This will result in true loss of learning opportunities. On the flipside, those who send their kids to school on those days and cancel their other plans will lose money and precious family time, with the likelihood that the time in school would not be productive given low attendance. For example, as our family would not want to deprive our [redacted] grader of his middle school graduation, generally held on the last day of school, we will likely need to cancel a family vacation planned for the week of June 24. Each family will be impacted differently, but all will have kids who experience less learning and will lose out in multiple other ways.

In addition, as we head into a second week without school, at least a couple of things will happen. First, we will start to see regression and learning loss, especially among students on IEPs and those requiring additional learning support. The work to get back on track will become harder as each day passes. Second, the important relationship between student and teacher will become increasingly frayed. Kids are increasingly angry and frustrated about what they are losing, and regardless of whether the kids or their families side with NTA or NPS in this dispute, the simple fact is that the kids interact on a daily basis with their teachers and not with the Mayor or School Committee. So any anger is likely to be directed toward the teachers, manifesting in a number of ways and detracting from the learning process.

Our family is fortunate that we were able to have a parent working from home much of last week, missing out on some work but managing, with kids old enough to spend time alone when needed. But I know of other families who have had to send their kids to stay with relatives so they can work, who have had to use up limited sick days, or who have had to pay day over day for pop-up camps or care. The wonderful Newton Parks and Recreation gap programming camp filled up within less than a minute when slots opened on Friday for this coming week, showing the frantic demand for programming and child care. Parents and caregivers are desperate to both be able to work and to get their increasingly upset kids out of the house to create some sort of routine. The financial and logistical burden is becoming overwhelming to many.

In summary, as you determine next steps, I implore you to keep the children and their families centered in your decision process. While the fines are no longer growing at an exponential rate, the impact on Newton families is. I appreciate that negotiation takes time when two parties are as far apart as NPS and NTA appear to be, but our children can no longer afford that time. If the strike is not settled by 8 pm on Sunday January 28, we need a model that returns the kids to school while allowing the parties to negotiate in some manner that maintains the urgency to reach a resolution in the very near term. I could imagine a range of penalties or implications for both parties if they do not reach a resolution quickly, but we can no longer have the children of Newton as the pawns in this negotiation.

Sincerely,



I am writing today as a parent of a Newton North High School [REDACTED] asking for your help to get Newton students back into their schools. While I sympathize with both sides of the issue, I am frustrated that both sides are willing to use our children as pawns and I'm desperate to find someone who can help. Unfortunately I feel that you are the only party that can help us do the right thing and get the schools open.

My daughter, [REDACTED] She is (was?) working hard to solidify her transition to college by taking college level classes, including 3 AP exams. She will attend [REDACTED] next year as a Pre-Health major and needs these classes to be ready for her freshman year. And AP exams take place in early May whether she is ready or not. Because MA schools start later than other US schools, time was already short, but now she is even more behind with the current situation. It devastates me to see her chance of success, as a freshman and as an AP exam taker, dwindle for political spite.

Please help her go back to school - I don't want to see her hard work thrown away. AP Biology, AP Psych, AP Literature, Anatomy, and other classes will help her succeed in college. Success in AP exams would instill confidence. She really needs to be going back to school.

Sara
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear Judge Barry-Smith,

I am the parent of [REDACTED] grader at Countryside Elementary. I am writing to you as I have already reached out to Mayor Fuller and Superintendent Nolin, and I now believe you are the only person who has the power to send our children back to school. I am aware that the negotiating teams can continue their work while school is in session, and I implore you to require the School Committee and the NTA to utilize that approach beginning on Monday January 29th.

The students' mental and emotional health is too important to allow schools to remain closed while these negotiations continue. I appreciate that keeping students out of school creates a perceived sense of urgency for the negotiations, but I would argue that this approach uses our children as pawns in a political fight between groups of adults who refuse to come to a reasonable agreement. This is unacceptable and unfair to our children.

My child is one of the kids who has consistently relied upon, and been supported by, the teachers and mental health professionals at Countryside. In kindergarten, he was diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder. It took the school social worker and special education teachers at Countryside months to get him comfortable attending a full day of class with his peers. The following year, in February 2020, he lost his father, around the same time he was diagnosed with ADHD. Again, Countryside team members supported him, and me, through that unimaginable transition, and checked in often while schools were closed due to COVID. When school reopened in September [REDACTED] went back full time, with all the supports he needed.

During the past week, I have seen him sit in his room, alone while I worked, crying because he misses his friends. His day of coming into my office and sitting quietly while I went to eight hours of meetings was the most activity he's had all week. We learned the hard way during COVID that keeping kids away from their peers does real and lasting damage - the exact damage that the teachers' union cites as causing the need for additional mental health professionals in our schools. COVID was not our choice, and we were doing what we thought was right by closing the schools. Now we know better, and we're still allowing this situation to continue. As the adults who are supposed to be looking out for our children, this is unfathomable and wrong.

Personally, I believe the teachers are reasonable in their requests, because I have seen firsthand the incredible work they do on behalf of our students. But even if the agreement that results includes some compromises on their part, reaching an agreement should not be the trigger that sends our kids back to school. There are thousands of children who are suffering like [REDACTED] is, and there is a perfectly reasonable way to allow all our students to go back to school

logistically sound, but morally essential.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this position, and the welfare of our children.

Best regards,

[Redacted signature]

We are writing to implore you to help get the Newton students back in-school. Please do everything within your power to return our children to school and have contract negotiations continue while our children are in school. We ask you to do this for their well-being, particularly considering these children are still recovering from a significant loss of education and social emotional consequences from the COVID pandemic.

Tuesday night our daughter cried herself to sleep, on her [redacted] birthday. We know that is not super consequential in the world that we live in, but the reason why she cried herself to sleep was because she wasn't able to, for the first time ever, celebrate her birthday at school with her friends. She was super excited to go to school and celebrate with her favorite teacher, and then go to aftercare and celebrate with all of her friends who attend aftercare. Instead, we had to explain to her why school wasn't in session. Yet again every night we had to explain that school is not in session and we have no idea when this will be resolved and every night she continues to be upset. This isn't fair, she is [redacted] years old and hasn't had a normal year of school.

Our son has struggled tremendously this past week without his usual schedule and routines. As we are unable to find any full time childcare and both of us work full time his routine has become filled with an unhealthy amount of video games peppered with some playdates with friends as other working parents share the burden of hosting a gaggle of kids at their house as they are too young to be left unsupervised. This has led to a lack of sleep drive, emotional dysregulation and the inability to cope with the lack of any predictability in his schedule.

Sadly, he is set to graduate from elementary school this year without having a normal elementary education due to the loss of both academic learning and the ability to acquire the normal social and emotional tools he needs due to COVID. Children his age have not had more than one complete or normal year of school due to COVID and now the strike, and now the excitement of [redacted] grade is tarnished. As is routine across the state, the final year of elementary school would normally include several fun and educational activities known in Newton as the "[redacted] grade experience". He has been looking forward to this special time since he was in kindergarten, and he is now worried and upset that none of these events have or will happen, let alone a graduation. A graduation is a significant event in the life of a child, and something he has been excited about for years.

These behavioral and social-emotional struggles are in addition to the not insignificant academic losses of the past week-plus, that seem destined to continue for the near-future: My children, and all of Newton's children, already lived through the COVID pandemic, with tremendous academic and social-emotional loss which we have not yet regained, and now to suffer a further setback, will have permanent lifelong consequences on their academic learning and mental health. Our kids have already suffered prolonged remote learning (and months of no-learning) due to COVID, and a strike on top of this protracted loss of learning is taking its toll. Children in Newton are still struggling with the residual complications from those years of lost learning and trauma, and the current school crisis has brought back the fear and uncertainty of the pandemic.

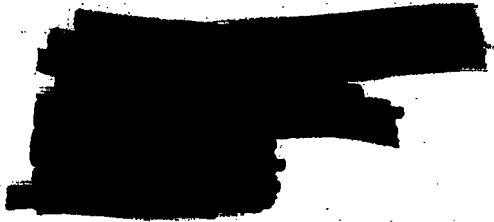
Our children's happiness and wellbeing is our top struggle and priority, but our family is also struggling with childcare. Both of us work full-time, and one of us is an essential worker, and we are thus dependent on school and aftercare for childcare so that we can work; with the school and Aftercare closed, we are left without reliable childcare, and have been scrambling to make sure our children have

meu with waitlists, and are pricey, leading to considerable unexpected and unbudgeted expenses. We are also likely to lose non-refundable payments for summer camp, with the last day of school pushing out and our children have expressed sadness about likely missing summer camp.

