



Dear Parents and Community Members:

The National School District and the National Elementary Teachers Association (NCETA) are at an impasse in contract negotiations. When a district and a union reach impasse, an impartial third party or mediator is appointed to listen to each side and make recommendations in an attempt to settle differences. The District and NCETA have met with a mediator three times without getting any closer to a negotiated settlement. The mediator has moved the process on to fact finding. Fact-finding is a formal process in which an impartial three-person fact-finding panel will review the arguments and proposals from both sides and issue a set of non-binding recommendations for a settlement.

At the last meeting of the Governing Board, I made the following statement about the negotiation process.

"Tonight we are celebrating excellence in the National School District. We will begin with a student presentation from El Toyon School, we will then honor our volunteer of the month, employees who have worked in the District for 35 years or more and our classified employee and teacher of the year. We have enjoyed outstanding success in our school district and tonight we will be recognizing many of the reasons for that success whether we are talking about the great students who attend our schools or the parents and community members who support our work or the classified staff that works hard every day to make sure our schools are ready for students to learn or the teachers who work hard to meet ever increasing standards for student achievement.

On behalf of the Governing Board, I would like to welcome all of you here tonight. I know that some of you are here to honor the people being recognized. I also know that some of you are here to speak to the Board about your concerns regarding the negotiations process between the District and NCETA. We are glad that you took the time to be here tonight and we are interested in what each of you has to say. Before we move ahead with the agenda, I would like to say a few words about the negotiations process.

We are facing unprecedented economic times in California, the likes of which we have not seen since the Great Depression. The State economic crisis has meant that we have received 22% less money from the State to operate the District. Districts all across the State have been looking to cut the same things to address the budget problem – class size increases, decreases in pay for staff and decreases in work year. Those items have been included in the District's proposal. The Board and I are very much aware that these proposals impact people and we do not make them lightly. No one up here wants to decrease the salary of our employees nor do we want to increase class size. But unfortunately, in these difficult times, we are all going to have to share in the pain. As I look at other Districts in the County, we see settlements involving the exact same elements that are in the District's proposal. For example, for the 2010-11 school year:

*Coronado Unified School District reached a tentative agreement for 7 unpaid furlough days – the equivalent of a 3.5% decrease in pay
South Bay reached a tentative agreement for 7 furlough days and are increasing class size to 26:1
Chula Vista just reached a tentative agreement with their teachers for 5.5 furlough days
NSD and the CSEA classified employees reached a tentative agreement for 6 furlough days*

At the next Governing Board meeting, we will be recommending to the Board that all NSD Management employees – including the Superintendent – will be taking 6 unpaid furlough days.

*The District's current counter proposal to NCETA is **not** our last, best and final offer. We have hoped, since the beginning of negotiations, that we could engage in a meaningful dialogue with the Association on which combination of these options could get us to the \$3 million target, but might also minimize the impact that we would have on employees and students. Unfortunately, that has not occurred and the District and NCETA are far apart. We remain committed, however, to working with NCETA to find a way to get to the \$3 million target that has the least impact on our students and staff. We all share your sense of outrage that we have been forced into making these cuts that directly impact the classroom and children because of the State economic crisis and the politics as usual that is taking place in Sacramento. I remain hopeful that we will be able to work together to get the District through this rough time and that things will ultimately get better."*

I wish you all a very restful summer vacation and look forward to the beginning of another very successful school year that will begin for students on August 23.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Oram".

Christopher Oram, Ed.D.
District Superintendent