**Good evening, I am Dr. Suzanne Windsor, this is my 29th year w/PGCPS. I serve as a Pupil Personnel Worker.**

**Article 22.2 C. General Salary Scale Info.**

As we continue with our PGCPS-PGCEA negotiations and now enter the domain of salary scale improvement and cost of living increases, you can no longer cry poor because we found the money. So, it is our sincere hope that this enterprise will be done in **good faith** through the true projections calculation of Federal, State, BluePrint, Local and other sources of funding the system has or soon will acquire- as we set forth our proposals.

We also would like to acknowledge that the system just recently sent out a “Teacher Absenteeism and Retention” survey to ask our members for insight into how to best address the extremely challenging past two years educators have experienced. The survey narrative acknowledged: the increase in teacher absenteeism; the increase in teachers leaving the system; and the increase in teacher stress and anxiety. It went on to ask for both short and long term remedy suggestions. To this I must respond, this is what we are currently bargaining for!

Simply stated, the short and long term answer is to treat all Unit 1 members as the professionals that we are and to pay us a professional salary commensurate with the education we have attained or are working toward as we strive to better ourselves for the betterment of our students and the community that we serve.

A professional salary means we attract new educators to the system and retain those that we already have. PGCPS can no longer afford to do business as usual; it’s time to think outside the box for hiring and retention or the system will collapse- as Unit members choose neighboring jurisdictions that have higher pay, better work and caseload ratios, more support, and better benefits.

Educators are experiencing extreme burn-out as working your full time assignment and then covering the assignment of a colleague or a vacancy is not sustainable. **So, to answer the system’s question about how to reduce absenteeism and increase retention…We need manageable work/caseloads now. We need more autonomy and respect now. AND, We need a real raise not lost to premium increases or the like NOW!**

**In-person Bargaining**

While we are ever grateful for the school system’s continued participation in the open forum of Bargaining for the Common good whereby all stakeholders may view this negotiation and see the integrity of the process, our PGCEA Bargaining team strongly desires a return to in-person bargaining.

We also believe that you wish to demonstrate the integrity of your word that in-person learning is safe and face-to face interactions and activities between students, parents, and teachers is safe by you, yourselves engaging in face-to-face, in-person bargaining. For, what message would it send to our students, parents, community stakeholders, and Unit 1 members for the leadership to say that it is **not safe** for them to meet with Unit 1 members that are either fully vaccinated or tested every week- yet it is okay for all of us to be engaging in in-person teaching and learning?

Hoping that you do not want to send a message that in-person instruction is not safe or that of an elitist, double standard, we are most willing to work with the PGCPS team on securing a location to hold the future negotiation meetings in-person. We can work together on the details of full in-person or a hybrid model such as just our teams in person and virtual for spectators. We are ever willing to work with you for an open and successful negotiation process.