Finally, we wanted to express concerns that over the past few days, the strike no longer seems to be about Newton's children, but has evolved into a political rally for a change state-wide. It feels like the focus on our children has been lost, and we thus implore you to help shift the focus back, so that we all remain focused on our children and schools in Newton.

We beseech you to do everything within your power to get our children back to school. These children have struggled so much with the pandemic, and to experience it again is just cruel. We would like to see the teachers and School Committee continue to negotiate, but we implore that this be done while the children are in school. The very reason that teacher strikes are illegal is to avoid our children suffering because of adult disagreements, and we beg you to end the strike, and get our children back in school.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction covers the signature and name of the sender. The redaction is composed of several overlapping black boxes of varying sizes, completely obscuring any text that might have been present.

I am writing to express our family's concerns and frustration regarding the continued unresolved disagreement between NTA and Newton city that resulted in the teacher's strike. We are concerned that despite so called negotiations between the two parties, no agreement has been achieved.

My husband and I both work full-time, and we don't have any family or friends in the state who can help us with child care. Our daughter is a [REDACTED] student in Newton [REDACTED] It is a private program that uses the Newton South High School facilities. Therefore, its operation has been affected by the strike since schools are closed. Due to the uncertainty of when schools will reopen, and my daughter's age (9 years old), we currently don't have any temporary child care resource except the highschool students whom we ask on a daily basis to watch our child.

Announcements for school status are released at 7:30 pm every night. It has been a very stressful situation over the past week for our family, as last minute coordination for babysitter requests has not always been successful.

My husband and I don't have much flexibility in our job to be able to handle this situation for any longer. Additionally, this has been a financial burden. We pay \$1700 per month for the preschool program (about \$400 per week). And now we pay additional fees for babysitters everyday. Our family is placed in a serious hardship situation; multitasking between work and child care and its mental and financial burden if this continues for the following weeks.

While I support fair salary and compensations for our teachers, I have learned that city hall has its own financial and regulation constraints. I don't forecast that the ongoing negotiations between the two parties will result in an agreement anytime soon unless other authorities or Newton residents (through future polls/votes) get involved in the decision making process. Therefore, I would like to ask you to consider using legal enforcement for both parties involved to use any additional tools that are available to urgently end the strike with or without a temporary or permanent agreement.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Best,
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

28 January 2024

Dear Judge Barry-Smith:

The Newton Teachers strike is harming our children, the same kids that both the Newton City Council and Newton Teachers' Association say they are fighting for in this negotiation. I am writing to ask you to compel the Newton Teachers Association and Newton School Committee to allow our children to return to school as they continue to negotiate a new contract.

I have three children, one each in elementary, middle and high school. They all love to learn. This past week has brought back memories of the early pandemic: the fear that they will be missing important milestones and events, the uncertainty of whether there will be school the next day, the doubt that this will be resolved quickly and life will soon return to normal.

Are we going back to school tomorrow? Will the play I've been rehearsing for the past two months be cancelled or rescheduled? When can I hang out with all my friends again? We're not allowed to go to the debates? Mock trial was cancelled? Is the exchange program still happening? Will I even be around for the graduation ceremony? When are we going back to school?

We're all concerned that the longer the strike goes on, the longer the school year will need to run. The kids cannot commit to summer jobs, we cannot sign up for summer camps, and there is also uncertainty about whether the missed days will need to be made up in April or February. We're in a holding pattern. It feels like the pandemic all over again.

We have jobs and work that needs to get done. Our employers are sympathetic to a point. Every evening we are waiting to hear whether school will be on the next day, and then we need to find a way to balance our obligations. Student and parents are being held captive to this negotiation.

Reasonable adults should be able to continue negotiating in good faith while also keeping the schools open. Please compel both sides to open the schools while they continue to negotiate.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

To Judge Christopher K. Barry-Smith

We are parents of an [REDACTED] who is currently in the [REDACTED] grade at countryside school. Our daughter is feeling upset and very sad because her school is closed for a week due to a strike. This situation is causing significant stress and challenges for our family, especially in finding childcare to go to work. Now, we are concerned that the ongoing strike may have a negative impact on our child's mental health.

It's truly disheartening, and both sides of the strike should reflect on the considerable stress they are imposing on us and, more importantly, on our children. The potential long-term effects on our kids are a significant concern. Thank you for your support and understanding during this challenging time.

[REDACTED]

Dear Judge Christopher K. Barry-Smith,

The NTA strike has been extremely impactful for our family of three. Our son, [REDACTED] is not a kid that's instantly comfortable anywhere, nor someone who adjusts to major schedule changes with ease. Unfortunately, the now week-long strike has challenged him in both ways significantly.

In what felt reminiscent of the pandemic closure uncertainty, with the announcement of the strike, my wife [REDACTED] and I scrambled to find ways to keep [REDACTED] looked after, engaged, learning and social.

We did this not only for [REDACTED] benefit, but my wife and I both work quite intensive jobs that do not make stepping away for a week a simple task. My son, being an ever-resilient child, was trying his best to accept the options at hand: a Newton Community Education program (at a cost of \$65-75+ dollars per day)? Art class (at \$50 per class)? Music class (\$50 per class)? Boys & Girls club (\$125 per year)?

While we are grateful that we were able to find flexibility in our schedules and have the funds to take [REDACTED] to different possible options to keep him social and learning, it felt utterly exasperating to watch our city do little to make progress in parallel.

[REDACTED] desperately wants to return to school, as do all his friends and their parents – so we request that you help however possible to get school to resume immediately.

We want our teachers well paid and happy; we want students supported and learning; the very public political circus around this has really been an embarrassment and a serious impact to our child as well as other, more vulnerable children and families in our community. We are disappointed that our city and school leadership have been slow and unresponsive.

Thank you for your kind attention to this matter. We hope for a swift resolution.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

To Judge Christopher K. Barry-Smith

Hi, I'm the mother of an 8-year old kid, who is in 3rd grade in the countryside. We are facing so many problems since last Friday that school closed. This situation causes a lot of stress and challenges for each family.

My son goes to bed every night crying for his school, his teacher and classmates. This affects our daily routine and we can't focus on our jobs.

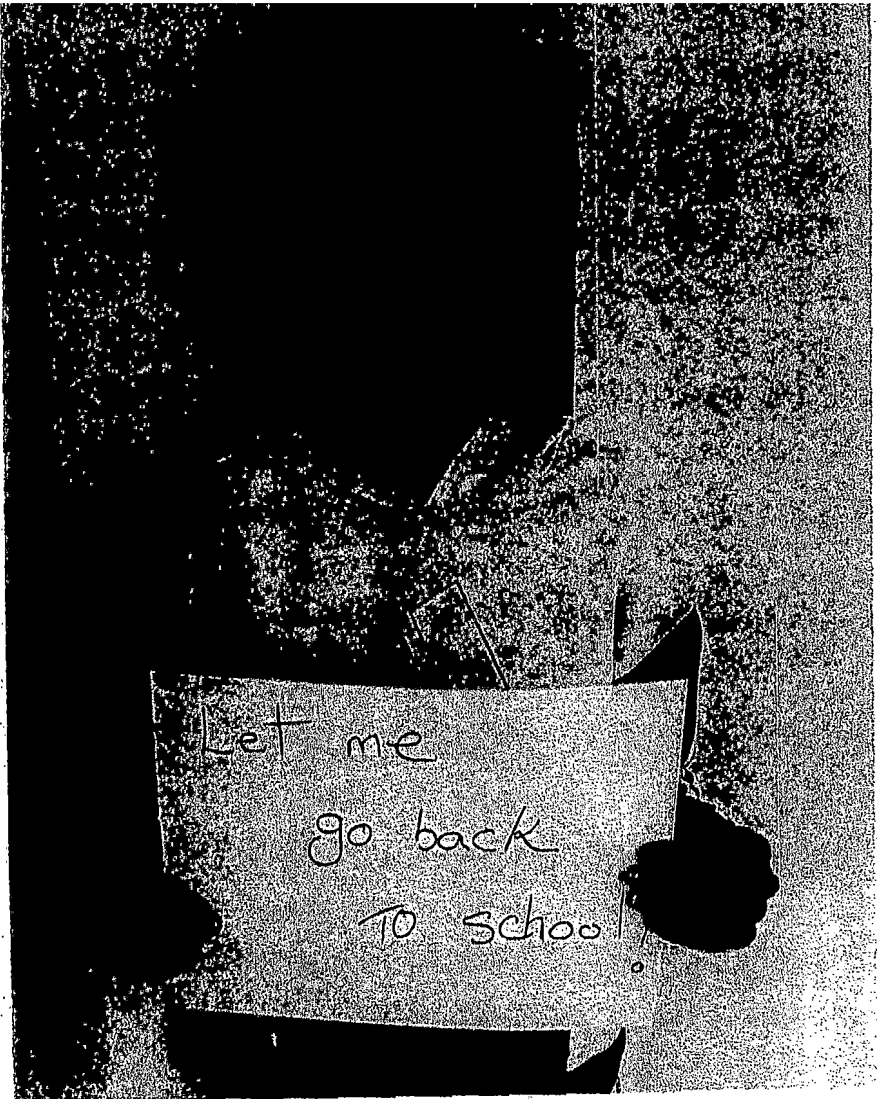
These kids are the new generation of this country and their mental health and poor education must be a big concern.

