

Published March 7th, 2018

Lafayette teachers demand fair pay

By Pippa Fisher



Springhill Elementary School teachers have been wearing black to show solidarity to their union and draw attention to their demands for fair pay. Photo provided

A parent spoke, showing a chart to illustrate how far behind the cost of living teachers say their salaries have fallen. Springhill Elementary fifth-grade teacher Christina Churchill says that from 2010 to 2016 Lafayette teacher salaries averaged five percent lower than the consumer price index and dropped an additional five percent in 2017.

The teachers took issue with information posted by the district which cites raises given between 2012 and 2016, saying the district was neglecting to mention 2007-2010 when they had no salary increase apart from a one-time annual bonus of one percent.

Churchill explains, "When the economy took a dive, the district asked us to take furlough days and raise our health insurance co-pay with the promise that we would be made whole when the economy was better. They have yet to 'catch us up' as promised."

Churchill said that 68 percent of teachers take second jobs to make ends meet.

Following the speakers, LAFSD School Board President Teresa Gerring acknowledged the large number of people who had turned up and said that while the board couldn't comment or respond at that time, "We are listening. We do hear you."

The Lafayette Education Association, the union representing about 200 Lafayette teachers, counselors and speech therapists, and LAFSD are negotiating a new contract.

Teachers have been wearing black in protest to draw attention to their needs. Churchill says that parents have been supportive. "Most of them had no idea we were working without a contract for two years or what our pay was," she says, adding, "The assumption is an affluent area equals high pay."

The district recognizes the need to retain high quality teachers, ensure quality programs and fairly compensate teachers but says that unfortunately the district's projected budget deficits have put them in a difficult position to guarantee ongoing increases in the absence of additional revenues or reduction in current spending.

The two sides met for mediation Feb. 26. They will be reconvening in mid-March.

Gerring says that the teachers and district continue to work on reaching an agreement with both sides mutually agreeing to mediation.

Reach the reporter at: pippa@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA