



Sun Staff photo by Pollock

CHELMSFORD TEACHER BERNIE READY
...leads colleagues in chant outside high school

Teacher negotiations in Chelmsford officially enter fact-finding stage

By **CAROL KOPP** 3-11-78
Sun Staff

CHELMSFORD — In the midst of a third mass demonstration by teachers, the contract negotiations between the Chelmsford teachers and the school committee, unresolved for eight months, officially entered the fact-finding stage yesterday.

As about 170 teachers stood outside the front doors to Chelmsford High School calling for an answer to their latest contract proposal, an impasse was declared in a mediation session held only after the school was cleared at 3:30 p.m. and every entrance barred by police officers.

The final mediation session was called to allow school committee response to a new proposal by the Chelmsford Federation of Teachers on the central issue in the contract dispute, a clause sought by the union that would require that any layoffs of tenured teachers be done on a strict basis of seniority and educational qualifications.

AT THE END of an hour-long session, union negotiating committee chairman Bruce Mellin emerged to report to the demonstrators that the school committee negotiators "don't want any part of our proposal, basically."

He indicated that the committee's counter-offer to the union proposal submitted March 2 was altered by only "a couple of lines" from the original offer made to the teachers.

Mellin said that the basic change in the counter-offer was a proposal to require a 12-year seniority level, rather than its former proposal for a 15-year level, before a teacher becomes eligible for full seniority rights.

The mediators had agreed on March 2 that this final proposal by the union, and its response by the school committee, would be the final effort at movement in the mediation process before an impasse was declared.