

February 2, 2010

**Initial Proposals of the
Desert Sands Unified School District to the
Desert Sands Teachers Association, CTA/NEA**

INTRODUCTION

These are times of unprecedented economic challenges for California and public education, including the Desert Sands Unified School District. The ongoing state budget crisis has had and will continue to have a profound adverse impact on the District. The need to prepare for significant expenditure reductions is certain, including costs represented in our negotiated agreement.

The precise amount of such reductions necessary to preserve our solvency is uncertain due to forces beyond any district's local control; however, the Board is required to adopt a balanced budget for 2010-2011 (and to project a balanced budget for two more years) by June 30, 2010, based on projected state revenues and District expenditures as we know them today. The District must begin making innumerable staffing decisions as early as February for the 2010-2011 school year. Therefore, changes in bargaining unit costs must be proposed now and agreed to swiftly in order to implement them as soon as possible.

There are options that do not require negotiations. For example, this month the District will begin making staffing decisions for the 2010-2011 school year. The severity of a layoff for certificated employees, however, could be lessened if the parties are able to address and implement negotiable cost-saving measures and significant reductions in bargaining unit costs.

Based on the economic and time challenges before us, the District believes that the parties must (1) work together to understand the District's fiscal concerns, needs, and realities; (2) explore options for addressing the above through contractual changes; and (3) continue to negotiate with each other in a constructive and collaborative manner that produces agreement that both parties can live with now and for the future.

These proposals are based on substance and need and criteria which represent the core beliefs of the Board and District. Consideration of and responses to Union proposals will also be guided by these criteria.

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Initial Proposals of the Desert Sands Unified School District to the
Desert Sands Teachers Association, CTA/NEA (continued)

CRITERIA FOR PROPOSED CHANGES TO NEGOTIATED AGREEMENT:

The Criteria are best expressed through the District's Core Values stating OUR BELIEFS that:

- Desert Sands Unified School District seeks to provide a high quality educational program that fosters outstanding student achievement.
- Desert Sands Unified School District equitably allocates resources to benefit all students.
- Desert Sands Unified School District seeks to provide a fair and competitive total compensation package to its employees, enabling the District to recruit and retain high quality staff.
- Desert Sands Unified School District is required to maintain fiscal solvency and ensure that our financial obligations for the current and subsequent years are met. The budgeted expenditures support the District Strategic Plan.
- Desert Sands Unified School District shall provide a safe and secure environment which is essential to student and staff morale and achievement.
- Desert Sands Unified School District will conduct communications and maintain relationships in a manner that is both ethical and respectful.

DISTRICT INITIAL PROPOSAL FOR CONTRACT CHANGES:

1. **ARTICLE 13 -- SALARY, HEALTH AND WELFARE BENEFITS**
2. **ARTICLE 14 -- SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT SALARY SCHEDULE**

The District seeks to explore different options for reducing expenditures including but not limited to suspension of salary schedule advancement and reduction of all certificated salary schedules including but not limited to extra compensation for extra duties. The District would also like to discuss furlough days or reduction in work year in the context of a salary reduction. The District will further propose to examine options for health plan design changes to further reduce costs of health benefits.

The District looks forward to straightforward, constructive and expeditious negotiations with the Association consistent with the values expressed above.