



MENDOCINO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

PAUL A. TICHININ, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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July 19, 2010

Mendocino Grand Jury
Carol Rosenberg, Foreperson Pro Tem
P.O. Box 939
Ukiah, CA 95482

Dear Carol,

In response to the Grand Jury Report entitled “**Respect Needed, A Report on Orr Creek School Special Education**” dated May 12, 2010, my responses are as follows:

Findings

I agree with the findings numbered: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, first part of 14, 15, 17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35

I disagree either wholly or partially with the findings numbered: 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, second part of 14, 16, 18, 19, 23, 25, 30

8. Given the economic status of the State of California and lack of clarity around the educational budget there is concern amongst all employee’s in the state.
9. I have no information to support this allegation
10. I have no knowledge to support this allegation
11. This statement is untrue as the director meets with staff on a weekly basis and has accepted input on staffing and cost saving issues from all staff
13. The state budget crisis and lack of clarity around the state budget has made staff aware that there may be reductions, however, no decreases in salary may be imposed as they are subject to negotiations. In 2009/10 the management staff took a larger percentage reduction than any other employee group at MCOE.
14. Disagree with the statement “employees reported experiencing retaliation if they utilized the grievance process”. The grievance process also addresses alleged violations of the contract and I have no information that would suggest that any employee has had any problems or experienced retaliation while the using the process.
16. The agreement referenced was not an interim agreement it is a final agreement.
18. Disagree as no grievances were filed in 2009.
19. No written complaints have been received regarding health and safety issues, nor have any step of the grievance process been activated.
23. This is a subjective statement and there are a variety of variables that determine public participation in board meetings.

25. Every student shall receive a free and appropriate education and each school district is responsible for determining what services are needed by students residing within their boundaries.
30. The SELPA through the Superintendent's Policy Council allocates funds to school districts and then the school district determines their own budget for special education services.

Unable to respond to findings numbered: 1, 12

1. I am unable to respond to this finding as I have not seen or reviewed the complaint
12. Unable to respond as I have no information to support this allegation

Recommendations

Recommendations 1,2,4,5 contain issues related to collective bargaining and will not be implemented because it is not reasonable or appropriate for me to do so.

3. I have never retaliated against an employee or singled someone out for utilizing the grievance procedure.
6. This is already being done with monthly staff meetings, quarterly Administrative Council Meetings, bi-monthly newsletters, press releases and a variety of supplemental materials that are included with staff paychecks.
7. Management staff are considerate and professional when dealing with sensitive issues.
8. I agree that providing information to the general public regarding the complexities of SELPA funding is important and necessary. This recommendation will require further analysis to determine the best way in which to communicate this information to the public.
9. This issue is not within the jurisdiction of the Deputy Superintendent and will need to be addressed by the Mendocino County Board and Superintendent of Schools.
10. This issue is not within the jurisdiction of the Deputy Superintendent and will need to be addressed by the Superintendent of Schools.

This completes my responses to the report, if I can be of further assistance, please contact my office at 467-5001.

Sincerely,



Damon Dickinson
Deputy Superintendent

DD/kw