This is not fair for these kids and their families to experience school closing again after Covid and its consequences.

This is truly heartbreaking to see our kids feeling sad and getting depressed instead of being in school.

Please re-open the school immediately before the damage that this strike causes gets bigger and bigger.

Thank you for your support and understanding.



Let me
go back
to school.

Dear Judge Christopher K. Barry-Smith,

I trust this letter finds you well. My name is [REDACTED] and I am a resident of Newton, deeply committed to the values and educational standards that this city upholds. My husband is a proud graduate of Newton South High School, and our decision to settle in this region was primarily driven by the esteemed reputation of its educational institutions.

Unfortunately, the recent closure of the school due to a strike has had a profound impact on our family, making it challenging for us to maintain a sense of normalcy. As I am required to be present in the office for my job, the need to stay at home and care for my son has raised concerns about the potential implications on my employment. Additionally, I have had to cancel crucial physical therapy sessions following a spine surgery.

While I am fully capable of handling and addressing the consequences of this situation as an adult, my primary concern lies with the welfare of the children. They are particularly vulnerable to disruptions in their education, and it is imperative that we prioritize their needs and well-being.

I kindly implore your consideration in expeditiously addressing and resolving the school closure matter. It is my sincere hope that, through your intervention, we can find a swift and amicable resolution that ensures the continuity of our children's education and allows families like ours to return to a semblance of normalcy.

Thank you for your time and understanding. I trust that your esteemed guidance will contribute to a timely resolution of this pressing issue.

Best Regards,

[REDACTED]

I am a parent of a Newton 5th grader, an educator with 23 years of experience, a person who has dedicated hundreds of hours to coaching youth sports in Newton, and a concerned citizen. I write to you today with a myriad of emotions. I write

Frustration: I am frustrated that our city has been sorely divided by people who are not modeling how to engage in civil discourse when you disagree or do not get what you aspire to attain.

Tired: I am physically and emotionally drained. Physically drained by the efforts it is taking to balance caring for our child while working as an educator (not in Newton). Emotionally exhausted from having to explain to my 5-year-old, who joined our family a year ago after being in DCF custody for the majority of his life, why the adults in his life that he trusted are not opening school.

Anger: I am angry. I am angry that the children who have been tossed to the side during these negotiations are being treated like collateral damage by both sides. I am angry that those who come from unsafe homes and depend on the safety of school are in more dangerous environments. I am angry that those who depend on the physical resources a school provides are unable to access them due to the ongoing strike. I am angry that just as we have begun to finally make gains on the mental health crisis caused by COVID, we have pulled the rug out from under the children once again.

I am angry that those students who received specialized services have been left behind by the adults charged with helping them lessen the gap between them and their peers.

Sad: I am sad for the lost time that will not be able to be made up. I am sad that some people equate school days in January to days in June, as if they believe that the only value to being in school is being present in the building. I am sad that over the past month, these students have only been in school for twelve days.

I am sad for the seniors playing sports who are missing a portion of their final high school season. I am sad for the juniors who were being recruited to play in college and may lose out on scholarship opportunities due to missed games by college coaches. I am equally devastated for those in the arts, robotics, and more who will miss out on their opportunities to perform and compete- some of whom will never have the chance to do so again.

I am distraught about the students working tirelessly in their classes. Students who are learning to better themselves and those who are working towards end-of-year assessments such as MCAS, AP exams, and SATs/ACTs. Losing at least 6 days of school could have an irreversible impact on their ability to be at their best for those exams and cannot imagine the exponential impact additional days will have on them.

Thank you for reading this letter. I am a Newton parent, and believe strongly that our children are being badly hurt by the increasing longevity of this strike [REDACTED] which means that their first year of K12 education was marred by the pandemic school closures. As you are no doubt aware, it took the better part of 2 years for their school experience to return to normalcy. Thus, last year was their first year of full normalcy in their student careers, and already they have been deprived of a second such year, by this strike. My children love school, and they want to be there, with their friends and teachers. It is tremendously disruptive and unsettling to them to have a lengthy break in the middle of the school year, and much like the documented regression that occurs for children from summer break, as this strike stretches on longer than any of the scheduled break weeks, it seems likely that teachers will have to spend time resetting the class after an eventual return. Furthermore, with their lived experience of the pandemic, my children are scared that they will never be able to return to [REDACTED] grade, similar to how public health mandates ultimately prevented them from returning to kindergarten.

It is imperative for the sake of our children that school reopen immediately. I believe the ideal scenario is for school to reopen now, with both parties continuing to negotiate in parallel with education. This would seem to be a fair solution that alleviates strain from both the children, who are suffering as leverage in a dispute between adults.

The families of Newton, and especially the students of Newton, are relying on your ability to fight for the students' welfare by reopening classrooms. Please apply the pressure available to your office, to bring about this outcome.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject: Newton Public School – Teacher Strike

Dear Judge Barry-Smith,

This is a letter I never wanted to write. I adore my son's Newton Public School Teachers and support team. They have changed his life for the better and I am eternally grateful. I am also a parent of a year-old trying to balance a full-time job, a second child in a different school system, a partner who must be on site for work daily, and a grader who is falling apart in front of my eyes. I implore you to do everything in your power to end this strike.

My son joined our family first as a foster placement through DCF, then a permanent placement, and finally as a legal adoption. When he started in Kindergarten at Countryside Elementary School in he had no formal schooling and was not exposed to traditional education. He was born into a house full of addiction, neglect, and violence. Over 5 years he lived in 7 different homes, some loving and some with many of the same challenges present in his birth home. By the grace of God, he came to us at age with the ability to connect, love, and be curious. It is our truest pleasure to be his family. This little boy has changed our whole family for the better and we are eternally grateful for him.

It took our little one a long time to be comfortable in school. He had to learn the social norms of school, how to engage with his peers, the alphabet, how to count, and how to trust. Kindergarten was hard, but he thrived with the help of his teacher, aid, and support team. grade has brought new challenges. He had to learn to trust a new teacher, is struggling to read and write, and is still very unsure about school in general. He has PTSD, ADHD, an oral processing challenge, and can't read or write. He is also full of joy, wonder, and a level of social/emotional inelegance that outweighs any adult.

Over 6 school days, I have watched the curious little boy who loved his friends and was working so hard to learn, fade before my eyes. In his place is the terrified, stressed, distrustful, button pusher who first arrived in our home ago. He feels abandoned by his teachers. He has said 'they are just like every other adult who pretends to care and then leaves.' He is pushing the limits with us, trying to see if we will leave him as well. I am in distress over it, as is my spouse. No matter what I tell him, or how I try to explain the situation, my little one can only feel the pain of adults not showing up for him.

Kids like mine, and so many others, need school. They need the routine, the consistency, the structure, and the care. They need to feel safe, cared for, and like someone in the world is on their side. It's time for the adults to model the behavior they expect of the children. Sit down, talk, and compromise. Our most vulnerable kids are counting them.

