



**WEST CONTRA COSTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

1108 Bissell Avenue  
Richmond, CA 94801-3135

**Bruce Harter, Ph.D.**  
*Superintendent*

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September 18, 2009

Dear WCCUSD Teacher:

We're on the brink of a strike that will be disastrous for everyone and we need to talk. The recession and the state budget have brought devastating cuts to our budget, a 23% reduction in revenue between last year and this year. We've already eliminated programs, increased class sizes, laid off employees, and slashed expenses.

With other unions, we've been able to balance the cuts to benefits by reducing the work year with furloughs like virtually all other public employers in the state. There are ways to shorten the teacher work year and have teachers work less without reducing the time students are in class. If we could find the equivalent of five days, we could afford to provide benefits at the same level we've done for two other unions -- \$4,800 for single employees, \$9,060 for employees with one dependent and \$11,700 for employees with families.

The two bargaining sessions we've had this month proved one thing – we need a mediator to work this out. The State Mediation service has offered one of its best mediators, someone who is skilled in helping parties reach agreement. There's no reason to wait another day to get back to the table. We're willing to work around the clock to find a settlement, but we need help. A mediator will provide that help.

A strike will have a long-term, devastating impact on everyone. You'll lose salary and retirement credit. Our students will have substitutes who can't begin to do what you do in the classroom. The District will lose the revenue we need to prevent much bigger cuts and employee layoffs.

At the end of a strike there will be a settlement. And we'll need a mediator to get there. So let's bring in the mediator now and find a way to deal with this horrible situation without having a strike.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bruce Harter".

Bruce Harter  
Superintendent