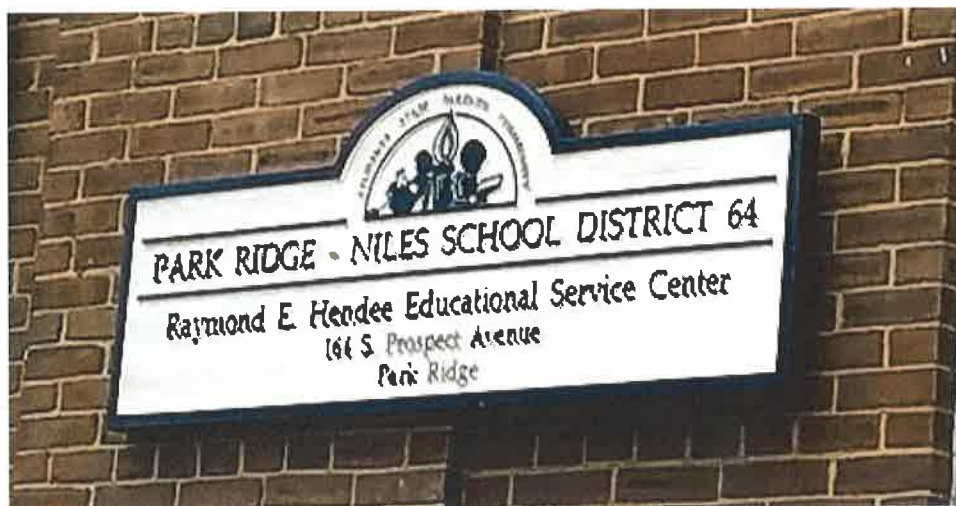


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[Park Ridge Herald-Advocate](#) shared a [link](#).
September 15 at 2:36pm ·



[District 64 board members defend decision to keep teachers contract secret](#)

Releasing a new teachers contract before it is approved by the Park Ridge - Niles School District 64 Board of Education could generate thousands of responses...

www.chicagotribune.com|By Chicago Tribune

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Comments



[Charlene Foss](#) The motion to release the draft contract for public review and comment lost 3-4, with Sotos, Paterno and Eggemann in favor of release. Shame on the rest of the Board. What is the harm in letting the public see, earlier than later, how you are spending our money and what policies you are putting into place? It is easier to avoid and delay public criticism if you wait until after the Board ratification vote - and THAT is what this is about. The excuses not to release were pretty pathetic as well. How dare the Board suggest that the public is not sophisticated enough to understand the contract? How dare the Board suggest that public input won't matter unless a certain threshold of people appear - or matter at all? Every one of us taxpayers put thousands of dollars into this contract. Show some respect and please do us the courtesy of providing information AND listening to our views. It's the process that counts.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [September 16 at 1:52pm](#) · [Edited](#)



[Dan Knight](#) Watch the video.

Sotos is either delusional or was being totally disingenuous in his exchange with Reardon. He is an elected official which means he casts votes. But that certainly doesn't mean he should choose not to take input from taxpayers, no matter how many on ANY issue, for fear they might be trying to influence his decision.

That's exactly why he should welcome input!

Or is it somehow better to remain within the insularity of the Board when making decisions.

Mmmmmm... don't think so.

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[Derek Cadmus](#) These officials are going to have very short careers if they don't listen to/address concerns of the very people they represent. I look at this like asking my wife what tie looks best with my suit before a big event....maybe I end up going with my original choice, but always get a 2nd opinion before making any big decision. If it was just dinner at a restaurant, neither of us cares if I clash. IMO, this 2nd opinion applies especially when a 4 yr contract is longer than their remaining term.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [September 15 at 3:40pm](#)



[Tom Sotos](#) Derek. Let me be clear. This is not a career. I do this on a volunteer basis. I volunteer my time and take my actions and decisions very seriously. My votes are calculated and always take the taxpayers of this district into account.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [September 16 at 7:33am](#)



[Dan Knight](#) [Kathy Meade](#), we elected them to represent us, not treat us like mushrooms.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [September 15 at 3:39pm](#)



[Dan Knight](#) I guess I should have responded to [Kathy Meade](#)'s inane comment. Instead she deleted it.

Go figure.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [September 15 at 10:01pm](#)



[Kathy Meade](#) I like when my elected aldermen get all snarky and call their constituents "inane". It shows a lot of class.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [September 15 at 10:38pm](#)



[Christopher Kueppers](#) Her husband teaches at CPS so her views are different

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [September 16 at 8:02am](#)



[Charlene Foss](#) Jayne Reardon is my hero.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [September 16 at 11:29am](#)



[Tom Sotos](#) Mine too.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [September 16 at 4:29pm](#)



[JC Carlos](#) I too would like to know the contract details before they are agreed upon.

