



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Evergreen Teachers Association**

*Engaging Students, Involving Families, & Empowering Teachers since 1963*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***School Starts in Evergreen District with No Contract, Again –  
Educators to Picket Wednesday Before and After Classes  
Evergreen Teachers Determined to ‘Stand Up for Our Students’***

**SAN JOSE** – Frustrated Evergreen School District teachers will gather before and after school on the first day of the new school year Wednesday to protest the district’s lack of respect and refusal to invest in educators in contract talks that have dragged on for well over a year.

Teachers originally asked for a modest 0.5% salary increase while trying to protect lower class size in TK – 3 grades. “We’re baffled by the district’s abject refusal to move towards a reasonable settlement,” said Brian Wheatley, president of the 520-member Evergreen Teachers Association (ETA).

He noted these lowlights of the district’s draconian bargaining proposal:

- 0% salary increase for educators.
- Increase TK-3<sup>rd</sup> grade class sizes from 24:1 to 27:1 ratios.
- Health Trust no longer funded by district.
- Upper grade art classes reduced.

In an effort to emphasize how disheartened they are by the district’s continued bad behavior, Evergreen teachers took a strike authorization vote in June during the last week of that school year, and 96% voted “Yes!” A factfinding hearing with a neutral, state-appointed party is set for Sept. 17. If no settlement is reached through that hearing process, the district will be legally allowed to impose their “last, best and final” offer, and ETA leaders will be able to call a strike, if necessary.

Wheatley said Evergreen teachers continue to be inspired by what educators in West Virginia, Oklahoma, Kentucky and Arizona have recently accomplished for students and communities with strikes and protests. “We are only asking for a modest raise to cover out-of-pocket healthcare costs and are tired of the constant disrespect,” Wheatley said. “We want to settle and get back to what we do best – teaching – but we will continue to stand up for our students and ourselves!”

--**WHAT:** Protests and picketing over stalled contract talks before and after classes at all 18 schools in San Jose’s Evergreen School District.

--**WHEN and WHERE:** The protests begin at 7:30 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 22. ETA President Brian Wheatley will be available for interviews at Millbrook School, 3200 Millbrook Drive, San Jose, 95148.

Evergreen Teachers Association is affiliated with the California Teachers Association with 325,000 members and the National Education Association with 3.2 million members.