

August 6, 2017

Dear Superintendent Skorkowsky,

I am writing to you as I am very concerned about the latest upheaval over our current contract negotiations. I am completely frustrated by the ongoing problems that occur every year during contract negotiations. Every year our families' health care and living wage becomes an issue and battle. Call me naïve, but I don't understand the issues. I don't understand why every organization/union must negotiate separately to get funding for health insurance. Why does the district pay separate amounts for each union group with different levels of coverage? Why aren't our insurance payments a basic cost and the same quality of care for everyone from support staff to administration and everyone in between? My second issue is the fact that the district continues to refuse to pay the company that teachers decided to use, long before I came into the district. Teacher's Health Trust was started because of companies like United Health Care, who increase their rates every year.

You keep wanting to put us on a plan that people want to replace. My parents elected to leave United Health Care due to the poor service and the amount of money it was costing them as retirees and the increases that came with it. Support staff is constantly saying how they have yet another increase from United Health Care and their salaries are not increasing to cover the costs. Now, CCEA has given information that shows that any teacher who is on a family plan will increase their monthly cost by over \$600 a month! With no cap on how much United Health Care will increase every year. How is that in the best interest of any teacher? A third issue is from the letter the district sent out about why it must once again freeze teacher pay. It was negotiated that we were to be allowed to increase our steps every year, and yet for the 5th time in the last 9 school years the district wants to freeze our step increases.

Also, we haven't had a real cost of living increase since the 2008-2009 school year. From 2009 – 2013 there wasn't any cost of living increases, according to the Las Vegas Sun when they reported the 1% cost of living increase teachers would be getting with the ratification of the 2013-2014 contract, in the article "CCSD teachers' contract approved, paving way for pay increases." The last cost of living increase was 2.6% with the last contract from 2015 -2017, which was lower than the national cost of living increase. In the private sector cost of living increases usually occur every year ranging from 2.5 to 3%, in education they occur once every 5-10 years and must be negotiated. The only increases we get are the yearly steps and the district has constantly frozen step increases over the last 9 years.

I often hear people questioning why there is a shortage of teachers. You don't have to look far to figure out why people are not walking but running away from teaching. Depending on the outcome of these negotiations will depend on if I can afford to stay in Clark County as an educator. I am a single mom raising 2 children. I can NOT afford to pay an extra \$600 a month for questionable health care or not to get my step increases (which I have always considered my personal cost of living increase).

I am asking that as everyone gathers around the negotiation table again, you consider what this impact has on everyone. I don't have a golden parachute clause in my contract, or even the ability to negotiate for myself, so I am asking that you fund teachers' health care to the same level as yourself and other administrators and you do it to our preferred company instead of refusing to increase the districts contributions because the district doesn't like the company teachers have chosen. I am also asking that you not freeze our salaries once again. I understood it once, but now it is past the point of understanding and becoming a yearly business practice for CCSD. Let's figure out how we can pay our teachers more what they are worth for the time, effort, energy and money, they put into their classes each year to make the gains and improvements we are all striving for.

Sincerely,

D. Louise Pell