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SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTIONS QUESTIONED BY COMMUNITY

BACKGROUND

In 1889, the Dinuba School District was established and all grades from one to eight were taught. Ten years later Dinuba Union High School was established and classes were held in the two-story elementary schoolhouse. In 1917, the Dinuba Unified School District was formed. Over the last 93 years the Dinuba School District has grown into a district of five elementary schools serving kindergarten through fifth grade, one sixth grade academy, one high school, one alternative high school, an adult school and an adult independent study program. The approximate number of students in the district is 5,700 with a demographic makeup that reflects that of the community and translates to 81% Hispanic, 16% Caucasian and 3% other.

Many parents actively participate in district committees, parent-teacher organizations, fund raising activities and volunteer programs.

The Dinuba Unified School District Board of Trustees (School Board) is elected by the community to provide leadership and citizen over-sight of the district's schools. The School Board works with the Superintendent to fulfill its major roles, one of which is ensuring accountability to the local community. This includes personnel, programmatic and fiscal accountability and serving as a judicial and appeals body as needed. Besides creating a complaint procedure that ensures due process and facilitates the progress of amenable resolution of issues, the School Board may convene to serve as a judicial and appeals body in accordance with law, School Board policies and negotiated agreements. The School Board may delegate fact-finding or hearing responsibilities in appropriate cases but remains the final decision-maker in these proceedings. Only the School Board has the legal authority for contracting with employees. They are guided by many rules, laws, school and government codes as well as the Brown Act when conferring about all things including student problems and employee negotiations.

REASONS FOR INVESTIGATION

The 2009-2010 Tulare County Grand Jury began an investigation into possible Brown Act violations by the Dinuba Unified School District Board of Trustees and their failure to answer questions from the community regarding the dismissal of an employee from Wilson Elementary School upon receipt of a Citizen's Complaint.

PROCEDURES FOLLOWED

1. Interviewed relevant witnesses

2. Reviewed relevant records and documents

FINDINGS

1. There was demonstrated community support for the Wilson Elementary School Principal in question.
2. The Wilson Elementary School Principal in question was not terminated, but reassigned.

3. The School Board answered all written and oral questions that were presented by the community.
4. The Grand Jury found no instances of Brown Act violations or improprieties by the School Board.
5. The contact person on the complaint had no knowledge that a complaint had been sent to the Grand Jury. The identity of the complainant remains unknown.
6. The return address on the complaint was Wilson Elementary School.

CONCLUSIONS

The Dinuba Unified School District Board of Trustees completed the Wilson Elementary School Principal selection process in a transparent and professional manner with ample opportunity for public comment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

None

RESPONSES REQUIRED

None