

There are two groups of people who I need to personally thank in the aftermath of the difficult, emotional road to an agreement between MTA and the district. Let me start with the over 800 teachers who voted to sacrificially take a pay cut. I am ashamed to admit that I was fearful that the Tentative Agreement wouldn't be accepted by the membership. Let's face it; only roughly 20% of Murrieta's teachers were given pink slips. Although remaining teachers would be faced with larger class sizes (in some classes) and perhaps, re-assignment, there are so many out there who have been facing financial difficulties not related to their teaching paycheck. Laid-off spouses, huge medical bills not covered by our insurance, divorce... I could understand how people might not be able to vote to take a pay cut, no matter how much they wanted to. I get it. When the results on the vote came in, however, I was overwhelmed and chagrined. How could I ever think that my colleagues would not be the generous people I have known them to be over my 9 years in the district? The fact that so many voted to preserve (as much as possible) small class sizes and their colleagues' jobs was an amazing thing to me. I am truly grateful to you.

I also want to thank the Bargaining Team. I respect the time and effort that they put in on the behalf of our membership. Everyday that the Bargaining Team was meeting with the district, the teachers of that team were sacrificing time with their students. At a critical time of year (getting ready for testing), this fact should not go unnoticed. Additionally, for each day they were gone, lesson plans had to be prepared. Most of us would agree, it's often more work to prepare lesson plans for a sub than it is to spend the day teaching the plans. I'm sure that much time was spent away from family and friends as Bargaining Team members prepared to meet at the Negotiations Table each day. These people also carried the weight of the future of over 900 teachers on their shoulders. I would imagine there were some sleepless nights among the members of the team. I am also truly grateful to you; I could never handle that kind of pressure.

I am under no delusion that a budget-fairy is magically going to make the state of California financially solvent. Those who were RIF'd this year need to count on it happening again next year, with more teachers added to the number. I am, however, tremendously thankful to the MTA membership and the Bargaining Team because my family has another year to prepare for it.

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