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NEWS >>

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS BUS WORKERS APPROVE FIRST TEAMSTER CONTRACT

Teamsters Local 777 Negotiates Wages, Protections for Drivers and Monitors

Less than one year after overwhelmingly voting to join Teamsters Local 777, school bus workers at Paige Bus Enterprises in Chicago have ratified their first Teamster contract.

The 80 bus drivers and monitors who exclusively service the Chicago Public Schools system nearly unanimously approved the Teamster agreement, with all but one worker voting for ratification. Paige Bus is a subsidiary of the Cook-Illinois Corporation, the sixth largest American school bus company. Although the company first contested the Teamsters' organizing campaign in December 2014, management repeatedly came to the table throughout negotiations intent to bargain a fair deal with its workforce.

"While negotiations were long, this agreement is a historic one that was achieved through mutual respect and cooperation between Paige Bus and Teamsters Local 777," said Elizabeth Gonzalez, Local 777 Trustee and Business Agent. "For the first time, these workers feel like they finally have respect on the job. They can show up for work every day knowing their jobs are secure, and they're getting paid what they've earned and what they deserve."

The three-year contract includes landmark wage increases for many of the company's workers. The Teamsters will receive 80-cent hourly raises in the first year of the agreement alone, when most drivers and monitors had previously never received more than 25 cents in new wages. The Local 777 members also will receive monthly bonuses for expenses, the protection of the Teamsters' powerful grievance procedure and the establishment of a more flexible bidding process for bus routes.

"Each year things would get worse because no one was listening. Joining the Teamsters was the way for us to have our concerns finally addressed to making things better," said Patrick Morris, a school bus driver with Paige Bus. "We knew other school bus drivers in the city who were union members and making significantly higher wages. We knew with Local 777, we could get that too."

For the past decade, the Teamsters' Drive Up Standards campaign has worked to improve safety, service and work standards in the private school bus and transit industry. More than 35,000 drivers, monitors, aides, attendants and mechanics have become Teamsters since the campaign began.

Teamsters Local 777 is an affiliate of Teamsters Joint Council 25, America's premier labor union for Chicago, Illinois and northwest Indiana.