June 20, 2014

Dear Colleagues:

After four months and 19 bargaining sessions between the District and UESF, there remains significant disagreement between both parties on important proposals that address wages and benefits, hours of employment, and class size. This situation has led us to the present assessment by our negotiating team to file for impasse and request that the Public Employment Relations Board appoint a neutral mediator to help us overcome our differences. We did not come to this decision without considerable discussion and review of the lack of significant movement in counterproposals dating back in many instances to mid-April.

In the weeks leading up to this decision, the District had recommended to the Union a couple of alternate strategies that could have helped move the process along. These strategies included both sides selecting their own budget analyst to scrutinize and sort out the SFUSD budget together and to report back to the full bargaining teams with an objective voice. The union declined to participate. Subsequently, the District suggested to meet in smaller groups for off-record discussions, similar to "mediation without the mediator." The smaller teams would then shuttle back and forth between the larger teams sharing the discussions - modeling what would happen in mediation, but under the District and Union’s control – without a mediator. The Union also declined to participate in this process.

By calling in a third party mediator, we are hoping to continue our negotiations and move toward a plan that gets us through our differences.

The District recognizes that wages need to be raised and has proposed a significant raise over three years. We also recognize that school districts in California are still sorely underfunded, witnessed by the fact that we are entering the second year of the Local Control Funding Formula that is designed, after 2020-21, to restore us to 2007-08 funding levels. A responsible evaluation of our revenues and expenditures will show that salary growth should be developed in a steady and sustainable manner and that our resources, as addressed in our Local Control Accountability Plan, must show a direct link to how we are supporting the learning of our highest need children.

We see moving to mediation as the most respectful way to proceed. It is our hope and belief that participation of a third party mediator will facilitate positive movement toward a fair and equitable three year contract.

Yours truly,

Richard A. Carranza
Superintendent

Sandra Lee Fewer
President, SF Board of Education