Not because I believe there are under the table agreements being made, but just because I like knowing things sooner rather than later.

If I have the option of knowing something Monday instead of Friday; then I prefer Monday.

I fully believe that any protest that I have to any particular contract terms will go ignored (and I'm fine with that)..... I just want to know stuff when other people know stuff.

Nobody likes to be the last to know.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [September 15 at 3:08pm](#)



[Derek Cadmus](#) Sounds a lot like back room dealings and wink wink handshakes. What are they hiding? These contracts are tax payer funded and transparency is knowing what our elected officials are agreeing to on our behalf. I'm not inferring everything isn't on the up and up, but this seems awfully fishy...much like the storm water contract with Burke.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [September 15 at 2:54pm](#) · [Edited](#)



[Lisa Giambarbere Bascomb](#) Anyone know the names of the 4 who voted against it? Should post those.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [September 16 at 4:45pm](#)



[Tom Skallas Tom Sotos](#) I am proud of you for doing the right thing. Taxpayers deserve to be informed by their elected officials. Those officials should welcome criticism, not fear it. Keep up the good work!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [September 16 at 8:13am](#)



[Tom Sotos](#) Tom thank you. However, Dan is right about one thing. Regardless of how many people come out to approve or protest the contract, we should at the very least put it out before we vote on it. The issue I was trying to bring to light was, how would the community react to the board publicizing the contract even if it meant it was solely for the purpose of viewing it and not being expected to comment vs. posting it and expecting public comment.

The two are very different in nature.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [September 16 at 8:20am](#)



[Tom Skallas Tom Sotos](#) I completely agree. The Board's duty is to disclose, not necessarily create a public approval process. Leaders need to make those decisions. Just not in the cover of darkness.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [September 16 at 8:28am](#)



[Tom Sotos](#) Dan. You should either read the article better or watch the video. You will see that your comments about me are completely incorrect and unnecessary. I want the contract published before we vote on it and I made that clear. I was asking the speaker what her intentions were when she proposed we publish it for a reason. There is a big difference between publicizing the contract for view and going to referendum to ask for the public approval of the contract. I wanted to identify if she expected us to publicize it as a form of informal referendum, where i was expected to listen to the public. My issue with this is clear. If 30 people tell me they don't like it but 10 tell me they do, is that enough of a sample of our community to change my mind about the contract?

Your post about me is reckless for an elected official. You should probably take more care when using your words. As an elected official your words carry more weight then the the average citizen, thus the necessity for you to be more careful when you defecate words.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [September 16 at 7:27am](#) · [Edited](#)



[Dan Knight](#) Huh? "Defecate words"?

My words were chosen carefully after watching the video.

Your asking how many people need talk to you one way or the other in order for you to change you mind is just ridiculous as Ms. Reardon pointed out.

The point is that you should allow taxpayers an educated opportunity to give you input. Then, yes, you and only you formulate the reason(s) for your vote(s).

By your reasoning you don't allow taxpayers a chance to give you that input because...what?, it would be too much for you to digest?
Or by Borrelli's reasoning that it's all too complex for the taxpayers and they might focus in too much one one particular issue or another.

So in the end you allow for about zero input by those paying for the contract you're negotiating nor do you reveal to taxpayers any of the reasoning for where you stand or how you vote in advance of handing taxpayers the bill.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [September 16 at 8:14am](#)




[Tom Sotos](#) I say you defecate because nowhere in my discussion or questioning of the speaker did I say or imply that I didn't agree the contract should be published. In fact I made it clear that I was In favor of publicizing it. I was asking the questions to find out if she (and others) wanted it published so they can have an opportunity simply to view it or if she wanted the opportunity to make her recommendations. It was a fair and important line of questioning, that I needed the answers to. I wanted to understand exactly what she was asking. Finally, nowhere in my line of questioning did I say or imply that if published, I would ignore the response by our community. I simply asked at what level of response do I start listening. If 100 people expressed their opinion but the remaining residence remained silent, would it be prudent of me to take what those 100 people said as a depiction of our entire community. I am in favor of publishing the contract, I would rather publish it and defend my decision to vote for or against it rather than not

publishing it and give guys like you a stupid reason to try and turn it into a transparency issue.


