



Speech to the Board

10 September 2014

By Amanda Fanning

Good evening members of the board.

This year marks my 10th as a teacher within Carlsbad Unified. While I never would have guessed the path my career has taken, I am so grateful to have grown as an educator within this district and my school. I have worked with amazing teachers, counselors, and staff-all of whom have shaped me in one way or another.

When I started at Carlsbad High school ten years ago, class size reduction had not yet been eliminated for 9th grade students. In fact, during my student teaching, two of my classes had fewer than 25 students. But that was then and this is now. During the course of my career, Carlsbad teachers, counselors, and students have borne the brunt of budget cuts. Class sizes have steadily risen until it was readily acknowledged that Carlsbad Unified had some of the highest class sizes in the county. Year after year we watched class sizes skyrocket knowing full well it negatively impacts our students.

Finally though, a light at the end of the tunnel has appeared. With the passing of Proposition 30 as well as the new Local Control Funding Formula public school districts are seeing an influx of money. During the first school board meeting last year, every member of this board agreed that class sizes were TOO HIGH. You asked for Superintendent Lovely to begin looking into ways to lower class sizes throughout the district.

As I prepared for this new year I expected to see significantly lower class sizes across all grades. After all, the board and district agreed to lower class sizes; with class averages dropping by 5 students in grades 4-5, 1.5 students in grades 6-8, and .8 in grades 9-12. This is all in addition to state mandated decreases in kindergarten-3rd grades. But the fact is, those are just averages, we *still* have some of the highest class sizes in the county.

We have kindergarten classes with 35 students. 35 students who need an attentive, caring, environment to guarantee they learn the fundamental skills which will serve them through their entire education.

We have First, second, and third grade classes with as many as 32 students, even with the state mandated rollbacks in class sizes.

Fourth and fifth grade classes have 34, 35, and 36 students. This is while simultaneously implementing new Common core state standards which require critical thinking.

6th, 7th, and 8th grade have Math classes running as high as 37; Science, Social Studies, and English, as high as 38 at some campuses.

And at the high schools. Rick Grove and I spoke this afternoon and I detailed some of the obscenely high numbers at Carlsbad High which he just mentioned. Still, I feel it important for you-the board-to hear the breadth of this issue. Between our two comprehensive high schools we have over 120 classes with class sizes at 40, or more. English alone has 22 classes over 40. Math? 15. Science? 20. Social studies? 20. In fact, at Carlsbad High School, every section of Advanced Placement Economics has either 49 or 50 students.

Surrounding districts have worked diligently to lower class sizes. This year Oceanside hired over 120 teachers. In Vista, Superintendent Devin Vodicka and the school board agreed it was imperative to bring back lower class sizes and worked with the teachers to make it happen. As of right now, Vista Unified has hired 170 teachers and is *still* hiring.

Our students deserve better than this. With class sizes this high, it simply isn't possible for students to receive the same focused attention and quality education as in surrounding areas. Class sizes this high do not allow Carlsbad Unified to meet its primary mission: "Providing every student with an extraordinary education in an inspiring environment." Every student cannot be fairly attended to, and a crowded classroom is hardly an "inspiring environment". Carlsbad Unified is supposed to be a world class district. Yet every year, I watch as we continue to do "just enough" rather than enough to make an actual difference in the quality of education our students deserve.