September 2, 1983

Dear UTLA Member:

As we have informed you, your negotiations team has been optimistic about the progress of negotiations. But all that changed abruptly on Thursday, September 1, when two hours before the UTLA membership meeting, the School Board introduced a new package of proposals, a package that is utterly unacceptable.

Given this bad faith action on the part of the Board, we have set a September 10 deadline for an equitable agreement with the district. If such an agreement has not been reached by 2:00 p.m. that afternoon, the House of Representatives will be convened at the leadership conference and asked to authorize a membership strike vote. Such a vote would be taken during the first week of school.

Here are the critical issues:

1. Despite the new money we won for the district from Sacramento, the Board is insisting on maintaining a $15 million reserve fund even though it operated quite successfully without such a fund in 1982-83. To keep this reserve intact, the Board is offering a 1983-86 contract with a total increase of 7.8% for the first year and with absolutely no guarantee of any increases for 1984-85 and 1985-86. The use of reserve funds would boost that figure to 10%.

The Board has also set aside $6 million for raises for administrators. Given the wide gap between administrative and teacher salaries, we’re insisting that money be used for teachers, with no raise given to administrators.

2. The Board has rejected our call for maintaining full health benefits through the implementation of plan efficiencies. It continues instead to call for a fixed financial amount, no matter what the effects on health benefits.

3. The Board is proposing a mandatory teacher transfer program under which teachers who have served five years at a school site would be subject to transfer at the whim of the district in line with “its perceived needs”. This would disrupt the educational process, school stability, and teachers’ lives.

4. The Board is proposing a violation of due process by instituting teacher suspensions of up to 15 days without a prior hearing. This may remind you of the kangaroo courts in western movies where they hang someone and then decide to try him.

These new proposals mark a significant deterioration in the negotiations process and evidence a new lack of good faith on the part of the school board.

Now is the time to get angry. We have used up every legal means at our disposal. We have gone through fact-finding. We have won a new school board. We have won new money from Sacramento. Now is the time to prepare for a job action.

At the negotiations table, we are impressing the Board with our seriousness. Now is the time for all of you to impress Board members with our unity and our resolve. Each of you should begin immediately calling Board members at their school offices (625-6000) and tell them this simple message: we are L.A. teachers and we support the UTLA negotiations team.

Second, you should begin to rally your colleagues to help them firm up their resolve to take whatever action is required to win you the settlement you deserve.

On September 10, either UTLA will have a settlement or I will ask your House of Representatives to authorize a job action vote.

In unity,

Judy Solkovits
President

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