



Chaboya Middle School

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May 17, 2018

Dear Evergreen School District Board Members:

We are writing to you regarding last week's board meeting on May 10th at Montgomery Elementary School. We had several students who, of their own accord, wished to speak at the board meeting. As educators, we support our students in and out of the classroom; therefore, we attended the meeting to stand with them and give encouragement. When they spoke, the audience of community members was understandably moved. These students showed initiative by putting time and effort into writing their remarks as well as courage by delivering their speeches in a room packed with adults. Their speeches epitomized lessons learned in our classrooms: expressing yourself in writing, citing relevant evidence to support your claims, practicing poise and strong public speaking skills, pushing yourself out of your comfort zone, and taking a stand for your beliefs.

We teachers are humbled by their actions and inspired by their ability to embrace Chaboya's 3 C's, our school's core values. They made a **choice** to voice their opinions. They took a **chance** by choosing to speak at a board meeting. They stood together to create **change** in their school district.

However, we do not believe the School Board shared our same sentiment. We were dismayed when Adya Veeraraghavan's speech was cut short by Board Member Sylvia Alvarez. Upon leaving the podium, Adya was overcome by disappointment and was in tears. We feel that the School Board should have practiced empathy and compassion, especially given that public speaking is a struggle for many students. Granting Adya some flexibility in the form of ten more seconds would have empowered her and showed her she is valued. Instead, the School Board demoralized her. Additionally, when Mindy Tuong saw Superintendent Kathy Gomez on her laptop during "Matters From the Public", Mindy asked Mrs. Gomez if she could pay attention while people are speaking to her. Mrs. Gomez's response--"I'll do what I need to do"--followed by a silent stare, is not how we teachers would respond to our students. Rather, we would provide an explanation in language a thirteen-year-old can understand and avoid punishing innocent inquiry. These are students that wish to understand complex issues and they need our support to foster their growth. Our treatment of these children and their families must show decorum and respect. After all, this is our community and we serve them. We are in this profession for children. We teach, we speak, we fight *for them*. Please join us.

Respectfully,
Chaboya Teachers