

Thank you for this opportunity to address you on behalf of the classified employees. I just wanted to share some thoughts we have on the items you will be discussing tonight.

Our union's negotiations team continues to work collaboratively with the district in trying to find ways to address the looming budget shortfall. We have had some great discussions and have come up with some very creative ideas that we are anxious to get your feedback on them.

For the past couple of years, it seems, we have been operating under the premise of "Doing more, with less". It is a sad fact that with the economy we are in today, we have no other choice. Many of the suggestions that you have received from both the community and the employees expand on this theme. There are many suggestions we have heard from the community regarding pay freezes or pay cuts. However well intentioned some of these suggestions are, there are a few facts that everyone should know.

One fact about employees in Carlsbad Unified, that I don't think a lot of people understand, is that we do not get pay raises every year. For Classified staff, after the first 5 years of employment, we move into longevity steps, where our pay is exactly the same for 5 year increments, before it goes up. Absent a promotion, or a Cost of Living Increase, which we haven't had for many years, a classified employee's pay rate is 'frozen' for those 5 years. In fact, with the yearly increases of the cost of health insurance, since we pay a percentage of that cost, our take home pay actually decreases from year to year while we are on our longevity steps. I just thought that was a difference that is important for every one to understand.

Finally, one idea the Board is being asked to consider is delaying the opening of Sage Creek High School, which would impact both staff, students and parents. Tonight, we are asking the Board of Trustees to consider leading by example, and consider delaying their search for a new Superintendent.