

Good Evening Trustees, Colleagues, and Community Members,

As we all know, the New Year is a time for firm resolutions and hopeful optimism. It is difficult to remain positive with regards to our current contract negotiations, however, especially with a presentation focused on dire enrollment projections and a recommendation to ignore state law and continue to inflate an already sufficient reserve. Day 2 of Mediation is set for January 14, the day after a budget presentation in Sacramento. Let's hope even a fiscally conservative for-profit organization like School Services will be able to acknowledge the billions of dollars in additional tax revenues and advise districts to invest in people and programs. ETA leadership believes an acceptable compromise exists. Please direct your bargaining team to move to settle. It would make a great resolution and be a marvelous way to start 2016!

Looking at tonight's agenda, we're pleased to see AB 375 as an item for immediate discussion/action. I'll have more to say once we get there, but thank you for getting actively involved in the process. Our advice going forward is, "Don't stop now!" Evergreen needs you to continue to intercede on behalf of teachers and the community as a whole. Here are two glaring examples.

You need to instruct Superintendent Gomez to stop harassing 1st through 6th teachers regarding the PE lawsuit. I realize it's very strong language, but I don't know how else to describe her bizarre behavior. Despite a reasonable compromise worked out with the district's own lawyer, Amy Levine, Superintendent Gomez continued her attempts to intimidate teachers right up until the Winter break. Please direct her to discontinue her counterproductive unilateral actions, and instead work with ETA to respond to this ridiculous litigation. Together we can find ways to counter this attack on public education, yet another useful New Year's resolution!

In addition, Dove Hill needs your help. District management has not been open and transparent with regards to the proposed Meadowfair school. Parents and the community as a whole have a right to be told about plans to close their neighborhood school and given an authentic opportunity to provide input. At the very least, please consider moving the February 11 school board meeting to Dove Hill to allow everyone to have their say. It may be somewhat unpleasant to hear from angry and frustrated members of the public, but, along with being an excellent New Year's resolution, it is your job as elected public officials.

Finally, I'd like to invite you to CTA's school board dinner on Monday, February 22 at 5 PM. If your available and interested, I be happy to provide you with more information.

True collaboration prior to any decision-making is the key if we're going to make progress together in 2016. If I may borrow a phrase from the current political landscape, "Let's make Evergreen great again!"

Thank you.