
NEWS RELEASE

The Las Virgenes Educators Association

LVEA Contact: Craig Hochhaus, President LVEA 805-402-7347 lasvirgenesea@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 29, 2017

Las Virgenes Educators Association Representative Council Unanimously Votes Against New Compensation Package for Superintendent Dr. Dan Stepenosky

Agoura Hills, CA- The Executive Board and Representative Council of the Las Virgenes Educators Association (LVEA) both unanimously voted to NOT support the new compensation package as part of an extended contract for Superintendent Dr. Dan Stepenosky. The vote was zero in favor and 35 opposed.

Dr. Stepenosky has one year remaining on his contract that will give him a 3% salary increase for the 2017-18 school year while all other employees will earn a 2% salary increase. During contract negotiations this summer, the District and Board repeatedly expressed concern that a 1-2% increase would put the district into financial jeopardy even though its financial reserves hovered around 24%, far above the 3% minimum required by the State of California and substantially above local districts. While the Certificated Employees of Las Virgenes face unknown salary levels for the three years following this school year, Dr. Stepenosky's new contract will guarantee 4% raises in each of the next three years in addition to a \$10,000 retention bonus. This is not about Dr. Stepenosky personally. LVEA thinks he has done a good job; however, we are concerned that there is more focus on management retention rather than our increasing class sizes, benefit premiums and other living costs for employees. For example, many teachers pay over \$8,000 out-of-pocket for their family's medical premiums and could really use a 4% raise for three years to help offset this and other costs.

A.E. Wright Middle School Teacher Darci Miller stated, "It's disingenuous for the district to urge financial responsibility and restraint and then turn around and give a contract that is far more generous than what's anticipated for classroom teachers, counselors, school psychologists, nurses, speech pathologists and other support personnel." Craig Hochhaus, LVEA President, is concerned that this was secretly negotiated and only announced after LVEA's increase was approved, "The timing of this announcement is suspect. It was announced shortly after the Board approved our modest increase and just a few days before going to the August 29 public Board meeting for approval. It's apparent that this new contract has been in the discussion stage for months while the district continued to claim financial hardship, provide creative justification for excessive reserve levels and plan for an unnecessarily generous salary package for our superintendent." Joanne Kress, White Oak Elementary teacher stated,

“Dr. Stepenosky’s salary is very competitive with local districts and is second only to Simi Valley (which has 64% more students). His salary is just above Conejo’s superintendent that has 73% more students. One argument to justify his new contract and salary increase is the higher salaries paid to superintendents in Redondo Beach, Palos Verdes Peninsula, La Canada, Torrance, San Marino, Manhattan Beach and Beverly Hills.” Calabasas High School teacher Rich Lopez points out, “these districts have robust foundation programs that have grown under the stewardship of their superintendents. Dr. Stepenosky helped establish The Foundation which has unfortunately not generated substantial, consistent funding for LVUSD.”

Brittany Stone from Willow Elementary further added, “all management (except for the superintendent), certificated and classified employees in our district essentially receive the same salary increase percentages. Why should Dr. Stepenosky be any different? He is a good superintendent and we appreciate all he does for our district, but our members are great educators and the ones who work with students daily. He already earns over three times the average teachers’ salary. LVEA supports all efforts to increase government and local funding. We are on the forefront of all marketing campaigns to increase funding from all areas. Las Virgenes is a successful family of educators. We feel that our leaders and certificated employees should receive comparable salary percentage increases. If proposals deviate from this goal, then they should be transparent and not quietly rushed through to minimize scrutiny.”

###

LVEA is affiliated with the California Teachers Association and the National Education Association