

Calexico Teachers Push For New Contract

By Mario Conde

The Associated Calexico Teachers attended the last school board meeting to ask the district to reach an agreement regarding their salary.

Teachers packed the Calexico School Board meeting room last Thursday, June 8, as they asked the board to move in the negotiations and agree to increase their salary. James Taylor, ACT President, said that the holdup in this year's negotiations is that the district refuses to move in negotiations and stuck to their original proposal which was to give them a three percent salary adjustment.

"Right now, in our county, out of all the major school districts, Calexico teachers are paid the least," Taylor said, "We had an English teacher position open in Calexico since September that they cannot fill because there are no teachers to fill them, but beyond that, there are no teachers that want to come to Calexico to teach that position because of things like our salary."

Taylor questioned how the district can bring qualified teachers to Calexico when they are the lowest paid in the valley compared to other districts. He also mentioned that CUSD is funded more than any other district since they have a higher percentage of students in need.

"California bases their budget for schools on the number of English learners, foster youth, and students who come from low income families," Taylor stated. "Calexico is funded far more because we have the highest amount of students with the most need but they (CUSD) are not addressing those needs by bringing in qualified educators."

In 2015, the school board approved a Memorandum of Understanding with the Associated Calexico Teachers to extend on-site time for teachers and instructional minutes for grades 9-12. The 2015-16 School Year required 64,800 instructional minutes in grades 9-12. Instructional minutes for Grades 9-12 at Calexico High School increased by 10 minutes per day and instruction schedules for grades 9-12 at Calexico High School sites shall be identical. This change also had a salary modification to include a 2.7 percent salary increase for teachers.

Last year, ACT invoked their sunshine proposal to amend their contract to adjust the bargaining unit members' salary by an original proposal of 7.72 percent for the 2016-2017 school years. Taylor told on the board on March 18, 2016 that the salary adjustment represents the exact remainder of the increased cost of living as determined by the State of California.

The district negotiators and ACT resumed their meetings on Friday, June 9, to talk about their contract. According to a negotiation update posted on their Facebook page, CUSD increased their offer by 0.5 percent, bringing their salary increase offer to 4.5 percent.

"In response, ACT offered to include one more frozen step to our salary schedule (bringing our proposed salary schedule to 22 years instead of 28 years), while keeping our proposed salary increase at seven percent," ACT posted on their Facebook page. "Though we did not reach an agreement today, we are encouraged from the continued movement from the district towards a mutual agreement. We mutually

agreed to continue negotiating at the beginning of the next school year, and we will continue to advocate for our teachers and for our students."

In related news, the Calexico School Board decided to table an item that would approve a salary schedule increase for Certificated Management, Classified Management, and Confidential Employees. Board President Lorenzo Calderon made the motion to table the item for a future meeting and was second by Trustee Ciro Calderon.

Trustee Richard Romero stated for the record that he would not support the adjustment if it comes back the same way.

"When the 6.7 percent was recommended, I was not aware that 2.7 percent that was added to the teachers was for the increase of their instructional minutes," Romero said. "It doesn't make sense to increase to give them a bonus to administrators and not increase their minutes."

Trustee Ciro Calderon said that everyone in the district is the same and should be treated equally.

"We value everybody and we value all administrators, however, in my years of services we first settle with the unions and then what the district agrees with the unions is also agreed with management, not the other way around," Calderon said. "I'm not saying that they don't deserve a raise but if you are going to do it with one you have to do it for everybody else."

Board President Lorenzo Calderon said he is tabling this item since he requested information and has not received it in order to make an intelligent decision about this item.

Record Number Receive Degrees From IVC

For just the second time in school history, Imperial Valley College had to break its annual commencement exercises into two parts to accommodate the large number of graduates and their families. And both of the ceremonies last Saturday were in front of a full house of well-wishers in the college gymnasium.

It was an exciting time for the 534 who walked in caps and gowns to receive their degrees, marking an end for some and the completion of another step in education for others. Some will move onto to four-year universities while others will put their knowledge to the test as they enter the job market.

IVC Superintendent/President Dr. Victor Jaime was enthusiastic about the accomplishments and size of the class. He noted that 15 percent more of the students are graduating with distinction than did last year.

Associated Student Government President Christine Bermudez told her fellow stu-

dents that the local college provides opportunities for a lot of people in a lot of different situations. She added that all of the hours they put in studying over the past couple of years would soon begin to pay off.

"It was a lot of work," Bermudez pointed out, "but we had a lot of fun times here at IVC."

Many of the graduates were related to each other. Jaime said that he knew of mother/daughter and aunt/nephew students who attended the college at the same time, as well as many sibling pairs.

A total of 1,479 students petitioned for degrees at the end of the year. 221 graduated with honors and 85 with distinction, having a grade point average of 3.5 or higher. 57 percent have a grade-point average of 3.0 or higher. The top three majors this year were Administration of Justice for transfer, General Science, and Psychology for transfer.

We're looking for curious and community-oriented writers and reporters to join our Imperial Valley news team. Contact Brenda at holtvilleneews@aol.com.



CALEXICO TEACHERS were at last Thursday's school board meeting to call for a new employment contract to be finalized.

Mario Conde photograph



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iExpresate!

Con Raquel Villa y Julio Camargo

iEscuche!

Semana del 19 de junio

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(Originalmente transmitido en febrero del 2016)

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