



Pajaro Valley Unified School District

School Board

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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On June 11, the PVUSD School Board rejected the contract proposed by the Pajaro Valley Federation of Teachers on a 2-5 vote.

The controversial proposal by PVFT included revision of the school calendar a mere 65 days before the start of the '03-'04 school year. School calendar, an issue so important to families with children, is the subject for negotiations between the school district and the teacher's union, which links the issue to such matters as teachers' salaries, benefits and working conditions.

Under the contract currently in effect, the school calendar prescribes a three-week winter break which according to the terms of the contract, was to continue unchanged for three years. The upcoming school year was to be the last of these years. Prior to this agreement, PVUSD's calendar had a winter vacation of four weeks. The three-week winter break was established in the year 2000 and was part of a negotiated agreement. In fact, establishment of the three-week winter break was a compromise between zones in the district, those that preferred the traditional two-week vacation and those preferring a four-week vacation.

The School Board recognizes the needs of our students' families to know the calendar far in advance of the initiation of the school year. The School Board fully understands how families schedule vacation plans to coincide with school breaks and appreciates the way this system allows students to attend school regularly. This benefits the students directly, as they do not miss out on the educational opportunities that regular attendance brings, and the district does not lose funding for student absences.

The union's proposal for calendar change was part of the collective bargaining process regarding district proposed furlough days. Due to the current school-funding crisis, PVUSD was asking all employees to take the equivalent of four days off without pay. As part of the complete budget package approved by the School Board in February, all staff were to face salary reductions in the form of furlough days. As part of the overall package, parents were called upon to pay for transportation in the form of bus fees.

The February budget package was based on the premise that the shortfall of funds be spread around to affect all, while the cuts were kept as far away from the classrooms as possible. This was the budget that had won the School Board's support.

It is clear that the School Board's vote represents the Trustees' firmness on an agreement made in February 2003. The agreement contained the three elements: four furlough days for all staff – no exceptions, bus fees for parents who can afford to pay, and a verbal assurance that the calendar would remain as is, with a three-week winter break and not be a bargaining chip.

The PVUSD School Board is firm in its commitment to the families in the district. While the calendar is negotiated between the district and the union, the Trustees know it is their duty to consider the effect all decisions have on families with children!