

Update on Negotiations with DSTA
A Report from
Desert Sands Unified School District Negotiating Team
April 12, 2010

On March 31, 2010, Desert Sands Unified School District and Desert Sands Teachers' Association opened negotiations for the 2010/2011 school year. The teams began by reviewing and quickly reaching agreement on ground rules. An update on the 2010/2011 school year budget and the newest information on Health and Welfare Benefits (which includes a 13% rate increase) were provided. The tenor of the day was one of productive collaboration.

The District communicated to the DSTA bargaining team its priorities for bargaining which are:

- ◆ **To continue providing the best quality education for our students**
- ◆ **To retain our highly qualified and trained teaching staff**
- ◆ **To keep class sizes as low as possible**
- ◆ **To remain fiscally solvent**

Leaving no stone unturned in trying to save jobs, the District verbally proposed a work year reduction of five (5) days for the 2010/2011 school year for certificated employees. **If the teams agree to shortening the school year by five (5) days, every saved dollar will be used for enabling the District to reduce certificated layoffs.** In this way, the District will be able to maintain lower class sizes and reemploy as many teachers as possible.

Our sole purpose for this proposal is to use the shortened school year as a positive way for certificated employees to maintain high educational standards by protecting teachers' class sizes and minimizing certificated layoffs in the face of a debilitating \$14.8 million deficit.

DSTA agreed to poll their unit members regarding the shortened school year proposal prior to our April 21st negotiations meeting.

Approximately, 125 certificated employees have submitted their retirement letters and PARS packets to the District. We are grateful for the many years of extraordinary contributions by our retiring certificated staff. We also thank them for the positive impact that this will have on both the budget and in saving teachers' jobs.

The teams will be meeting again today, April 12th.