



Lupe Anguiano

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May 3, 2010

The Honorable Julia Brownley
California Assembly, 41st District
6355 Topanga Canyon Blvd., Suite 205
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

Dear Assemblywoman Brownley:

We the undersigned community members, parents of students in the Oxnard Elementary School District or employees of the Oxnard School District are requesting your assistance in investigating irregularities that have recently surfaced.

As you know all across the state school districts are facing economical challenges and schools are faced with budget cuts and increased class size that inadvertently will affect student achievement. The Oxnard Elementary School District has within the past year made decisions that have been questionable and are not fiscally responsible. As a result there has been a negative impact on the working conditions of their employees and a much greater concern, is how these decisions will effect the education of the students.

A little over a year ago the Board of Trustees removed the Executive Administrator of the English Language Services Department of her duties. She had been in the position for about 7 months and was in the process of implementing the newly developed English Learner Master Plan. Dr. Anna Becerra was bought out of her contract, replaced by a principal and then a replacement principal had to be hired. She was relieved of her duties for no specific reason, and she was escorted out of the building.

On February 17, 2010 the School Board put the newly hired Dr. Anthony Monreal on a paid administrative leave. His salary is currently being paid and the Assistant Superintendent of Business & Fiscal services was appointed interim superintendent. An investigation has been completed but to date the situation has not been resolved, and Dr. Monreal continues getting paid while on leave.

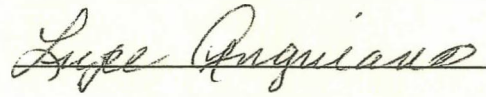
On March 3rd the School Board voted to give a pink slip to the principal of Harrington Elementary School. Her letter states that she will be reassigned to the classroom next year. Although this decision has no financial implications it once

again questions the process used by the Board of Trustees to make decisions. She was given no reason except to say that she "Was not a good fit". She has been the principal there for the past 8 years and although her school is a program improvement school her school has continued to improve every year.

Additionally during the past year there have been several employees who have left their District level positions after a very short tenure, this has been a reason for concern. We sincerely hope that you are able to assist us in addressing some of these concerns. We are asking for your focus to be the improprieties in the hiring and terminating process and how some of these decisions have created unnecessary financial burdens. Please help us to create a transparent, positive and collaborative working environment that our children deserve.

Thank you in advance for your support in finding solutions to these critical issues.

Sincerely,
Lupe Anguiano, Executive Director
Stewards of the Earth



Dr. Juanita Sanchez-Valdez
Former Principal
Oxnard School District



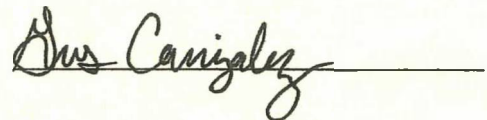
Perla Del Castillo
Harrington School Site Council
President



Maria Bravo
Harrington English Learner Advisory
Committee, President



Gus Canizalez
Harrington School Office Manager
Community Member



Copy sent to:
Mr. Albert Duff, Sr., President
Dr. Deborah De Vries, Clerk
Mrs. Ana Del Rio-Barba, Member
Mr. Arthur Joe Lopez, Member
Mr. Denis O'Leary, Member
Mr. Jack O'Connell, CA State Superintendent of Schools
The Honorable Pedro Nava, CA Assemblyman 35th District
The Honorable Fran Pavley, CA Senator 23rd District

Areas of Concern
Oxnard School District Financial &
Personnel Management

Mrs. Debra Cordes

Employee of the District 32 years

Learning Director (Vice Principal) 12 years, teacher 12 years

Principal of Harrington School 8 years

Lives in the community

Scores have increased steadily in the past 8 years

Good evaluations

Bilingual-ability to communicate with parents

*Attached sheet is an Accountability report as it relates to English

Learners: Note Harrington School has done equal to or above the District

Average on most measures

		Overall(AYP)		Hispanic(AYP)		SED(AYP)		EL(AYP)	
		LA	Math	LA	Math	LA	Math	LA	Math
2003-04	607	15.5	23.7	14.9	23.3	13.3	21	10.8	20.1
2004-05	632	19.86	28.61	19	27.75	17.75	26.63	12.3	25.4
2005-06	640	21.2	34.4	20.3	33.1	18.6	32.3	12.7	28.2
2006-07	688	26.4	46.7	24.7	45.4	24.7	45.1	15.7	38.8
2007-08	708	31.4	47.9	30.1	47.1	27.9	45.8	22.1	41.5
2008-09	727	33.7	54.3	32.5	53.3	31.3	53	27.7	50.4

