

Office of the Governor

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NEWS RELEASE

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WHITMAN : STRIKE ACTION DURING PROFICIENCY TESTS SPEAKS VOLUMES ABOUT PATERSON TEACHERS' UNION PRIORITIES

Gov. Christie Whitman today issued the following statement regarding the Paterson school strike:

While we are pleased that Judge Saunders has ordered the members of the Paterson Education Association (PEA) to return to work, we are greatly troubled that the illegal action by the local teachers' union has already cost the students of Paterson two days of instructional time and caused significant disruption to the students taking the High School Proficiency Test (HSPT).

That the PEA would take a clearly illegal work action right in the middle of the HSPT is inexcusable. The students taking the proficiency test have worked long and hard to demonstrate their knowledge and the PEA's decision to stage an illegal strike while the test was being administered speaks volumes about the priorities of the local teachers' union.

The tactics employed by the PEA - disrupting the administration of our proficiency tests, costing the students of Paterson two days of important instructional time and the reported use of young students to bolster the union's ranks on the picket line, are deplorable.