If it is published and you don't like it, the most you can do is complain that I voted for a bad deal or applaud me for voting for a good deal. I'm ok with that as an elected official it is expected to be scrutinized and applauded for my decisions. Decisions I was elected to make for you by the way. I will always listen and take the voters opinions into account, but in the end, wasn't I elected to vote the way I feel is best for our community?

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 [Tom Sotos](#) Do you ask me everything you need to vote on something? If you did ask me and I disagreed with you would you change your vote? Or even more importantly, what if you asked me and I was able to change the way you vote, would you be representing the entire community the way they elected you to.

I haven't always agreed with our communities elected officials and the decisions they have made. The difference between you and I is clear. I voted for certain officials and I will take their entire work as a whole before I decide to vote for them the next go around. I will not stay silent when I agree with the way they vote and speak only when I don't agree. That's a bit cowardly.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [September 16 at 9:18am](#)

 [Robert Trizna](#) [Tom Sotos](#) What's "cowardly," Tom, is saying you're for transparency and accountability but not doing anything to promote it – like personally publishing the tentative agreement, which you should have done already if your self-serving remarks were legit. Here's why:

First of all, I can't find anything in the current agreement that says a tentative agreement cannot be published. But if you disagree, please provide chapter and verse of the current contract – and do so on this FB page so that everybody gets the benefit.

Second, although I don't specialize in school law, I can't find anything in the Illinois Educational Labor Relation Act (115 ILCS 5) that prohibits a school district or an individual school board member from publishing a tentative agreement.

But let's assume that the PREA would file an unfair labor practice charge (a "ULP") with the IELR Board in response to publication. That would confirm what we already know: that the PREA and its members are afraid to let the taxpayers know all the terms of the deal you Board members have cut with them before that deal is signed, sealed and delivered. Having their true colors come out would be a blessing in its own right.


What's the risk?

Under 115 ILCS 5/15, all that the IELR Board appears able to do in response to a ULP charge is to hold a hearing and enter a cease & desist order basically saying: "Don't do that again." And while the IELR Board can award "an appropriate sanction" which "may include an order to pay the other party or parties' reasonable expenses including costs and reasonable attorney's fees" – it appears that can happen only "if the other party [i.e., D-64] has made allegations or denials without reasonable cause and found to be untrue or

has engaged in frivolous litigation for the purpose of delay or needless increase in the cost of the litigation....”

So what are you afraid of, Tom – offending your fellow non-transparent Board members and the highly-paid administrators when you can offend the taxpayers instead?


[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [September 16 at 12:57pm](#) · [Edited](#)

 [Tom Sotos](#) [Robert Trizna](#) I am an elected official, elected by our community to the D64 school Board. Key word being Board. I was not elected to act as an individual. I was elected to act within the democratic process of a board of 6 other elected officials. Elected by the same people who elected me. If I chose to go rogue or start a coup or disgrace the democratic process by ignoring how the other 6 voted, how would that be doing the right thing. Wouldn't be just a selfserving action of a child who was acting out because he didn't get what he wanted.

My only fault is that I was not convincing enough to sway enough votes to agree with me. The board listened, they took into consideration my arguments and the board voted. Regardless of how I feel about the outcome of the vote, it doesn't change the fact that I lost the vote. To go ahead and unilaterally post the agreement without the support of the majority of the board would be more insulting to the voters than me not publishing the document unilaterally. I would be insulting their choice by not honoring their vote when they elected these same officials. I would be disgracing the democratic process that I took oath to uphold.

So no I will not unilaterally post the agreement. I will however go home and feel bad that I wasn't convincing enough to get it published under the proper channels.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [September 16 at 4:41pm](#) · [Edited](#)

 [Robert Trizna](#) [Tom Sotos](#) When it comes to an understanding of representative government, you couldn't find Col. Mustard in the Conservatory with the Candlestick.

You most certainly WERE elected to act “as an individual” – you didn't run as part of a slate or ticket, at least not overtly (because, of course, anybody paying attention knows that you became the PREA's surrogate for Kristin Gruss once she got tossed off the ballot as Greg Bublitz's running mate in 2015) – and I don't recall you running as a candidate of the Rodney King “Can We All Get Along?” Party.

But just for the sport of it, TS, riddle me this: Do you “go rogue” any time you don't vote with the majority? Or this: If you discovered that the Supt. was padding her expense account or otherwise improperly siphoning money from the District, and you lost a Board vote on whether to disclose it to the taxpayers and/or report it to law enforcement, would you stay silent so as not to “go rogue” against the vote of your fellow Board members?

