



Newport-Mesa Federation of Teachers
2900 Bristol Street, Suite C107
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
(714) 754-6638



June 16, 2015

Dear Colleagues,

It is regrettable that we have been unable to reach agreement with the district during our reopener negotiations for the 2015-16 school year. The main barrier to our reaching an agreement involved the longstanding issue of inequitable preparation time for our K-3 teachers. Despite our efforts to secure 30 minutes of guaranteed preparation time for the 2015-16 school year and 90 minutes of guaranteed preparation time for the 2016-17 school year, the district would not agree to safeguard this valuable time needed to prepare for instruction from mandatory collaboration meetings. The district wouldn't even agree to give the K-3 teachers 2 substitute release days! We were willing to increase the elementary instructional minutes in order to allow for K-3 preparation time. By including "collaboration" meetings within the definition of conference/preparation time, the district could force K-3 teachers to forego valuable preparation time to work with your colleagues on Principal directed assignments, paperwork unrelated to instruction, and other directed tasks.

Over the years we have fought hard to define collaboration meetings as mandatory meetings under the terms of our Contract. While we often voluntarily collaborate during our preparation time, there is no requirement that we do so. Under the terms of our Agreement, collaboration meetings must occur within the 4- hour limitation of mandatory meetings. The district has failed to recognize that K-3 teachers have the same need for preparation time as teachers in grades 4-12. The district has the same expectations of K-3 teachers as all other teachers, however they are not provided the same resource of preparation time.

It really is a matter of respect for the job that we do and we are merely demanding equitable treatment.

The district wanted us to accept 2 additional professional development days, which would increase our work year from 186 to 188 days using a calculation that would not fully compensate us at the regular daily rate. They wanted us to increase secondary class size from 180 to 186. They wanted to impose a uniform 8-period block schedule on comprehensive high schools, which would deprive staff of their contractual right to conduct a waiver vote.

The district may lead you to believe that we walked away from a salary increase and an enhancement to our medical benefits package, but we have been fighting for increased salaries, increased benefits, and improved working conditions, and the district's offer fell short on righting a historical wrong. We could not accept a meager raise and a slight increase of the district's contribution to benefits in the face of enormous salary increases for the superintendent and high-level district administrators. We all deserve a meaningful increase to our salaries and benefits.



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After months of negotiating, and last week's 17-hour bargaining session ending at **1:23 am**, we met again tonight with high hopes. Tonight, the district presented its Last, Best, and Final offer. This offer contained the condition that if we did not agree to all terms the district would remove the two additional staff development days and the offer of 30 minutes guaranteed preparation time. Because we could not agree to these unfavorable conditions tonight, we left the bargaining table at **9:39 pm**.

We are open to resuming negotiations when the district demonstrates a willingness to give consideration to our demand for equity.

In solidarity,

Your NMFT Bargaining Team