

**Statement of Palo Alto Educators Association (PAEA)
Issued by Teri Baldwin, PAEA president, on March 11, 2015**

Palo Alto teachers are proud of the long history they have had of working with the Palo Alto Unified School District. This relationship has been cooperative and respectful in recognizing that our mission is to work in service for our students and our community.

The Palo Alto Educators Association had to take the necessary step of filing grievance this past November 2014 due to actions taken by Gunn Principal Dr. Denise Herrmann. These actions violated the collective bargaining agreement. This is the first grievance the Association has filed in over a decade. It needs to be stressed that this is an agreement that is negotiated annually between the district and PAEA. As part of the collective bargaining agreement, the grievance process includes the step which requires informal conversation to take place prior to the filing of the grievance. Teachers at Gunn High School, serving as their school site representatives and Teri Baldwin, PAEA president, met with Dr. Herrmann several times in the hopes of resolving the issue without the need for filing the grievance.

Dr. Herman disregarded teachers' concerns over the use of Schoology. Dr. Herrmann sent a letter to the parents of Gunn High School which can only be seen as an attempt to undermine teachers and influence current negotiations. This grievance was filed after much thought and deliberation.

The Association continues to work with the district in balancing the needs of students and the concerns of teachers about Schoology. Many teachers already use Schoology in order to support their students and recognize the convenience for students and parents. However, there is apprehension that programs like Schoology do not promote the sort of organization and self-management skills that young people need to acquire for success in life after high school. Teachers know that a one size fits all approaches to education are never in the best interest of the students they strive to serve every day.

It was unfortunate that Dr. Hermann was unwilling to settle this issue in a manner that required the filing of the grievance. It was PAEA's very last resort as shown in the fact that this was a first for the Association in over a decade.