Those are rhetorical questions, Tom, because they're far too hard and uncomfortable for you to answer. But I'd love to see you try.


Actually, you are a “selfserving [sic]...child...acting out” – but you apparently do it only to CYA for your PREA allies and your anti-transparent, anti-accountable fellow Board lemmings and overpaid administrators who arrogantly treat the District's taxpayers as

mindless cash stations that happily pay more for less: less quality of education, less value for their tax dollars, and less transparency and accountability from their Board members who they elected to be stewards of their tax dollars.

As for being “insulting to the voters” and “disgracing the democratic process that [you] took an oath to uphold,” your year-plus on the Board has covered that entire waterfront, twice and maybe even three times. As someone who reflexively votes for almost every closed session Tony “Who’s The Boss” Borrelli proposes, you wouldn’t know “transparency” if it slapped you on the derriere and called you “Sally.”

Feel as bad as you want, but feeling bad doesn't get the job done. If you can't walk the walk, step aside and let someone else try.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [September 17 at 12:11am](#) · [Edited](#)

 [Tom Sotos](#) [Robert Trizna](#) seriously? You continue to claim I am a PREA puppet and replacement for Gruss, yet you have zero proof of this. Plus, I was already in the race well before she was removed.

I was elected as an individual to work with a board of 7 not independently, didn't think I had to explain that to you.

Your riddles make mention of illegal acts, not really comparing apples to apples now are you. But why would you, your argument wouldn't work if you did.

I have been an advocate of our taxpayers and my voting record proves it. I worked with the board to get itemization of student fees. I voted against a multi million dollar expense for vestibules and was able to convince the board not to do them (at least for the time being, still a fight). I voted with the board and was an advocate for residency checks which has saved the district hundreds of thousands. Plus countless other examples you are well aware of, yet conveniently forget or downplay to strengthen your ridiculous claims.

So just because I don't enroll in the Trizna theory of how a board member should act (which by the way is off the wall in my opinion) it doesn't mean I don't care about the taxpayer (of which I am one, and by the way, the taxes I pay equal 3 times what you pay). I vote to go into closed session for issues I believe require closed. The issues that should and can be in open I vote for open.

As for stepping aside, I think not. I made a commitment and I plan to see it through. However, if you feel you can do a better job, a few seats are becoming vacate this next go around, how about you get off your derriere and put your money where your mouth is and run for a board seat. Come sit next to me.

Finally, I do what I believe is right for this district. To me that means balancing the taxpayers needs with the needs of our school system. To me the two go hand in hand. To me it is a partnership between the taxpayers and the schools. The schools rely on the taxpayer to foot the bill and the taxpayers rely on the schools to offer a high quality education (both for the residence who have children in the district and for those who don't but want there property values to stay strong by having a district newcomers want to be a part of.

Yes I agree our schools can be better, they are really good and strong but can be stronger. I don't agree that this can happen over night. It didn't take a year for our schools to fall out of the highest top rankings and it won't take a year to bring them back. It is a work in

progress and I think we have assembled the right parts to make that happen. I also am sure our teachers are committed to the same goal.

Bob, I want a culture where it's the taxpayers and school district of Park Ridge working together against the world. Not us working against each other. Get on board with that and stop trying to pitting the taxpayers against the board and board against the PREA and visa versa.

Maybe you should step aside and spare Park Ridge from having to read your nonsense. No hard feelings, I think you're an intelligent man, just a wee bit over the top.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [September 17 at 12:58am](#)



[Robert Trizna Tom Sotos](#) Transparency – along with Honesty, Integrity and Accountability – aren't "the Trizna theory," but I can see how you would consider them "off the wall" given the way you and your Board operate.

And a mere 24 minutes of last Monday night's D-64 Board meeting video – starting at the 1:03:20 mark – help demonstrate it. Thanks for doing your part there.

Unfortunately, it's you and your fellow board members who are setting the Board against the taxpayers every time you run into closed session, not because you should but just because you can. And you set the Board against the taxpayers every minute that you continue to deprive those taxpayers of the information they need and deserve to make informed decisions about how D-64 is spending their money – in this case, a legal obligation for more than \$200 million over the next 4 years – and the kind of stewardship the current Board members are providing for one of this community's most important institutions and assets.

The saying goes: "If wishes were horses, all beggars would ride." Similarly, if you actually accomplished all the things you claim credit for, we wouldn't even be having this discussion.

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[Christopher Kueppers](#) The biggest burden put on the taxpayers, all done behind closed doors. Shady

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [September 15 at 3:08pm](#)

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