



Evergreen Teachers Association

NEW THIS MONTH

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Brian Wheatley's comments from the School Board Meeting on Thursday, November 13th

Pages 1-2

ETA MEMBERS TALK TO THE BOARD

Pages 3-4

T-SHIRT DAYS IN DECEMBER

Page 5

NEGOTIATION NEWS

Page 5

VACATION READING LIST

Page 6

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Page 6

Remember to check the website at etanews.org for more up-to-date information about important events



The President's Message

to the School Board on November 13th, 2014



Good Evening Trustees, Colleagues, and Community Members,

At the risk of having board members once again debating whether I have the right to free speech and spending thousands of dollars on lawyers fees in an attempt to have my comments expunged from the record, I feel the need to respond to Mr. Zito's election day email. In it, he made numerous inaccurate and inflammatory statements about the teachers I represent.

Misleading statement #1 - "Like Unions all over California, the Evergreen Teacher Union has spent over \$25,000 to get their slate of 3 candidates elected."

First of all, while we are definitely and proudly a union, our name is the Evergreen Teachers Association. Not surprisingly, Mr. Zito's dollar figure is grossly exaggerated. We did spend money donated by teachers on pro-education candidates including at the county board level where we helped elect Claudia Rossi, a Morgan Hill Trustee. As documented in the Mercury News, her opponent received \$180,000 in support from the California Charter Schools Association.

#2 - "But I declined the endorsement and any contributions from EESD unions..."

In truth, Mr. Zito was invited to participate last April but refused even to meet with our Recommendations Committee. We did interview him prior to his first term and were so concerned by his lack of understanding of how public education functions including the collective bargaining process that we chose not to endorse him.

#3 - "Our District teachers and staff received a much needed raise in February 2014, and another raise on July 1."

There was no raise July 1, and Mr. Zito failed to mention the agreement to share health benefits costs which also began in February thereby virtually eliminating the raise he described as much needed.

Misleading statement #4 - "However, at our Evergreen District Board meeting on October 9th, the teacher's Union president announced they have opened this year's negotiations with yet another request for a raise over twice the size of their most recent raise."

I made no mention of the specifics of the proposal during my public comments on October 9th. Doing so would be both inappropriate and illegal. I don't believe my remarks have been erased from last month's minutes at least not yet if anyone feels the need to verify their accuracy. In reality, the district negotiated a three-year deal that included a re-opener for a salary increase in 2014-15, and we are simply attempting to help the Evergreen School District follow through on its contractual agreements.

As president of the Evergreen Teachers Association, I believe negotiations should be a collaborative undertaking where both sides seek common ground on which to base an agreement. My hope going forward is Mr. Zito will cease his confrontational tactics and repeated attempts to bargain in public. Under the Employer-Employee Relations Act (EERA), doing so is defined as an unfair labor practice. I suggest he stop trying to micromanage the district and allow the process to reach its logical conclusion. At that point if he must continue to undermine his own management team by voting against it, so be it.

I'll conclude with a quote from Lily Eskelsen Garcia, president of the National Education Association. I encourage you to listen to her speech in its entirety on our website, ETAnews.org

"When it comes to fighting for our kids we never hold back and we never give up. Voters know what we know - when families do better, kids do better. On this fundamental lesson, the public is on our side."

Thank you.

[Brian Wheatley](#), ETA President
408-272-0601

ETA Members Speak to the Board

Comments from the November 19th Meeting

Stephanie Hunt

Montgomery Elementary School

Good evening. My name is Stephanie Hunt, and currently I live in the nation's fifth most expensive city, San Jose. For the past 17 years I have taught at the Evergreen Elementary School District at Montgomery School. When I was hired in August of '97, Evergreen enjoyed a sterling reputation; boasting the challenge of a diverse student population, professional development opportunities, collaborative collegiality, an atmosphere of respect toward teachers, and yes, competitive pay. Evergreen was a natural first choice for me, and I was thrilled at being hired here.

