Good evening. I am speaking on behalf of my fellow DEA members at Marina High School.

President Dishno, Superintendent Harwick, distinguished members of the Board, and District Administration, I address you this evening to advocate for a swift and respectful conclusion to our current contract negotiations.

Lion, Baron, Triton, and Oiler concerns are also Viking concerns and it is in all of our best interests for tomorrow’s session to be productive, and ideally, conclusive. We are hopeful that the work done tomorrow will keep our district traditions in mind. HBUHSD and DEA have long been committed to attracting and retaining the best teachers, staff, and leaders in Orange County.

We all seek three things when considering employment: working conditions, salary, and benefits. We have the first: our working conditions are enviable. Our campuses are beautiful, and our students are a delight to work with.

We are hopeful that the Board will direct the District team to address the other two elements with a salary and benefit offer that represents or exceeds maintenance of effort levels. If we were worth 37% percent of the District budget in the past, we are certainly worth that now. Health care is often called a benefit. In fact, it is the core of a healthy organization. Professionals worried about medical cost or medical treatment for themselves or loved ones are far less focused than those who rest assured that they are valued and respected enough to have their health needs taken care of.

For those leaders and teachers in the room tonight who have joined us recently, I’d like you to bear this in mind: together, DEA, CSEA, HBSSPA, and the HBUHSD leadership weathered both the Orange County bankruptcy and the Great Recession through careful, fiscally-responsible stewardship.

We are now on the other side of those financial crises with health care programs intact. Most companies and some local districts cannot say the same. In this new era of financial stability and growth, the health care of everyone in this room should be unquestionably secure.

This takes me back to district traditions. HBUHSD has always offered better than competitive salary and benefits. Everyone in this room, on both sides of this podium is here because of three things: working conditions, salary, and healthcare. We are hopeful that tomorrow’s session will clearly communicate to DEA that we are as valued and respected as we have been in the past and we are on equal terms with everyone in this room. We all work together every day to achieve common goals for students. I have every reason to be hopeful that we can work together tomorrow to achieve these common goals. Thank you.