

Statement from Mayor Avedisian regarding Warwick Teachers' Union Protest

“For the last 17 years as the leader of this City, I have faced many obstacles and challenges. While many have had clear resolutions, others have taken more time and forethought to find adequate resolutions.

The ongoing contract dispute between the Warwick Teachers' Union and the Warwick School Committee has been both challenging and emotional for all those involved. At various points during recent rounds of negotiations, I have taken on an active role in the discussions between the two parties, most recently sitting in on current mediation sessions.

Despite having no legal authority to negotiate a contract resolution I have, and will continue, to work with both parties to reach an agreement in an amicable manner. As I can only act in an advisory role, it is up to the parties involved whether they will act on and follow that advice. With that said, I find the timing of this protest odd given that just yesterday we settled on the next date for mediation and are five to six weeks from the arbitration decision.

At every turn, I have remained in contact with the Union, School Committee and School Department, with the priority being, that which is in the best interest of our schoolchildren. While I do not have the authority to apply pressure to any party involved in hopes of spurring an outcome, I have urged everyone to remember the needs and quality of education that our students deserve.

Although I had a press conference with Senator Reed and other previously scheduled obligations that required my attention today, I have continually made a concerted effort to keep discussions and lines of communication open.

As always, I remain committed to working with the members of our Teachers' Union, the administration, and School Committee to resolve the contract dispute and look forward to having a productive, positive discussion at the next mediation session.