

Letters: Douglas teachers want fair treatment

To the community,

The teachers in Douglas County have not received an increase in salary since a mediated agreement was reached in February 2008. The end result of that mediated process was 4 percent for 2007, and 4 percent for 2008, not compounded. That agreement was reached after the DSA [Distributive School Account] for DCSD was increased from \$4,911 to \$5,324 per student, an increase of 9.6 percent.

The mediator was able to move the parties once it was shown the DSA increased substantially and revealed through board documents that the administrative groups were approved raises well above 8 percent for the same time period.

Since then, the DCPEA (Douglas County Professional Education Association) bargaining unit's base salary has fallen from \$35,712 to \$34,957. That is a decrease of 2.1 percent. During the extreme recession in Nevada, DCPEA worked with the district to restructure the health plan and reduce the monthly contribution per employee by 13 percent. A total of (\$1,062 per year per employee) rather than take additional cuts to the base salary.

The district was allocated a DSA increase of 10.76 percent YOY 2012-2013. This brings the DSA allocation to \$5,885 per student, 10.5 percent higher than it was in 2008.

It is our opinion that the district has the means to fund a reasonable raise.

The final offer made by the district would have increased the base salary to \$35,831. That would be an increase of less than \$10 per month over the salary negotiated in 2008, six years

ago. In our opinion this is not a reasonable offer.

Why arbitration?

In Nevada, binding arbitration is the final step available to parties when they cannot resolve their differences. The DCPEA negotiation team requested to begin negotiations in January 2013. The district refused to meet on any issue until the legislature finished business in June. Since the legislative session closed, our team has met face-to-face with the district for multiple hours over a dozen times. In the full year since DCPEA asked to open negotiations not a single tentative agreement on any issue had been signed by the district.

The final face-to-face negotiation session in January 2014 ended in DCPEA declaring impasse when the district made their final offer of 2.5 percent and once again no TA's were signed on non-financial issues. However, neither the declaration of impasse, nor the arbitration scheduled for June 16-20 prevent the district from requesting further negotiation.

Sincerely,

Brian Rippet, Douglas County Professional Education Association president