

Today, I come before you once again to thank you so much for approving the increases to salaries, as well as health and welfare benefits, which we have been negotiating this year. I would also like to publicly thank Linda Rosado and the entire District Office staff that was involved in getting this increase on our February 1st paycheck; our members are extremely happy and this is thanks to your hard work!

This retroactive 10% ongoing raise for the 22-23 year and the additional \$2,000 to the hard cap on Health and Welfare beginning July 2023 are pushing us in the right direction when it comes to our ability to compete with surrounding districts in the attraction and retention of qualified certificated employees. Because many of these surrounding districts are also receiving increases of a similar size, our position on the comparable salaries lists from CTA will unfortunately continue to be at or near the bottom. Our negotiating teams are currently working to find creative solutions to change our position on at least some of these lists, and we hope that when the admin team brings you our collective ideas, you are open to approving them. As a district, we must work collaboratively to retain our valuable employees because replacing them is getting harder than ever.

On another note, how do we solve the issue of bringing in new certificated employees, as well as classified ones, for that matter, to our valley and specifically the school district, as people resign, retire, and move on? I would like to suggest yet again that the board and cabinet members of the school district continue to think outside the box with finding ways to help retain existing employees and attract potential ones. Many people in these categories cannot find affordable housing here. I believe that there is land owned by the district that could be used in a creative way, in conjunction with other invested parties, such as the City of Big Bear Lake, to provide subsidized housing for some of our neediest or newest employees and their families. Big Bear Mountain Resort is a leader in our community in this area since they have given significant raises to their employees and have opened employee housing on the west end of town in the last few months. BVUSD and the City of Big Bear Lake teaming together to turn unused land that is prime real estate into affordable housing for employees is a win-win situation for everyone. This kind of ingenuity helps keep vital human resources in town, promotes permanent population growth and pushes back on declining enrollment. As we all know, Air B and Bs and VRBOs are changing the landscape of Big Bear. It is vital that those in authority continue to think outside the box before it's too late; we MUST have people to run the town who can afford to live here.

I know that I speak for all of our BVEA membership when I say that we are greatly appreciative of the financial and emotional support of our Bear Valley Unified School district board. We look forward to hearing in the near future about your decisions regarding our other creative compensation solutions, as well as any outside the box thinking you may have in regards to the housing crisis. Thank you again for your time, support, and consideration as the union continues to strive to improve our compensation package and working conditions in this beautiful valley which is our shared home.