



THE DISTRICT'S LAST AND BEST IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH

November 12, 2013

After speaking to our bargaining team I find myself feeling angry, perplexed and more concerned than ever over the quality of leadership at the district level.

On Benefits:

The District put on the table that their contribution to benefits would be a hard cap of \$12,068. That number is what we've said their contribution should be all along based on the 68% of the Kaiser 10/10, Safeguard, Vision and Life family rate. Which by the way, was the district's original proposal. However, they've regressively proposed a hard cap. Why is this a bad thing if the dollar contribution is the same? Because in the future, when health care benefits increase, SEA members will be responsible for 100% of the increase in out of pocket expenses. So while they appear to be giving in to our assertions, their proposal is a take-back. We negotiated the percentage rate based on the fact that the district asked for furlough days last year. To accept this agreement today, would mean that we gave up the furlough days last year for nothing.

Furthermore, by making the benefits offer of \$12,060 in their last best and final offer, they are basically obligating themselves and admitting to what we've been saying all along. This was the district contribution negotiated last year and they absolutely can afford to pay for it. They just outed themselves. Yet, in open enrollment they are unilaterally imposing Brand's made up district contribution. I find the level of stress that he is putting our families through and how he has try to extort concessions using healthcare as a bargaining chip completely unethical.

On Salary:

I believe that our team's latest proposal to the district was more than reasonable. As a matter of fact it was a fairly modest 3% increase in salary retroactive to the beginning of the school year. Their offer of 1.56% increase effective January 1 (not retroactive) is absurd. And their proposal for a 3 year contract where the raise for the second year is 1.8% and for the third year 2.2% is an attempt to lock us at a time when we know that much more funding is coming to California schools thanks to our efforts for passing Prop. 30. What Brand is saying is "Thanks for the hard work. Here are some scraps for you." After years of sacrifice, we deserve more.

On Class Size:

This is the item that is most maddening of all. My predecessor for years reminded the district that the MOU that increased staffing ratio to 31 to 1 and the student contacts to 182 was expiring in June of 2014. That after June, we would return to the contractual staffing ratio of 28 to 1 and student contact maximum of 176. The district of course ignored this, didn't plan for it, didn't budget for it, and now the have the audacity to tell students, parents and teachers that what they want is to cram even more students into the classroom. They proposed an increase in staffing ratio to 31:1 and an increase in student contacts to 187! Let's remember that over the last 4 years we've had this staffing ratio at 31:1 with 182 students. By proposing 187 student contacts they are trying to hide a higher staffing ratio (roughly 37:!) and at the same time making a regressive proposal. Their last proposal both on benefits, and on class size are worse than their original proposal!

Last, Best and Final Offer

When I spoke to Ed Brand last week he said his team would come to the table ready to do whatever it took to reach an agreement. Negotiations started at 10am and by 3pm the district had presented their last, best and final offer. Even after that our bargaining team made one last proposal. The district rejected it and reiterated that they had presented their last best and final offer. The ball is on the district's court. Are they coming back to the table or are they going to declare impasse? It's hard to believe that during the 5 years of financial crisis impasse was always avoided, but now that the financial picture is improving, the district is all but declaring impasse.

It's time to show the District our resolve! Work to the Rule. Show up the next Board meeting. Stay informed.

Sincerely,

Roberto Rodriguez