



A Message from District #61

October 31, 2019

Decatur Public Schools
101 West Cerro Gordo Street
Decatur, Illinois 62523
217.362.3000

Dear DPS Parents and Families,

As you are well aware, programs at nine District #61 schools remain suspended. These programs had to close for safety purposes during the time that members of the Decatur Federation of Teaching Assistants are on strike. District #61 employs 275 teaching assistants who work with more than 500 students in prekindergarten classes at Pershing Early Learning Center and in Macon-Piatt Special Education District (MPSED) programs housed in nine DPS schools. These programs depend on teaching assistants to keep students safe during the school day, meet grant requirements, and maintain state- and federally-mandated learning environments for students.

Parents of affected students may request an IEP meeting after the strike concludes to determine the impact of lost time and compensatory services needed as a result. IEP teams must consider the total time lost in order to determine the impact. Therefore, this cannot be determined until teaching assistants return to work. Parents may call the special education administrator assigned to your child's school to schedule a meeting, or call the MPSED office at 217-362-3055.

District #61 and school leaders are examining the daily needs in programs that remain open and offering assistance as needed. DPS will continue to assess the situation in our schools throughout the duration of the strike. Programs impacted by the DFTA strike will remain suspended until an agreement has been reached between Decatur Public Schools and DFTA.

We remain hopeful that a resolution will be reached soon so that students can return to school. The DPS negotiating team is willing to meet with DFTA at the call of the federal mediator. Announcement of any movement toward an agreement will be communicated using the district's regular communication platforms.

Sincerely,

Dr. Paul Fregeau
Superintendent
Decatur Public Schools

Kathy Horath
Director
Macon-Piatt Special Education District