So please, sir, I ask you to do everything you can to help this situation come to a close. Our kids need to be back in school.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
[REDACTED]

I am a parent in Newton and I am extremely concerned about what this strike is doing to the kids and feel strongly that they need to get back in school - NOW. It has been 6 long days that these kids have been out of school and it is taking a toll on them and the parents. I am the mom of a [REDACTED] grade boy who attends Mason Rice and it is time that the teachers get back in the classroom and do what they claim to love to do - teach. The union has made its point with the strike but the negotiators can sit at the table and do that work while the teachers go back to the classroom.

The harm that is being done to these kids is mounting - they are losing out on learning; social engagement with their peers; the older kids are unable to participate in athletics and extracurricular activities and not to mention that we have no idea how these days are going to be made up. The kids are not the only ones who are struggling, as working parents have been scrambling to find childcare and some, like me, have even had to bring my child with me to work. As I work in the healthcare profession, this has been less than an ideal situation for both myself and my child.

It is time to enforce the law and require the teachers to get back in the classroom. This city is at a breaking point and if something isn't done to enforce the laws imposed by the Court System then we have no end in sight to this awful

requests that are being made by the union. The union and teachers feel that they have most of the city behind them with their actions and requests; however there are many of us parents that disagree and we want our voices to be heard. We implore you to enforce the law and let the kids get back to school now.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.

Jan 28th 2024

Dear Judge Barry-Smith,

I hope my email finds you very well!

My name is [REDACTED] and I'm a Newton Public School parent. My [REDACTED] grader and [REDACTED] grader have been out of school for 6 days already due to the current teacher strike situation which you are fully aware of. I'm writing to you to express our grave concern and to ask your help to do whatever you can to put the kids back to school.

We are very concerned that the kids will not have schools for more days and possibly weeks to come, given the little progress that has been made so far from the week-long negotiation. At this pace, with still a big gap and seemingly no willingness from either side to compromise, we see **NO HOPE** that a mutual agreement can be made any time soon while in the meantime thousands of Newton kids are going to lose more school.

We also have no faith, especially after reading the Superintendent Anna Nolin's 2nd Affidavit, that the representatives from both sides at the negotiation table indeed put thousands of Newton students' interests on their minds, and that they come to the negotiation table with good faith as they claimed, as clearly evident from their disrespectful attitudes towards each other. We believe our teachers care about their students deeply, but we are not sure if this was truly carried to the negotiation table at all. We do not know which side we can count on now that are really working towards getting the kids to school so we turn to you for help!

We appreciate your attention and your efforts on this situation. We fully respect the rulings you've made and we believe those help work towards ending the current strike. However, we also heard that the NTA has enough funding which may embolden them to take this strike further despite of the fines. We were wondering if there's anything else within the legal frame that **can enforce the school to open and students back in class, even though the negotiation is not settled.** We ask for your help on that!

We sincerely believe you share our concern and the concerns of thousands of families in Newton with kids not in school. PLEASE HELP US!

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

January 28, 2024

The Honorable Christopher K. Barry-Smith
Associate Justice
Middlesex County Superior Court
200 Tradecenter Drive
Woburn, MA 01801

Dear Judge Barry-Smith:

First, thank you for your service to the Commonwealth. I come from a family of attorneys and have great respect and appreciation for the work our judges do.

Second, I'd like to introduce myself and my family. I was born and raised in Newton, a proud graduate of the Newton Public Schools, now living back in Newton. My wife immigrated here from Mexico after college to pursue a career. We have a son in [REDACTED] grade and a daughter in [REDACTED] grade.

My son loves school more than any other place in the world. He's very social and highly curious, he loves being with friends and learning. He is sad when the school year ends and counts days to the start of school. He was in kindergarten when COVID hit and like so many other kids, he has had to manage issues with anxiety ever since. This is now the second time that he has had the school rug unexpectedly pulled out from under him, with no idea when he will return. He cries when the phone call comes at night telling him he can't go back to school tomorrow and he's generally a sad shell of his normally-exuberant self. My daughter is handling the situation somewhat better but she too misses her routine and we worry that after years of struggle learning to read, the progress she was finally making with the help of her fantastic teachers will be lost.

Are kids resilient, will they bounce back? Yes, probably. But they shouldn't have to and adults shouldn't keep making them. I'm writing to ask for your help creating more urgency for the parties involved to get our kids back to school immediately and continue their good faith bargaining with the kids in school.

The current situation seems to be a stalemate. The gap between the parties is huge and neither seems able or willing to move in a meaningful way, despite the pain that this strike is causing the families of our city. Everyone says they want the kids back in school but the gap is too big to be bridged and both sides have effectively unlimited resources to prolong the fight for weeks or months.

I love our teachers and I respect their right to fair bargaining. I also respect the City's need to responsibly manage budgets. But I cannot accept a situation where the children are punished for the adults' problems. I am not a lawyer and I do not know what tools are at your disposal, but I

If you have the ability to get the kids back in the classroom while the bargaining continues, I hope you will exercise it.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Very Truly Yours,

A large, solid black rectangular redaction covers the signature area of the letter.

January 28, 2024

The Honorable Christopher K. Barry-Smith
Associate Justice
Middlesex County Superior Court
200 Tradecenter Drive
Woburn, MA 01801

Dear Judge Barry-Smith:

Thank you for your service to the Commonwealth. As a public servant myself, I have deep appreciation and respect for those who dedicate their professional lives to supporting our communities.

Born and raised in Newton, MA, I am a parent of two Newton elementary school children [REDACTED], a product of the Newton Public School system, and a Newton, MA resident who wants a vibrant, thriving city and state. I am writing to you in these capacities to encourage you to do everything in your power to facilitate the resolution of the impasse between the NTA and the City of Newton.

My kids love going to school. They love their teachers this year and from years past, all of whom are truly amazing educators, public servants, and human beings. They love their friends and their school community. The past two weeks of uncertainty, unpredictably, and disruptions to their schooling and routines have noticeably affected both their learning and their moods. As a parent, it has also been difficult to see – let alone explain to my kids – how they, the students, are being centered in this negotiation. It sometimes feels like the kids are an afterthought in all this. Therefore, I'm writing to ask for your help creating more urgency for the parties to get our kids back to school immediately and engage in good faith bargaining so that the negotiations between the adults does not harm the kids.

I strongly support the right of unions to bargain collectively, including of course our public school teachers who as a general matter are not valued or compensated nearly enough for their work, service and dedication. Moreover, as a former policymaker, I also respect and very much understand the City's need to responsibly manage our finances and provide a range of public services to its citizens on a sustainable basis. But, practically speaking, my top concern is the kids – mine and my community's. In short, Newton's students should not be punished because the union and the city cannot resolve their differences, especially when this is ultimately all about the quality and viability of *the students'* education. If you have the power to advance good faith negotiations by all parties and get the kids back in the classroom while the bargaining continues, I would be grateful if you could exercise it.

Thank you for your consideration.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
January 28, 2024

The Honorable Christopher K. Barry-Smith
Associate Justice
Middlesex County Superior Court
200 Tradecenter Drive
Woburn, MA 01801

Dear Judge Barry-Smith:

We are parents of two Newton Public School students who are among the almost 12,000 children impacted by the strike. For our older child in the [REDACTED] grade, this disruption comes after her kindergarten year was cut short by COVID, and our younger child is now having her [REDACTED] year unexpectedly interrupted. Our family is one of thousands impacted, many of whom face extremely challenging circumstances as a result of this strike. We are doing what we can to pull together as a community, but it's impossible to replace the stability and reliability of a school routine in our childrens' day-to-day lives.

As parents, it's unfathomable that school continues to be closed, and painful to see our children's education used as a bargaining chip. Our children deserve to be in school, and it's disheartening that their wellbeing is deprioritized in this situation. While the school days will likely be made up, the disruption to our children and the broader community will have a lasting impact, particularly the longer this strike lasts.

We recognize the complexity of this situation, and hope that you will consider our children's interests, and the detriment this strike is having on their education and wellbeing. We urge you to do whatever you can to help get our kids back in the classroom.

Best,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

January 27th, 2024

The Honorable Judge Christopher Barr-Smith
Middlesex Superior Court
200 Tradecenter Drive
Woburn, MA 01801

Re: Newton Teachers Association Strike

Dear Judge Barr-Smith,

First of all, thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Second, if I may, I'd like to tell you a little bit about my son. He is a [redacted] grade student in Newton Public Schools, and one of the 20% of NPS students diagnosed with a disability and receiving services on an IEP.

