



Los Gatos-Saratoga High School District
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GOVERNING BOARD

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September 8, 2009

Members of the 2008-2009 Civil Grand Jury
Santa Clara County Superior Court
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

FILED

SEP 09 2009

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

Dear Members of the Grand Jury:

Please find the district responses to the Grand Jury's Final Report, Santa Clara County Schools – Who Really Benefits from Education Dollars? These responses are filed with the Office of the Honorable Jamie Jacobs-May, Presiding Judge, Santa Clara County Superior Court on behalf of the Governing Board for the Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District.

**Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District
Responses to Findings and Recommendations of the
Grand Jury's Final Report**

Response to Finding 1

The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District disagrees with Finding 1. Governing Board members are not offered overly generous benefits. Reasonable benefits help to attract and maintain well-qualified, hard working and dedicated governing board members.

Recommendation 1

- Removing health benefits will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable. This benefit is of great help in attracting and maintaining well-qualified, hard working and dedicated governing board members. Board members do not receive benefits that are more generous than employee benefits, e.g., premium copayments are required at some benefit levels.
- Minimize travel and conference costs. The district has taken measures to minimize travel and conference costs and the reimbursements are limited to documented and necessary costs in accordance with board policy. The district benefits greatly from board member training and ultimately help our students succeed.
- Pension contributions are not offered to members of the governing board.

Response to Finding 2

The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District disagrees with Finding 2. The superintendent's benefits are not overly generous.

Recommendation 2

The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District provides a reasonable compensation package to the Superintendent and changes to the contract will not be made and are not warranted.

- Auto Allowance (\$600/mo): The superintendent is on call to perform duties twenty-four hours a day. Much of the work of the superintendent requires in and out-of-district travel. The allowance is sized to reimburse the superintendent for the use of his personal vehicle on district business.
- Housing Allowance: Not applicable
- Million dollar housing loans at zero or below market interest rates: Not applicable
- Guaranteed annual step and/or longevity increases: Not applicable
- Signing bonuses: Not applicable
- Contract buyout: Provided by Education Code and is in accordance with regulations. The superintendent is charged with making sometimes unpopular decisions and this provision provides the superintendent the ability to make the best decision to help students succeed in a political environment.
- Excessive performance bonuses: Not applicable
- Per diem payments when out of the district: The superintendent is only paid for full days worked in a documented system to provide 220 days of service, excluding vacation. Additionally, the superintendent receives 30 days of vacation. The superintendent does not receive compensation outside of this contractual obligation.
- Personal technology allowances: Not applicable
- Professional memberships and subscription allowances: The superintendent receives paid membership fees in professional educational organizations that advance the cause and understanding of public education.
- Excessive travel and entertainment expenses: The district has taken measures to minimize travel and conference costs and the reimbursements are limited to documented and necessary costs in accordance with board policy.
- Salary increases automatically triggered by increases in teacher's salaries which are in addition to other guaranteed salary increases: Not applicable
- Pension allowances (in addition to regular STRS/PERS contributions: Not applicable
- Advanced degree stipends: Not applicable
- Lifetime medical insurance benefits: Not applicable
- Annual physicals: Required and protects the district from the loss of its chief executive officer at a critical time.

Response to Finding 3

The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District disagrees with Finding 3. The superintendent's salary is related to a myriad of factors and realities of market supply and demand for top executives.

Recommendation 3

The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District governing board believes its superintendent is properly compensated and changes will not be made and are not warranted. The district is a high performing district located in an area of Santa Clara County with one of the highest cost of living. Tying the superintendent's salary to district size would be simplistic and counterproductive to finding and retaining its leader.

Response to Finding 4

The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District disagrees with Finding 4. The Board has a strong interest in hiring the best person for the position of superintendent.

Recommendation 4

The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District will not implement the recommendation because it is not warranted. Qualified superintendent candidates are not always available locally. To conduct a local "preliminary search" may delay the hiring process and could jeopardize the ability to get the most qualified person for this important leadership position.

Response to Finding 5

The Governing Board for the Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District partially agrees with the finding. The school district should engage the services of County Counsel when appropriate and limit the number of private attorneys providing services.

Recommendation 5

The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District will implement finding 5 by using County Counsel when appropriate. The district is sometimes involved in complex legal issues that require legal expertise in sub-sections of the Education Code, requiring considerable specialized legal capacity, time and energy. The District will review its current list of approved attorneys and consolidate where possible.

Response to Finding 6

The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District disagrees with finding 6. In the Los Gatos-Saratoga communities and the other jurisdictional boundaries, there exists a strong preference for local control of the school district.

Recommendation 6

The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School will not implement finding 6 because it is not warranted. The district encompasses the largest geographical area in Santa Clara County and includes areas in Santa Cruz County. These diverse communities value local control.

Currently, the district is in the process of annexing a small portion of the area formally a part of the Montebello school attendance area. The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District will provide education services to students residing in this community that attend grades 9 through 12. This annexation is not directly related to Finding 6 however it does result in a consolidation of districts. The annexation is representative of 5 school districts working together to provide the best outcome to students and families. The district's are: Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District, Saratoga Union Elementary School District, Cupertino Union School District and Fremont Union High School District and Montebello Elementary School District.

Please feel free to contact me or the superintendent if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rosemary Rossi".

Rosemary Rossi
President of the Governing Board
Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union
High School District