



May 8, 2017

Dear PS7 families,

Last week we were informed that a group of employees want to form a union and be represented by the Sacramento City Teachers Association (SCTA). SCTA is affiliated with the California Teachers Association and the National Education Association. The SCTA and CTA notified local and national media outlets last week and the Sac Bee recently published an article on the topic. The articles focus mainly on political and adult issues and mention little about your children. We want to maintain open communication with our families, our most important partners, and ensure you receive proper and timely information regarding developments of this topic.

The purpose of a charter school is to increase learning opportunities for all scholars and provide families with expanded educational opportunities within the public school system without the constraints of traditional rules and structure. At St. HOPE Public Schools, our mission is to prepare our scholars to go to and through college. This is an ambitious mission that, even on our most challenging days, we believe is the most important cause worth fighting for. It is impossible to argue the impact St. HOPE has had in pursuit of this mission in Oak Park and beyond. Currently, 96% of the Class of 2017 of Sac High have already been accepted to a four-year college or university. Numerous St. HOPE alumni have graduated from college and are now pursuing careers in business, law, and education. A large part of our success come from two contributing factors. The first is that our dedicated staff, at all levels, has the ability to make decisions, provide opportunities, and deliver an educational experience that prioritizes what's best for kids without cumbersome regulations and constraints. The success of our scholars has also been accomplished within the framework of St. HOPE's five pillars: High Expectations, Choice and Commitment, More Time, a Focus on Results, and the Power to Lead.

Like every organization, corporation, or school system, we have had our challenges along the way. When we set the bar as high as we do, the wins with our scholars feel incredible. But the frustration we feel when we don't meet our bar is tough because we know what's at stake for our kids. That frustration has been felt in different ways by different staff members at different times. As a network, we feel strongly that the way to continue to make the decisions and improvements we need is to create an increasingly collaborative, transparent, and cooperative environment in which staff of all levels can come together, talk about our issues and then create solutions that leverage our strengths to solve our problems.

A core objective of unionization is the negotiation of collective bargaining agreements. We believe that having outside interests negotiate such an agreement will not benefit either our teachers or our scholars. Outside interests do not have the knowledge and understanding of our scholars, our community or the innovation and flexibility our teachers need to ensure we have the best learning environment possible.

We hope you'll continue to engage with us as we work to become one of the finest urban preK-12 public school systems in America. We will keep you updated on the outcome and remain committed as ever to preparing your children for college graduation.

Sincerely,

Kari Wehrly  
Principal of PS7

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What does this mean for my student?**

Growing up is hard work and we want to ensure that all scholars have a chance to be their best selves as they climb the mountain to and through college. We are hopeful that all school staff, home office employees and managers will continue to place their time, energy, and focus on each and every scholar through the remainder of the school year. That means having each day to master the objectives and skills required of them each day without solicitation during working time.

### **What if our family is contacted by the media? Who do I contact if I have questions?**

There may be a chance the media will reach out to families. You are not obligated or required to speak with the media. If you have any additional questions about this subject, please contact Dominique Amis at [damis@sthopepublicschools.org](mailto:damis@sthopepublicschools.org).

### **I've heard that some teachers are against unionization. Is this true?**

It is true that a number of our teachers have expressed that they don't believe that unionization would be the best thing for our school environment and wish instead to work directly with administration on addressing their concerns. Others feel that their school has wonderful administrators and support systems and see no need to introduce anything different.

### **I thought unions were opposed to compensation based on performance. What is St. HOPE's opinion on this subject?**

At SHPS, we've worked hard to put in place a compensation system that recognizes the hard work of our employees that gives additional pay to those teachers who demonstrate great commitment to our children and show visible gains in student achievement. While it's true that unions generally do not support this kind of differentiated pay for highly effective teachers, we will not stop advocating for our best teachers to be recognized for the incredible work they do with their students.

### **Where does St. HOPE Stand?**

We understand that some teachers have legitimate concerns. We are committed to addressing those concerns and want to maintain the flexibility we need to address them in innovative ways and through direct communication with our teachers, instead of being governed by a rigid and bureaucratic union environment and contract.