My son has struggled with many challenges throughout his life. The most recent one was a diagnosis of Selective Mutism. For almost one year, he refused to speak outside of our family home. He wouldn't speak at school, after-school, extracurricular activities, extended family, or to his various clinicians and therapists. But in December of 2023, he experienced a breakthrough: he began speaking to his teachers, aide, and classmates in the [redacted] grade! The reasons are multifold, but I give most of the credit to his teacher and aide, who exhibited remarkable patience and skill in helping his communication blossom.

His teacher and I were so excited about this new development, and we worked together with his IEP team to create a plan so he would begin speaking to his other teachers (art, music, gym, his other school clinicians). That meant adding many services to his IEP, as well other classroom strategies that would slowly increase his comfort level with speaking.

The week he was supposed to begin his new IEP services and present his first-ever "my favorite place in the world" speech to his classmates, the NTA declared they were on strike. The evening I write this, his school has been closed for 6 school days, and to us parents, there appears to be no end in sight.

My family is terrified that after school eventually begins, his progress will have completely dissipated, and he will be mute once again.

My family has done our very best to remain calm and neutral, as our son does not deal well with the unexpected. But because I am also a public-facing Newton municipal employee and did

the longer this goes on, the more anxiety he will have going back to school. This could be devastating for him.

I want to tell you our family's story not because I think we "have it the worst," because we certainly don't. I know many other young children in my son's class with special needs and I am sure many other families are struggling.

I am telling you our story because I want you to know that in this entire situation, I don't believe anyone is thinking of our children. I want to give them a voice. I want to give my son a voice.

Please, do everything in your power to ensure he can get back to school in a timely manner. Think of him, and the other vulnerable students, when rendering your decision about this strike.

Thank you,



...with the upmost respect for your position and as a law abiding citizen.
As a Newton resident, a licensed social worker, the daughter of a teacher, and a mother
of three, I highly value our schools and our teachers - they are the backbone of our city.
I can say without a doubt every resident desires a fair contract for our teachers and they
deserve it. However, what is happening in our city is disgraceful. There is a reason that
the law in Massachusetts holds teacher strikes illegal, it is to PROTECT our children.
Unfortunately our children wellbeing is no longer being preserved, instead they are
being used as pawns in this sickening game of chess. Our children deserve better and
should not suffer at the hands of anyone breaking the law. Please be an example to our
children, raise the fines against the union to get our children back to school.
Negotiations can continue without sacrificing the needs of our innocent students.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature and name of the sender.

I implore you to read my letter and all the other letters you have been given today.

I have two children in the Newton Public School system. During Covid I had one child in [REDACTED] and one in [REDACTED] grade. To say keeping them out of school was a disruption is an understatement. To this day, my now [REDACTED] year old [REDACTED] grader sees a therapist from the trauma of those months of being home without school.

This strike brings back those same feelings and emotions. While I love our teachers, most parents can't help to feel that our children are being used as pawns to get what they think is fair. While they dance in the streets, disrupt businesses with air horns and car horns, try to bang down the mayor's door, and storm the Statehouse, my children are home with two working parents. No school. No idea when they will go back.

I respect the position you are in and the tough choices you have, but what are we teaching our children when an illegal strike has little consequence? I tell my children when you break the law you go to jail. What do I tell them now?

I want to also state something that you may not be aware of. There are MANY teachers who I have privately spoken to who are AGAINST the strike. They feel bullied by the NTA and are too afraid to speak out. They feel trapped by the rhetoric, unable to express how they feel and are home without pay.

Please help our children and the MANY teachers who are too afraid to speak. Please put a stop to this illegal strike and send the children back to school where they belong.

It's up to you to make this right.

[REDACTED]
Full time working mom

Dear Honorable Christopher K Barry-Smith,

I am writing as a very concerned mom of three Newton Public School students - [REDACTED] grades. As you know, my three kids have been out of school for six consecutive days and it is causing stress, sadness and anger.

My [REDACTED] year old asks me every night if he's going back to school and every night when I have to tell him NO, he cries. Not only is he confused but he's now questioning whether his teacher doesn't like him and doesn't want to be his teacher anymore. Having to console him every single night is heartbreaking because he's [REDACTED] and does not understand.

Not only is this causing sadness, but for every day they miss now - in January when REAL learning happens - they will be forced to make up these days at the end of June or worse during vacation weeks when I think we can all agree real learning does not happen. By the end of June, students, teachers and parents are checked out. Right now is when they need to be in school with their peers, learning, enjoying school - not questioning if they'll ever be back, if their teacher hates them and crying every night.

I am not on the side of the city and I am not on the side of the NTA - I am on the side of the NPS students who are caught in the middle of this fight. Our children are being deprived of their right to an education and as the NTA keeps saying - ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. Compromises have to come from both sides and I am asking you to make sure kids are back in classrooms as soon as possible while the two sides continue negotiations.

I can honestly say I never really understood why strikes are illegal but I now fully understand - it's for the kids and it's for the community. This strike is absolutely crushing the wonderful Newton community that we all love. People are angry - with teachers, with leaders and with each other - and the longer this goes, the harder and harder it's going to be to get back to where we were before this strike.

Thank you for your consideration helping to get our kids back in the classrooms.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Newton Mom, Newton Resident, [REDACTED]

cutting into the time she has left at the school.

Moreover, she is taking several rigorous AP classes, including BC Calculus, Physics and Spanish, and is hoping to secure 4s or 5s on the AP exams scheduled in April, the scores required to get college credit for these classes. However, the strike interrupted the classroom learning, and while the school days lost will be made up for most students, it may not be in time for my child and other seniors to learn all the material needed to ensure success on the AP exams. This makes our whole family feel anxious and sad, as she's been working very hard and was on a good track to achieve the goal of AP scores prior to the strike.

Another point of anxiety for us and other families with [REDACTED] is delay in school submitting term 2 grades to the colleges that require those as they review the applications. We received a letter from a school principal suggesting we send a communication provided by the school to the colleges, to inform them about the strike, and anticipated delay in the grades submission by our school. Nevertheless, it's not clear whether some colleges may end up deprioritizing these incomplete applications.

My [REDACTED] started middle school during COVID pandemic, with Newton being one of the last districts going back to in-person learning, and her high school experience is now interrupted with the strike. While our both kids were in NPSs from the kindergarden and we never considered private schools in the past, I am starting to question whether we should take steps towards leaving NPS for my [REDACTED] to ensure she can have continuous learning during her high school years, as it's not clear at this point whether NPSs can provide that for the remaining high school years'

I love our Newton teachers and wish all their demands can be met. However, from my understanding the city doesn't have the additional funds to meet these demands without a consequence of layoffs of the teachers in the future; and we don't want that to happen. It is also very puzzling to me why the teachers, who say they care for their students and want to be in a classroom, have chosen the path of illegal strike as a tactic - considering students are exactly the people harmed by this strike the most.

It is also very sad for me to watch how both sides, and especially the teachers, who are supposed to be the role models for our children, are publically expressing a lot of negativity and bias towards Newton mayor and SC members, who are publicly elected officials. While I personally did not vote for Mayor Fuller, I respect the choice of most of my fellow Newtonians, and think it is not a role of the NTA to demand her to change the overall budget amount dedicated to the schools at this stage of negotiations. I would rather see them open to negotiating within the existing parameters, if that's what the City decided should be allocated to the NPSs, and in light of other items the city budget covers.

The current situation seems to be a deadlock, with both parties not willing to compromise much. I fear the strike will continue for much longer than both sides initially expected, and in the meantime, the kids are the losers who, yet again, need to cope while adults can't resolve things. We also worry, in case the strike continues for much longer, about the school year running over into the end of June and potentially taking up April break. Like many other families, we have some plans already, including plans for my senior to visit colleges to help with the final decisions ahead of the May 1 acceptance deadline.

I strongly urge you to do all you can to end this strike and to help our kids come back to school. I wish for both sides to negotiate effectively and respectfully, and to reach a compromise that provides a fair contract without a future need of the layoffs. With that, I strongly believe these negotiations should continue in parallel to the kids being taught in school by our great teachers, not instead of it.

Thank you.

[REDACTED]

Newton, MA

Dear Judge Berry-Smith,

We are writing to you in regard to the effect of the ongoing Newton Teachers strike on our kids. The strike created a great amount of stress, anxiety and hardship for our kids and family, and we ask you to do whatever is in your power to have school resume tomorrow.

