



HEMET TEACHER'S ASSOCIATION

March 8, 2010

Letter to the Editor
Valley Chronicle
2091 W. Florida Ave. #140
Hemet, CA 92543

In her commentary of March 5, Valerie Dew felt that I, as well as the other 300-plus teachers, exhibited rude behavior when we walked out of the March 2 Hemet school board meeting. Yes, we probably were rude, and I would hope the teachers who attended that meeting would respond the same way again. Why? Because when trustee Dr. Figgins said that the Hemet Teachers Association would not settle, he was using his elected position to attempt to create his own false reality.

It is not HTA that created the impasse in negotiations. Hemet Unified began the bargaining process by demanding that teachers give up 7% of our salaries. As soon as HTA offered our first counter proposal, the District immediately and unilaterally declared impasse and put a stop to negotiations. This was over the objections of HTA who stated we wished to continue to bargain in hopes of reaching a settlement. Again, at the February 23 school board meeting, Holly Guntermann, the HTA bargaining chair, encouraged the HUSD to resume bargaining, rather than waiting for a state appointed mediator. We have heard nothing from the District.



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As a school board member I would expect Dr. Figgins to be more informed when addressing the public. Especially when he had just voted to eliminate 182 teaching positions (144 lay offs and 38 temporary teaching positions).

Not only was Dr. Figgins uninformed and absolutely wrong, his comments were insulting to those teachers who had addressed the

Board explaining the hardships a salary reduction would cause their families.

HTA is ready and willing to return to the bargaining table at any time. Possibly Dr. Figgins would like to observe the process in person so that when he speaks he will actually know the facts. That way we will all stay to hear his comments.

Respectfully,

Jerry Hall

Jerry Hall, President
Hemet Teachers Association