

## **Rejection of imposition – statement by Noah Everitt**

My fellow South Burlington Educators' Association members moments ago voted to formally reject the employment conditions unilaterally imposed last week by the South Burlington School Board.

It is unfortunate that the board chose to begin the new school year – literally the first day of the new year – by sowing seeds of disruption, uncertainty and chaos. It is especially unfortunate that they chose this path instead of one of healing that our community so desperately needs.

After a year that we all – educators, parents, students, community members, and, yes, even the board – went through, the last thing we need to do is keep that disruption alive. By taking the action it took last week, the board became one of seven – only seven – in the history of the state to impose employment conditions more than once. Sadly, the board next door is also on that list; a few days after our board took its divisive action, the Burlington School Board did the same thing to its teachers.

Our vote today should send a strong signal to the board that the women and men who teach the city's children prefer an approach that leads to healing and certainty. We are calling on the board to rescind its imposed employment terms, and get back to the table until we agree on a settled contract for this school year. We will not begin negotiating for next year until the board agrees to return to the table for this year.

Make no mistake: our resolve today is strong. We are passionate people who have dedicated our professional lives to the students of this district. We are proud of what we – and everyone involved in our schools – have accomplished. The board's decision to once again impose employment conditions puts that all at risk.

We urge the board to hear us. We urge the board to rescind the imposition and resume talking to us. And we urge the board to take this opportunity to reverse the course of last year and make this year one of healing and renewal for our district. Our students are counting on us to do so.