Due to the economic downturn, from 2007 to 2012 we teachers sacrificed raises, COLAs, and class size reduction. In 2012, monetary support for public education began to flow in again. Several education bond measures passed, Proposition 30 passed, Governor Jerry Brown earmarked money for schools, the economy was rebounding, and due largely to our stagnating salaries the district's budget reserve ballooned to over 20 million dollars. Because the reserve is supposed to cap at three million, or 3%, we teachers expected to see long awaited salary increases. Conversely, our district offered us nothing.

What ensued was 18 long, horrible months of what became acrimonious negotiations after which teachers, (largely due to battle fatigue) agreed to a 3% salary increase and a 50% share of health insurance increases. Sadly, in less than a year, the health insurance increase out of pocket has absorbed the 3%, and we are now returned to nothing since 2007. Furthermore, the cumulative rate of inflation since 2007 is 15%, so basically Evergreen teachers have been in declining salary since 2007.

Research supports that within education, working conditions characterized by respect for teachers, trust in their ability as professionals, and proper support create an atmosphere that retains teachers, important factors to consider as 46% of US teachers leave the profession in the first five years, costing the US billions.

In juxtaposition, here's a brief summary of our current working conditions. Most injurious is the continued decline of teacher pay at Evergreen. Additionally, we contend with slashed school budgets, time-sapping, micromanaging administration, and continued backlash from the 13 years of absurdity that was NCLB; all against a backdrop of the expectation that new, more robust Common Core standards be implemented effectively and efficiently despite the skeletal support we've experienced thus far toward that end.

The teachers who have weathered all of this and are still standing are a resilient, intelligent, resourceful bunch. We are the fierce patriots that know that public education is the cornerstone of democracy, and that quality public education, wherein 90% of the nation's students attend, is essential for churning out what Common Core states as its primary goal: a college and career ready citizenry, capable of participating in society at a high level in an increasingly global world.

I am eager and excited to say goodbye to NCLB and usher in a new era of Common Core Standards, and I will work hard to implement them effectively. I am confident that I speak for Evergreen teachers when I say that. We are a committed, hard working bunch. It is a time of amazing transformation in education, but the bottom line is that it is high time that our pay transforms as well.

Thank you.

Jeff Beckley

O.B. Whaley Elementary School

Good Evening,

I am Jeff Beckley from O.B. Whaley and I have a little rhyme for you about being thankful:

As I sat yesterday
Just a pondering my navel,
I figured I had much
For which to be thankful

I'm thankful for
The flowers, the birds, and the
bees
And the fact that my bellybutton
Has not yet reached my knees

I am thankful for my colleagues
Who make work worthwhile
I am thankful for the children
For whom learning brings a smile

I am thankful for parents
Who help and who care
And realize it takes much work
For a teacher to prepare

I appreciate vacation
A needed time of rest
A time to reenergize
So we can give it our best

I am thankful for love,
Respect, and caring
That makes the world
A good place for sharing

And since it is a time for
Thanksgiving and gratitude
I simply don't understand
The District's Bad Attitude

Toward the teachers they employ
Who creatively educate the
masses
Do you not see it?
Do you need glasses?

For as plain as the nose
In front of your face
Are the overworked teachers
Working at a breakneck pace

To implement Common Core
And PBL lessons
With very little guidance
With no manipulatives in their
possession

With this you have added a multi-
tude
Of work hours to our day
It's time for you to say thanks
And increase our pay

If you really are serious
About attracting and retaining
Quality Teachers in this district
Well, your options are waning

If you only add to the workload
And you don't increase pay
How will you attract teachers
To work and to stay

Where you do not give them thanks
Only tell them they must do more
Using your same tired line
About a district going poor

Well, it's time to start waxing
Stop with all the lies and deceit
You have the money
Why are you shuffling your feet?