All of our kids are current or former students of the Newton Public school system, from elementary through middle school to high school. At present our two younger kids, [REDACTED] are attending the Bowen Elementary School.

[REDACTED] is a special kid, born with [REDACTED] a complex syndrome with physical, metabolic and cognitive phenotypes. However, with the right multi-disciplinary approach, [REDACTED] has been benefiting from what the public system has to offer under the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and is now at his grade level academically. The current state of abrupt break in the school routine created a significant amount of setbacks to Ilai's progress, academically, socially and emotionally.

Due to [REDACTED] syndrome, there are very limited number of programs/camps he can attend and for most there is a wait-list. The abrupt change in his academic and social environment creates a severe state of social isolation and anxiety for [REDACTED] setting him back on his wonderful progress made since the beginning of the school year. [REDACTED] is anxious, unhappy and socially isolated, with a ripple effect on his siblings and especially on us and his little sister [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] misses her friends and experiencing anxiety not knowing when she will be allowed to go back to school, which has been a source of joy and excitement for her since the beginning of the school year. [REDACTED] is our youngest, and watching all of her siblings in school made her look forward to starting elementary school, with all of her the expectations been met - just to be abruptly removed and unable to attend school.

Both of us have highly demanding jobs, but the most abrupt and immediate impact is on [REDACTED] patients. As a senior faculty of the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] sees multiple patients across her Lupus Nephritis, Chronic Kidney Disease and Dialysis clinics; as you may know, [REDACTED] provides excellent medical care to underserved populations across the entire northeast, both as a primary, secondary and tertiary referral center. However being a working mother, this strike forces [REDACTED] to make impossible choices between her commitment to her patients and her kids. This strike forces us to do a sub-par job at our workplace, with a ripple effect on our kids and on multiple other people affected, impacted and touched through our workplaces.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Superior Court Administrative Office
Three Pemberton Square
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Judge Barry-Smith,

We are writing today as concerned parents of two children in the Newton Public School system.

To call this past week unsettling would be an understatement. We moved to Newton in 2014 for a number of reasons including its location, transit and, most of all, its education system.

We have watched our children regress – all the way back to 2020. That is to say, it is feeling eerily like the early days of the pandemic, where everyone's schedules are disrupted with no end in sight. Our family is back to the days of compromised schedules, too much screen time and overall frustration. We are relying on grandparents, friends, and babysitters to help fill the days since both parents work full time. At least one of us has had to work from home every day this past week, even when we are supposed to be in our office. Every day, we have heard both kids melting down at least once – sometimes over the most insignificant things. It's hard to watch and rationalize what is happening with our kids, and I don't think we are alone.

Beyond that, the messaging on the news and social media have been in complete contradiction with one another. For us, as parents, it's all very confusing and depressing. It's hard to keep this from our kids, even though we try. Both the NTA and the City are claiming full transparency, yet that transparency seems to be contradicting accounts of the day. It's starting to feel like both sides are in their corners, and any understanding might be lost about what can be done and what is ultimately right. I want my kids to stand up for themselves. During disagreements, we have talked in school about flexible brains and rock brains. I'm worried that both parties at the negotiating table are navigating this dispute with the latter. If you're not familiar with this terminology, I recommend you speak with one of our wonderful elementary school teachers.

We realized during the pandemic, on a deeper level, how essential our teachers and schools are – and we continue to respect and appreciate all that they do. To be clear, we stand with our teachers. We all would not be who we are without teachers in our lives. What we do not stand for is this feeling of uncertainty and miscommunication.

Some of the stories that have been floating around include the following:

- we have heard this strike could last a while;
- all the fines in the world won't matter because the NTA has deep pockets and is now being backed by a number of third parties, and

All is to say, we do not know what is actually true, and this is all starting to feel very political in nature. We are losing focus on what matters – navigating this efficiently and effectively and getting the children back to school. We are fortunate to have found a village, but that being said my husband and I have spent a significant amount on unplanned childcare over the past week to make sure our kids are safe and cared for – for part or all of the day. We cannot imagine what families are doing to navigate who are not so fortunate.

I am writing you today for help. Our kids need to be at school. More fines and harsh words are not the way to solve the problem. Understanding, compromise and clear minds need to be the mantra of those involved in negotiations. Please, as a third party, please encourage our city representatives and unions representatives to work together and be a positive example.

As I write this, I would like to say that I would not like my letter published or quoted in any way. This is a one-to-one plea, and I cannot speak for other parents.

We appreciate your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Two Newton Parents

Dia S Roberts-Tyler

From: Michael A Sullivan
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2024 3:45 PM
To: Dia S Roberts-Tyler
Subject: Fwd: Illegal strikes are effectively legal!!

Michael A. Sullivan, Esq.
Clerk of Courts
Middlesex Superior Court
200 Trade Center
Woburn, MA 01801
(781) 939-2810

From: Michael A Sullivan <michael.sullivan@jud.state.ma.us>
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2024 3:44 PM

[REDACTED]
<Middlesex.clerksoffice@jud.state.ma.us>
Subject: Re: Illegal strikes are effectively legal!!

Good afternoon:

Thank you for your e-mail. It has been forwarded to the Assistant Clerk in the session with the Judge.

Have a good day.

Michael A. Sullivan, Esq.
Clerk of Courts
Middlesex Superior Court
200 Trade Center
Woburn, MA 01801
(781) 939-2810

Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2024 1:32:32 PM
To: Middlesex Clerks Office <Middlesex.clerksoffice@jud.state.ma.us>
Subject: Illegal strikes are effectively legal!!

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, and know the content is safe.

Dear Judge Barry-Smith,

The vast majority of the city of Newton is deeply disappointed that the laws of the state of MA are not being upheld. The recent ruling of a \$50K fine on the NTA equates to about \$25 per member represented in the union. This is "a slap on the hand" and equivalent to a parking ticket, not an offense that is impacting 12,000 children.

income every day the strike continues. Clearly there is no pressure right now on the union leaders to compromise.

Meanwhile, the law is being broken for 12 days running, and more importantly, 12,000 children's lives are being impacted. The ones most impacted are those on assistance (13% of families in Newton) and those who require special services (20% of NPS students). We beg of you to uphold the laws of Massachusetts with the force they deserve. Get the kids back into school, and let the mediation process continue in parallel, as the law dictates.

Please respond to confirm you have received and read this email.

Best regards,


Dia S Roberts-Tyler

From: Michael A Sullivan
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 12:22 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Middlesex Clerks Office
Subject: Re: Urge swift action against NTA and its leaders

Good afternoon:

Your e-mail has been forwarded to the Assistant Clerk in the session with Judge Barry Smith.

Have a good day.

Michael A. Sullivan, Esq.
Clerk of Courts
Middlesex Superior Court
200 Trade Center
Woburn, MA 01801
(781) 939-2810

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 12:15:50 PM
To: [REDACTED]; Middlesex Clerks Office
<Middlesex.clerksoffice@jud.state.ma.us>
Subject: Urge swift action against NTA and its leaders

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

As a citizen and Newton resident, what happened in the last few days become unbearable. We have witnessed Newton Teacher Association use our kids as leverage to push their agenda through ILEGAL strike which left 12k Newton kids out of school for 9 days already! Despite the court ruling, the leaders of NTA have been contemplating the orders and use tactics to intentionally delay the reopening of the schools. This is NOT acceptable in a society with law and order. I urge you and the court to take the swift action to protect the most vulnerable group of our society, our kids!

Thank you for your considerations!

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dia S Roberts-Tyler

From: Michael A Sullivan
Sent: Thursday, February 1, 2024 12:10 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Union Closes Schools for a 10th School Day

Categories: Newton Teachers Strike

Good morning:

Your e-mail has been forwarded to the Assistant Clerk in the session with Judge Barry-Smith.

Have a good day.

Michael A. Sullivan, Esq.
Clerk of Courts
Middlesex Superior Court
200 Trade Center
Woburn, MA 01801
(781)939-2810

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 11:00:12 PM
To: Middlesex Clerks Office <middlesex.clerksoffice@jud.state.ma.us>
Subject: Fw: Union Closes Schools for a 10th School Day

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Evening Hon. Barry-Smith,

How long will you and the justice system allow this to continue? The system is put in place to bring justice to the people and I truly don't see how assessing/re-assessing/pausing fines is creating any sense of urgency for either party?

Our children belong back in school - isn't this a right? What are we teaching the future of our community, state, world with this example of the justice system not intervening when people commit a crime? Is the lesson: you receive more time to do right at the expense of children?

My aunt (now in her late 70s) is a retired school teacher and explained that when she was teaching in the public schools in CT, back in the 1980's, there was a strike and eventually, the Union president was put in jail as a penalty for the strike and stoppage of education.

My 9-year-old asked "Why isn't this happening today?" "Why is this allowed to continue if the Court and a Judge are now involved?"

We didn't have an answer...and frankly, I don't see how much longer one can allow this to continue? Have we not seen what lack of education did to the mental health of children as a result of the pandemic?

How is it ok to continue this disregard for their education so adults can continue to bicker?

Continue the negotiations but please, please put our children back in school.

Thank you and we sincerely appreciate you stepping in and up on this case.

From: Mayor Ruthanne Fuller <hr@newtonma.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 10:44 PM

Subject: Union Closes Schools for a 10th School Day

Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2024

Mayor's Newton Update

Tomorrow will be the tenth day with our youngsters' classroom doors shut by the NTA.

And I have a question for the union tonight: Where is your sense of urgency?

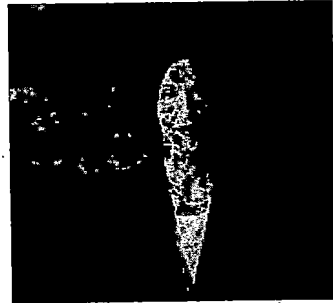
At 11:30 yesterday morning, the Newton School Committee negotiating team put forward an increased offer – a meaningfully increased offer, a highly competitive offer, a sustainable offer. The offer we proposed would continue to make Newton one of the highest paying school districts in the state.

The union took 26 hours to respond in full.

What happened in those 26 hours?

Our kids were stuck at home. Our parents and caregivers were struggling, making alternative arrangements, paying a lot for childcare, depending on family and friends to fill in, and missing work again.

Meanwhile, the union found time for boisterous rallies, celebratory music and listening to speeches today at the Newton Education Center (where bargaining was supposed to be happening) from the President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association and the President of the National Education Association headquartered in Washington, D.C.



Let me repeat the question:

To the leaders of the NTA – Where is your sense of urgency?

This strike, this illegal strike, is hurting our children.

Below is the message the School Committee sent tonight:

Negotiations are continuing this evening. The School Committee and Newton Teachers Association have come to agreement on many issues, but compensation remains unresolved.

The two parties remain approximately \$15 million apart on our proposals, of which approximately \$12 million is related to Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA). Yesterday, with additional funding from the Mayor for the last year of the contract, the School Committee offered a COLA for all employees that would increase salaries by a minimum of 12% over four years.

The School Committee continues to focus resources on Unit C aides as we have heard from the NTA that this is their greatest concern. We recognize that the job of an aide in the Newton Public Schools is a tough job as the increased level of student needs is real. It is a harder job today than it has ever been. That is why we have proposed raising the COLA for many of those valued employees by more than 15% over the life of the contract. Many of our Unit C aides would see their compensation rise by more than 40% over four years.

The School Committee remains focused on reaching an agreement that is competitive and sustainable. Signing a contract we cannot afford is not going to improve outcomes for students, and will consume resources that our teachers are asking for to reduce class sizes and add mental health supports.

We are still negotiating and doing the hard work every day to settle this contract. We again ask the NTA to let our kids go back to school.

*Sincerely,
Newton School Committee
schoolcommittee@newton.k12.ma.us*

Staffing Update Related to FY25 Budget

Social Emotional Supports for Students

The Superintendent has committed to adding staff to address high school class sizes and 5.7 social workers to ensure that all elementary schools, the preschool and the high schools all have social workers. Student support at middle schools

is delivered differently - by guidance counselors and others. The chart linked below shows the district's total mental health staffing as of today (before the positions budgeted for next year) so the community can understand the large amount of staffing support our students already have.

[Social Emotional Support Staff for Students \(current - before additions for next year\)](#)

School Committee Meeting Calendar Discussion

Given the extended NTA strike, the School Committee has scheduled a meeting on Thursday, February 1, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. to begin discussions about when the days will be made up to meet the state mandated 180 school days. Meeting login information is here."

[School Committee Meeting Login Webpage](#)

Here is a [memo](#) from Superintendent Nolin, which explains the options. The calendar makes a provision for 9 days of a strike. We are now at 10 days so the School Committee will include this new information in the discussion.

The meeting on Thursday will be an initial discussion with a vote to follow in future meetings.

Click [here](#) to read the message from Superintendent Anna Nolin tonight.



Mayor Ruthanne Fuller | 1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA 02459

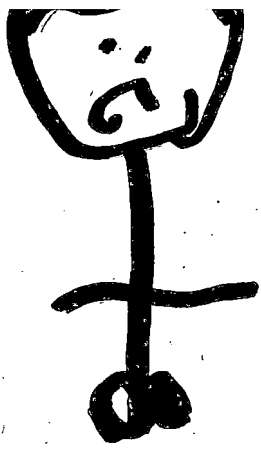
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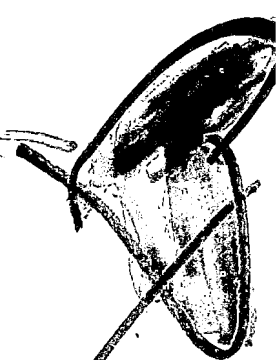
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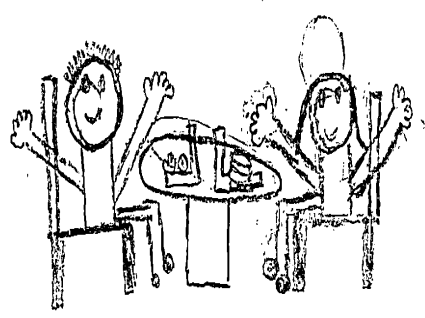
Kids go back

to School!



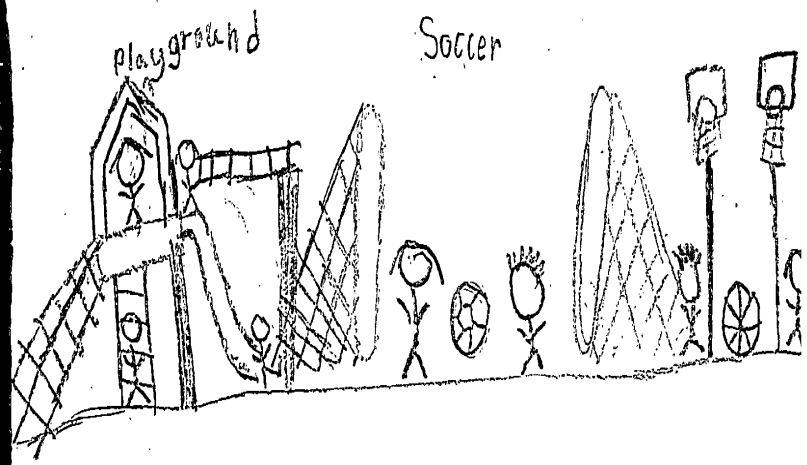
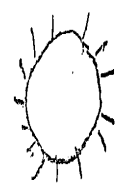
1

Snack/Lunch



2

Recess



I LOVE School!

