

## **Presentation to the CVUSD School Board by CVTA President, Alicia Gholami September 24, 2015**

I began this school year at the Welcome Back Rally speaking about a former student who made me realize that I impact my students' lives on a greater level than I ever imagined. That is why I am an educator. My top priority is being there for my students.

Tonight, I am joined by my colleagues from all across our district, spanning all grade levels and subject areas. No matter what their job titles might be, I can tell you something about each and every one of them: being at this meeting tonight is not their top priority. Let me explain.

As I've visited sites during the first weeks of school, a common thread spans them all. Our new curriculums take time. Just as the Common Core Standards ask our students to develop critical thinking skills, the instruction of the standards-based curriculums requires our educators to push their thinking and expand their strategies. I've heard over and over from my colleagues that they feel like college students again, spending hours each night studying to prepare for the next day. Our students are our first priority. Looking around this room tonight, I guarantee that each and every educator in this room has work at home to prep for tomorrow's lessons. Their students are their first priority.

So why are we here? Castro Valley's educators stand before you tonight to ask one thing: Let us focus on our students! We want to prepare our students for 21st century professions. We want to inspire our students to achieve more than they can imagine. We want to change lives. Unfortunately, we are distracted. Distracted by the stressors associated with our salaries.

I am not here to tell you anything you do not know. California is in the midst of a teacher shortage crisis. The cost of living adjustments in the Bay Area are so extreme that many families are being forced out. Educators have a choice of where to work.

CVTA met with our district today to review the 2015-16 projected budget. For the 2015-16 school year, Castro Valley is receiving an additional \$8 million in unrestricted LCFF funding when compared to the 2014-15 school year. After analyzing additional expenditures for this school year, including costs of textbooks and step and column increases, we see close to \$2 million available for educator compensation. In addition, our district's expenditures are consistently over projected each year by approximately \$2 million. That's a total \$4 million dollars. We believe that the board's priority should be retaining Castro Valley's educators while allowing them and their families to live locally.

Please take away the stress of finding an affordable place to live. The stress of affording doctor's visits for our children. The stress of making it to the end of the

month without a negative bank account balance. Take away these stresses so we can do what we are here to do. Let us focus on our students!