



SANTA
CLARA
UNIFIED
SCHOOL
DISTRICT

1889 Lawrence Rd.
Santa Clara, CA
95051
(408) 423-2000
STEVE STAVIS
SUPERINTENDENT

September 11, 2009

Don Kawashima, Foreperson
2008-2009 Civil Grand Jury
Superior Court Building
191 North First Street
San Jose, California 95113

FILED

SEP 21 2009

DAVID H. YAMASAKI
Chief Executive Officer/Clerk
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY D. ALDYCKI

Dear Mr. Kawashima:

This letter represents our response to your letter of June 24, 2009 regarding the Grand Jury report on Who Really Benefits from Education Dollars.

First, the Santa Clara Unified School District (SCUSD) prides itself on being fiscally responsible and prudent in its expenditure of funds while serving its more than fourteen thousand students in the kindergarten through twelfth grade program and another fourteen thousand students in adult education programs.

Finding 1:

Boards of Trustees approve overly generous benefits which include the following: Fully paid health benefits for trustees and their families; Excessive travel and conference costs; Pension contribution.

The Board of Trustees in the SCUSD receives the same benefit package as do teacher bargaining unit members. Medical benefits are capped at \$725.90 per month; the premium for maximum coverage of \$2000 per year is fully paid for dental care; and, a family vision care plan with a \$15 deductible is paid for by the district. No pension payments are made for Board members.

Board members have been allotted attendance at one conference per year which required out of district, but within the state, travel. Not every Board member attends the conference, and for the 2009-2010 school year, the number of Board members attending the CSBA annual conference has been limited to three.

Findings 2 and 3:

Boards of Trustees are approving overly generous benefits to Superintendents. Superintendent salaries and increases appear to be no relationship to the number of schools, students and employees they oversee.

BOARD
OF EDUCATION
INA K. BENDIS
DON BORDENAVE
JIM CANOVA
ELISE DeYOUNG
PAT FLOT
ALBERT GONZALEZ
ANDREW RATERMANN

"The mission of Santa Clara Unified School District is to prepare students of all ages and abilities to succeed in an ever-changing world."

The SCUSD Superintendent does not receive an auto allowance, a housing allowance, a mortgage assistance loan of any kind, a guaranteed annual salary increase, a longevity bonus, a performance bonus, per diem expenses while out of district, any professional membership or subscription allowances, a pension allowance other than his and the district's mutual contribution to STRS, lifetime medical benefits, or an annual district-paid medical physical.

The average enrollment for school districts in Santa Clara County is 7,962. SCUSD's is 14,151. The average total compensation for superintendents in the County is \$206,076. The SCUSD superintendent's total compensation is \$192,726. The average total cost per student for a superintendent's compensation in the County is \$25.88. For the SCUSD superintendent, it is \$13.62. Only two districts in the County have more schools than SCUSD, and only three districts serve more K-12 students.

Finding 4:

Boards of Trustees hire costly search firms to recruit successors for retiring or dismissed Superintendents.

The current Superintendent in SCUSD is in his second year of serving in the position. The previous Superintendent served for three years, and the Superintendent before that served for ten years. The current and former superintendents were hired from within, without outside searches or search consultants. The ten-year superintendent formerly served as an assistant superintendent in the county.

Finding 5:

Boards of Trustees approve the hiring of multiple private attorneys, in some cases at tremendous expense.

For routine matters and general counsel, SCUSD relies on the expertise and legal advice of County Counsel. For some of the complexities of special education, negotiations with newly authorized bargaining units, lay-offs, property acquisition, and contract breaches, outside attorneys have been employed.

Final Word:

Student safety and student achievement remain the stated and primary goals of the SCUSD. Fiscal responsibility follows closely behind those two. We believe that we have met our obligations and without hesitation respond that the beneficiaries remain our students, their families and our taxpayers.

Sincerely,



Pat Flot, President of the Board of Trustees



Steve Stavis, Superintendent