

Presented June 16, 2010

Good Evening Board President, members, administration and colleagues. I am unable to be in attendance this evening, for a very good reason, my niece is graduating from Rio del Valle Junior High at 6 p.m., but I have asked a CSEA Executive Board member to read this on my behalf.

I am angry that the interim Superintendent's contract was approved last week while we are still paying the salary of a superintendent on administrative leave. I know you cannot divulge information regarding his leave from our district, but we don't have the money to pay for 2 superintendents.

We also do not have the money to continue to pay the district's law firm hundreds of thousands of dollars, which at one point reached over \$1.1 million. What is the Oxnard School District doing wrong that we need to spend so much money on attorney fees? Meanwhile, in a neighboring unified school district this year they spent approximately \$200,000 in legal fees including outside counsel. The amount of money the Oxnard School District is spending on legal fees is wrong on so many levels. This is money that needs to return to the classrooms now!!!

Last year 2 board members approached an in house attorney to find out what needed to be done to bring an in house attorney on board in the Oxnard School District, everything was set in motion, a job description was developed, an eligibility list was presented to the Personnel Commission and interviews were held. An attorney was offered the job and then something happened and she decided not to accept it. Then there was a Study session held at the end of February to interview a law firm, and it was the law firm that is now employed by the district and the law firm of the attorney who was offered the job. They both presented lower billing fees. After that study session no one heard anything else about an in house attorney for the Oxnard School District. We can't afford NOT to have an attorney in house. The budget deficit is not going to get better right away, so you have to make adjustments in the spending of money.

If we as CSEA have to sit at the negotiations table in 2011 to decide who loses a job, gets their hours reduced, reductions of their salary or we have to begin using furlough days then the employees aren't the only ones losing out. Our students and their families are losing out on their education of which you are

the guardians. Really think about what you are doing with tax payer money.

Tonight you are making a decision regarding the Early Retirement Incentive. The recommendation is that CSEA not receive it because not enough employees retired to make a savings. These are loyal employees that have been here between 20 to 40 years. So, they will not be able to receive a well deserved incentive to retire after all their years of service to the students, families and the community, but we can pay 2 superintendents and attorney fees into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Where is your loyalty to the employees and their families after so many years of service?

Finally, in my 37 years of service to the Oxnard School District there have been times, throughout the years, where decisions were made and I was ashamed, but this is the first time in my career that I am not proud to be a part of this district.

Thank you for listening,

Clara

*Clara Ramos, Union President
Classified Employees
Oxnard Elementary School District*