October 20, 2017

Dear CUSD Community:

For many months, the Capistrano Unified School District’s (CUSD) and the Capistrano Unified Educators Association’s (CUEA) negotiating teams have been meeting to negotiate an agreement. To date, a complete agreement has not been reached.

On October 17, 2017, the teams met a third time with a mediator. The teams were unable to reach an agreement and the mediator stated that she would be sending the parties to fact-finding, the next stage in a defined process aimed at reaching an agreement.

The District has shared two last best final offer options to CUEA, as outlined below. Either offer would result in on-going expenditure that exceeds budgeted revenue and revenue projections, resulting in moderate but manageable reductions in District programs, without the need for class size increases.

The first is a one-year offer that includes the following:

1. A 3.5 percent one-time payment to all teachers and unit members
2. A temporary increase to the Health & Welfare benefits cap such that Kaiser would be “no out-of-pocket” and the HMO plans would receive the same dollar increase, with a match for the following year
3. Anchor the Master’s Degree Stipend into the salary schedule so that as salaries increase, the stipend would also increase
4. Extend Elementary Supervision at recess for one year to provide valuable time for teachers to plan and prepare
5. Extend the Physical Education (PE) Pilot Initiative, which strives to limit the number of students to 50 or less per PE class
6. Provide a one-year extension on Summer Professional Learning for teachers
7. Provide compensation for Special Education Summer Assessments for teachers who work during the summer to assess children with IEP’s
8. Strengthen the Health & Welfare Benefits Committee to identify opportunities for savings and cost reductions in an effort to reduce the burden of yearly cost increases to the District and employees

9. Implement full-day kindergarten at the following schools (and eventually District-wide), to provide all-day instruction for working families’ kids, similar to the private schools in our community:

- Carl Hankey Elementary
- Clarence Lobo Elementary
- Del Obispo Elementary
- Harold Ambuehl Elementary
- Hidden Hills Elementary
- Kinoshita Elementary
- Marblehead Elementary
- R.H. Dana Elementary
- Tijeras Creek Elementary
- Wagon Wheel Elementary
- Wood Canyon Elementary

The second offer we shared with CUEA is a three-year proposal that includes the following highlights:

1. A 1.5 percent ongoing salary increase, effective July 1, 2016
2. A permanent increase to the Health & Welfare benefits cap
3. Anchor the Master’s Degree Stipend into the salary schedule so that as salaries increase, the stipend would also increase
4. An early retirement incentive during the 2017-2018 school year, which would provide a benefit to retiring teachers and prospective savings to the District
5. Extend Elementary Supervision at recess for one year to provide valuable time for teachers to plan and prepare
6. Extend the Physical Education (PE) Pilot Initiative, which strives to limit the number of students to 50 or less per PE class
7. Provide a one-year extension on Summer Professional Learning for teachers
8. Provide compensation for Special Education Summer Assessments for teachers who work during the summer to assess children with IEP’s
9. Strengthen the Health & Welfare Benefits Committee to identify opportunities for savings and cost reductions in an effort to reduce the burden of yearly cost increases to the District and employees

10. Under this 3-year option, the District would reopen negotiations with CUEA on MOU’s and health and welfare benefits in 2018-19, which would allow us to identify cost reductions in the Health & Welfare Benefits Committee and then initiate cost reductions in negotiations.

11. Implement full-day kindergarten at the schools listed above (and eventually District-wide), to provide all-day instruction for working families’ kids, similar to the private schools in our community.

As I have stated previously, our Board of Trustees and District leadership value the commitment and dedication of our teachers and certificated staff. We greatly appreciate the extraordinary education provided to our students by teachers and certificated staff. It is always our desire to recognize our teachers and staff for their work while also ensuring that our District budget remains fiscally sound.

It is appropriate for the District to acknowledge the uncertainties of future state funding, especially in light of the very broken Local Control Funding Formula that was created in Sacramento, which continues to severely underfund Districts such as ours and does not promise to increase funding in the future.

To ensure we are protecting our District, our taxpayers and students, we insist on building and maintaining a responsible budget that strikes a balance between recognition of the work of our teachers while acknowledging the challenges of our facilities maintenance needs for which the state provides no dedicated funding, and the increased costs pushed down from the state to pay for employee pension benefits.

We remain hopeful that we can reach agreement soon and without proceeding to fact-finding.

Sincerely,

Ryan Burris
Chief Communications Officer