When you told principals all to
spend down their SIP funds
Well, frankly, we all were totally
stunned
This was a first in this district's His-
tory

You helped create your deficit
spending
Your own self-fulfilling prophecy
A shameful game. A terrible sham.
Why not just pay us

And stop trying to scam
The teachers by telling the public
that
You're in a jam
When you're really in a position

To do the right thing
And to show us your thanks
Let loose of the strings
For teachers deserve a chance

At a fair living wage
To call us greedy for asking
Is a terrible outrage
It's ludicrous and mean

It's an outright poke
In the eye of all teachers
As we slowly go broke
You have no right to ask us

To do more for and with less
As you take a percentage on your
salary
That you never repress
In this time of thanksgiving

You could and should show that
you care
You have plenty of money
Your budget is not threadbare
Unlike the clothes
Your teachers will wear

To take as you give to yourselves
Is simply not fair
So please be thankful
For the difficult job that we do

And please say thanks to your
teachers
With some more and much needed
revenue.
Happy Thanksgiving, you should
try it some time!

A Sea of Green

Don't Forget to Wear Your ETA T-Shirt!



Please plan on wearing your new ETA shirt on School Board Thursdays in December (the 4th and the 11th).

In addition, wearing it on negotiation days (Dec. 8th and 17th) is a great way to show support for our intrepid negotiators

Contact Brian Wheatley if you didn't receive a shirt or need to exchange it for a different size.

Negotiations News

Visit etanews.org for the most up-to-date information!

The District and ETA negotiating teams met on Monday, December 8th, 2014 for a negotiations re-opener.

The District made the following offer:

- [1] 1% on schedule increase beginning start of 14/15 school year;
- [2] 2 District Thursdays per year for 14/15 and 15/16 for purposes of grade level planning; and
- [3] A one time .5% increase for 14/15

The ETA Team offered **one** of the following:

- [1] A 4.5% increase to the salary schedule for the 14/15 school year; or

- [2] A 4.25% increase to the salary schedule for the 14/15 school year.

Additionally included as part of option [2]:

A change to Article 7.2 to read:

The District shall provide all elementary schools and 6th grades housed at the junior high schools one minimum day per week. First, Second, Third, and Fourth Thursdays are for teacher planning. Fifth Thursdays shall be for district and/or school in-services.

And a change in Article 7.6 to read:

Unassigned preparations time shall be provided for grades TK, K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and SDC teachers as follows:

7.6.1 Two (2) 45 minute prep periods every week, excluding the following three (3) weeks:

1. First week of school
2. Last week of school
3. Week of Parent-Teacher Conferences

Vacation Time Reading

Some are “teacher” books. Some are just good reads.

1. ***Look Me in the Eye: My Life With Asperger’s* by John Elder Robison**
Robison was diagnosed with Asperger’s syndrome at the age of 40. That understanding transformed the way he saw himself—and the world.
2. ***Doctor Sleep* by Stephen King**
A sequel to King’s novel *The Shining*. “What happened to Danny?” a fan asked King at a book signing. This book is King’s response.
3. ***Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America’s Public Schools* by Diane Ravitch**
In a chapter-by-chapter breakdown Ravitch puts forth a plan for what can be done to preserve and improve our public schools. She makes clear what is right about U.S. education, how policy makers are failing to address the root causes of educational failure, and how we can fix it. Do you agree with her arguments?
4. ***Unbroken: A WWII Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption* by Laura Hillenbrand**
The biography of Louie Zamperini—a juvenile delinquent-turned-Olympic runner-turned-Army hero-turned POW. Read the book before going to see the movie!
5. ***Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**
A powerful, tender story of love, race, and identity centered around a young man and woman from Nigeria who face difficult choices and challenges in the countries they come to call home.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Visit etanews.org for more information and updated events!

- ◆ **Dec. 8th:** Negotiations Day 4, Mt. Hamilton
- ◆ **Dec. 9th:** Rep Council Holiday Celebration, Mt. Hamilton at 3:45 p.m.
- ◆ **Dec. 11th:** School Board Meeting, District Office at 6:30 p.m.
- ◆ **Dec. 17th:** Negotiations Day 5, District Office