Mrs. Cathy Kawaguchi

The District hired a company (headhunters) to search for an Assistant Superintendent

On the Wednesday prior to the Saturday scheduled interviews, the Board appointed Cathy Kawaguchi (less than 2 years as a principal, 1 year as a Learning Director- did not meet the minimum administrative experience requirement) She had not applied for the job and there were current administrators who were scheduled to interview for the position.

Dr. Ana Becerra

The ELS (English Learner Services) Director (District office position) person in charge of bilingual education was relieved of her duties (Dr. Ana Becerra) after 7 months on the job. She was notified on the morning after a board meeting and escorted out of the building. She was told to make arrangements to come in on a Saturday and pick up her things. She was

replaced by a principal (Diane Villegas) anglo woman married to a Hispanic. They had to buy Dr. Becerra out of her contract; additionally they had to pay a retired principal to finish the school year at the school that Mrs. Villegas had been the principal. Mrs. Villegas had originally applied for the ELS job, but she was not selected, instead she was appointed to a principal position that she did not apply for. Dr. Ana Becerra originally taught in Oxnard but had been gone for a number of years, prior to coming back for the ELS job, she was a principal in Oregon. She has not been able to find a job since she was terminated from her position in Oxnard.

The removal of Dr. Becerra was done under the leadership of an interim superintendent and Cathy Kawaguchi, both had been at their positions for about 2 months.

During the past year 2 other Latinas have left the district after a short tenure.

Luisa Menchaca was director of classified personnel. Prior to her leaving she told me that she had the feeling that Hispanic women were not thought of too highly. I recently spoke to her to ask her about the reason for her leaving. She said that she was not pressured to leave, however she did not feel supported and she didn't feel as if it was worth it to work harder at trying to stay. She also said that she didn't feel comfortable trying to recruit Latinos to the District because of the underlying feeling of non support.

Norma Del Rio was the administrator of Pupil Services. She openly says she left because they (Cathy & Janis Duran(Interim Superintendent) were on her. She says the department was a mess and they blamed her for all the problems even though she was new and spent most of her time dealing with multiple issues that were there before she got here. She worked for a month with Dr. Monreal but she felt that Cathy Kawaguchi had a direct line to him and was never able to defend herself.

In both cases the women retired in order to get out of their contracts.

Dr. Anthony Monreal

The Board once again authorized money to be spent searching for a superintendent. They hired Dr. Anthony Monreal who was previously employed by the State Department of Education under Jack O'Connell. He was on the job for 8 months and now he has been put on administrative leave. They have had investigators interviewing employees. They are trying to justify firing him so they won't have to buy him out of his contract. He has been on paid administrative leave for 2 months and no decision has been made.

Due to budget cuts they are cutting to Learning Director positions. On the board agenda it clearly states 2 Learning Directors (Elementary) The 2 Learning Directors they have chosen to give pink slips to are 2 Latinas who are Junior High Learning Directors and they were not the most recently hired. (Since this was originally written the 2 Learning Director positions have been reinstated, however the concern still remains, that there is no process for decision making.)

Due to budget cuts Cathy Kawaguchi will be reorganizing the District Office positions. The District has given pink slips to (2) District Office employees, one of them is also a Latina.

On the same night that the (2) Learning Directors and the (2) District Office positions were on the agenda to receive pink slips, there was also a program specialist (African-American woman). Since these positions were on the agenda during the comments by the public the African American woman had several people speak on her behalf, including the NAACP. During the action item part of the agenda the board voted to remove the program specialists position (African American woman) from the agenda, so she did not receive a pink slip.

It is critical to be aware of all the inconsistencies with selections, appointments and terminations that have occurred within the last 18 months in the District. These decisions have financial implications and disrupt the educational progress of our students.