

June 7, 2021

Dear School Board Members,

On Friday June 4, CSEA and LFT Leadership were made aware that Deputy Superintendent Bree Valla had informed our long-time negotiations facilitator Jim Walker, whose contract with LUSD expires June 30, that the School Board was pushing to replace him with another facilitator. Ms. Valla specifically informed Mr. Walker that the School Board was seeking to use the services of Jim Brown, who has been running the Board workshops that have been ongoing throughout this year. Neither CSEA nor LFT was informed of this decision prior to Mr. Walker receiving notice from the Deputy Superintendent, and we only learned of this decision from Mr. Walker himself.

Then, over the weekend, we discovered through inquiries made to School Board members that the School Board had not, in fact, made any such request to seek a replacement for Mr. Walker, nor had any discussion on the topic ever been held between District management and the School Board.

We also learned of an email sent to the School Board from Superintendent Trevor McDonald on Saturday where Mr. Walker was quoted out of context and without noting that he was responding to Ms. Valla's email informing him that the School Board wished to engage the services of Jim Brown in his place. The Superintendent's email created the impression that Mr. Walker would not be available for in-person meetings and no longer had a desire to work with LUSD. At the last negotiations with both LFT and CSEA, at which a Board member was present, Mr. Walker clearly stated that he looked forward to continuing our negotiations and would be happy when we could meet in person.

To be clear, both CSEA and LFT Leadership are outraged over these discoveries. Jim Walker has effectively served as the negotiations facilitator in both CSEA's and LFT's bargaining sessions with the District for ten years. He is respected by all parties because he is fair, knowledgeable, and has skillfully helped both unions resolve periods of tension and conflict with the District at various points in his ten-year history working in our District.

Both CSEA and LFT were expecting to continue into the next school year with Jim Walker in negotiations. Both unions are currently in the middle of important work with Mr. Walker—CSEA is in the process of creating and committing to its relationship compact with the District, while LFT has yet to finish this year's contract negotiations cycle. To lose him at this moment is in neither CSEA's nor LFT's interest. Without him as our facilitator, our current and future work in negotiations with the District would be impaired, to the detriment of our respective memberships.

Additionally, both CSEA and LFT each respectively have an Always Consult Before Deciding (ACBD) agreement with the District in place which requires parties to notify one another before major decisions are made that could impact relations. District management failed to live up to this ACBD agreement, both when notifying Mr. Walker that the Board wanted to seek another facilitator and when on Sunday they unilaterally cancelled all upcoming negotiation sessions that were currently scheduled for CSEA and LFT negotiations.

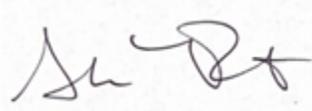
One of the core tenets of the interest-based bargaining process we use in negotiations is trust. Because of the events of the past few days, we are now deeply concerned by management's misrepresentation of the will of the School Board. We have no choice but to question other instances in which the District has claimed to speak on behalf of the Board, including instances that have recently arisen in closed-door labor-management negotiations. Moving forward, both CSEA and LFT fully intend to be vigilant in monitoring discussion at School Board meetings and fact-checking any future instance in which District management claims to be speaking on behalf of the Board.

CSEA and LFT both are committed to doing everything we can to convince Mr. Walker to renew his contract with LUSD. We were relieved to learn late yesterday afternoon that District management has agreed to the terms now set forth by Mr. Walker that he requires as a means to repair the trust that has been broken. In the interest of all members of CSEA's and LFT's bargaining units, we urge the Board to vote to renew his contract, which we hope to see on the next School Board agenda.

In unity,



Jerry White
President, CSEA Lompoc Chapter 257



Skyler Petersen
President, LFT Local 3151