3

math

$$6+8=14$$

$$14-9=5$$

$$5+1=6$$

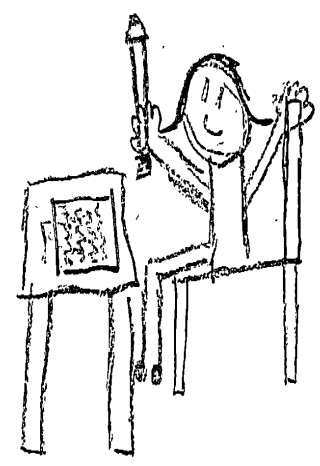
$$6-5=1$$

A+



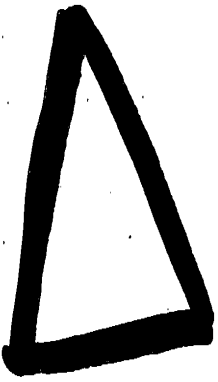
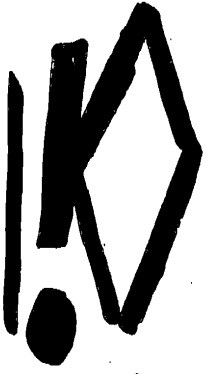






4

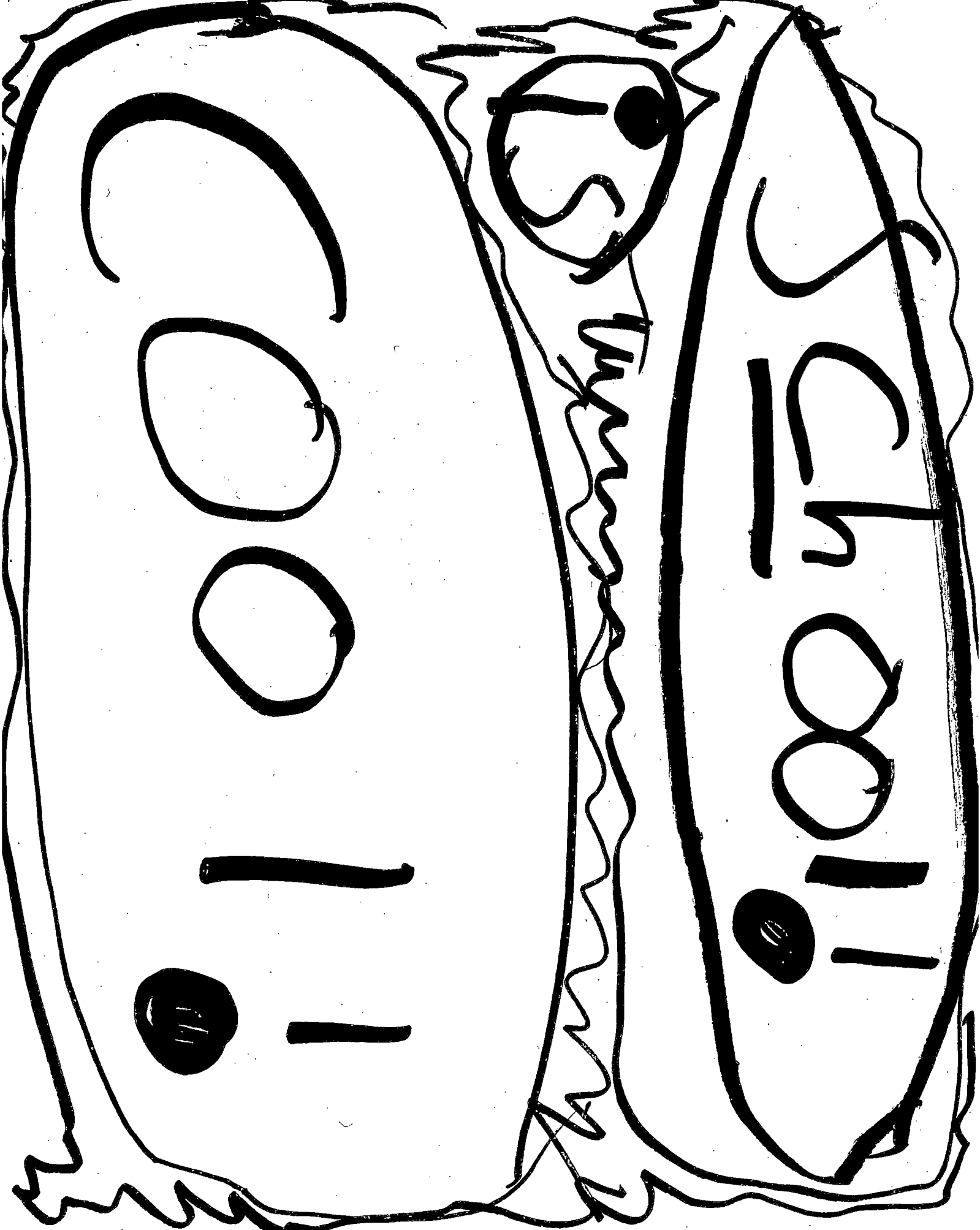
writing



Kids Need To...

Learn! and write, read,
add, subtract

to  School! 
     



S

W

Chooii

OOII

1st grader

1st



TOP SECRET

I AM MISSING
I should be reading & writing
I miss reading & writing
I like to play with friends
I have a cat & a dog

I Miss...

ଭାଷା

ଆମେ ଓ ଆମିନି

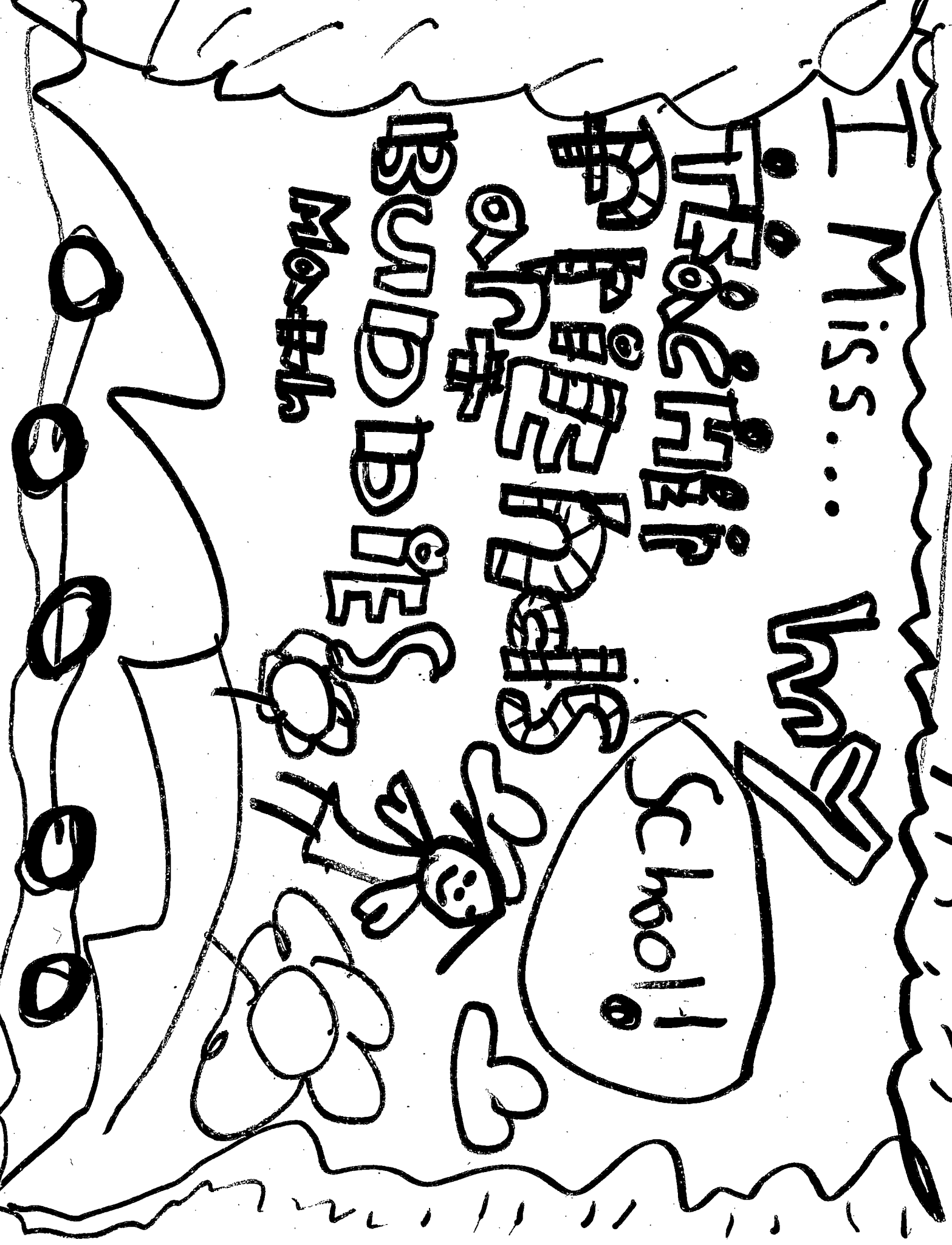
କାଳିକା

ଓ ନିଜ ନିଜ ଘର

ଭାଉନୀମାନଙ୍କ

ମୋହନ

School!



I NEED MY SPEECH

+ HELP A BY



THE STUDENT

NEEDS
SCHOOLS