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Minneapolis teachers and education support specialists begin open-ended strike with no deal in sight

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Massive rally of striking educators and supporters. Photo: Brad Sigal

Minneapolis — Teachers and education support professionals in Minneapolis began striking at 7:30 a.m., March 8, with pickets held at public schools all over the city.

At Lyndale Community School in South Minneapolis spirits were high on the first day of the strike. MFT members said that 100% of the teachers at the school had signed in and were out on their picket line. The line marched back and forth around the two street sides of the school for about an hour before they began moving and the crowd of around 100 people marched over to Lyndale Avenue, a major street in the area. There they proceeded up and down both sides of Lyndale to the honks and

pumped fists of passing cars as they chanted, “If our students don’t get it, shut it down!”

Similar scenes played out at schools all over Minneapolis from 7:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. Large crowds and serious but good moods were broadly reported from the picket lines.

At noon, a large unity rally marched to the Davis Center where the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) office is located. Around 7000 educators, students, parents and community members rallied for over an hour outside MPS to loud chants and speeches from educators and supporters.

At 4 p.m. a delegation of labor, community, and parent leaders marched on Superintendent Ed Graff’s office to deliver a demand that Minneapolis Public Schools settle the contract and meet the educators’ demands to give the students the safe and stable schools they deserve. Cherrene Horazuk is the president of AFSCME Local 3800 who represents clerical workers at the University of Minnesota. Horazuk said, “On Saturday more than 50 organizations sent a letter to Superintendent Ed Graff demanding that he negotiate but we got no response. Today we showed up in person but again we got no response, just like the educators and students have gotten no response from him. We let him know that we stand with the educators and the students and with their demands.”

At the same time as the Minneapolis educators began their strike, educators in Saint Paul across the Mississippi River from Minneapolis reached a contract settlement averting a strike and winning major gains on their key demands including getting class size caps reinstated, additional mental health supports for educators, demands around equity and inclusion, and wage increases.

Spirits were high among Saint Paul educators, who issued a call for their members

and supporters to turn their support across the river to the Minneapolis fight. Sarah Vast is a parent of a student in Saint Paul and they said, “Saint Paul Public Schools found a way to meet the needs of their students and educators. It is time that Minneapolis Public Schools did the same.”

Picketing is expected to resume at 7:30 a.m. on Wednesday with unity events each day.

Source: [FightBack! News](#)

