

September 30, 2015

Hayward Unified School District Board of Trustees
24411 Amador Street
Hayward, CA 94544

Dear Trustees:

We, the undersigned, are faith and community leaders in the Hayward area. Like you, we are deeply committed to the success of all students in our Hayward Unified School District. That success is currently being constrained by actions that we have observed during public meetings of your board. We write to formally express our concerns about the poor quality of your relationships with each other, and our concerns about the behavior of some members toward District employees, guests, and members of the public.

The negative behavior that we have observed has recurred for several years. Recent events during the closed and open sessions of the Board of Trustees' meeting on Wednesday, September 16, 2015 are a case in point.

During final comments at the special Board meeting held on Thursday, September 24, four Trustees reported that Superintendent Dobbs conducted himself in an unprofessional manner during the closed session of the Trustees' meeting on September 16. Mr. Dobbs, in a letter addressed to the Trustees on the following day, Friday, September 25, apologized for his behavior but also noted that some members of the Board had addressed school employees in an unprofessional manner at the closed session held on September 16. In addition, he noted that one member of the Board was discourteous to an international guest who spoke during public comments at that meeting. This latter situation is documented in the video coverage of the public portion of that meeting.

The behavior mentioned above, and the frequent recurrence of this type of demeaning and unproductive behavior is untenable. It detracts from your responsibilities and skews your priorities. For example, recognize that the district has an extraordinary opportunity not possible for many years. With the passage of Measure L the voters have authorized funds to significantly improve educational facilities within the district. You have a chance to make a meaningful change that will improve student learning. It deserves and needs your full attention.

We urge you to reflect on your public behavior as elected representatives of the community. Recognizing there are priorities to establish and grievances to heal we urge you to engage a professional consultant who can assist you to focus on appropriate board/superintendent relationships and governance procedures. Three organizations that can provide you with a list of qualified consultants include the following: California School Boards Association, Association of California School Administrators, and American Association of School Superintendents.

For the sake of the 24,000 students in the HUSD and our entire community, please take steps today to engage an external consultant to help you evaluate and improve governance relationships. Then, by November 11, 2015, provide the public with documentation of the engagement and your progressive plan for improvement and any measurable results that flow from your learning process.

So let us begin anew—remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Dr. Arlene K. Nehring, Eden United Church of Christ
The Rev. Chuck Horner, Evangelical Churches of Hayward
Mr. Paul Frumkin, Former Member HUSD Board of Trustees
Ms. Sara Lamnin, Hayward City Council
Mr. J. Francisco Zermeno C, Hayward City Council
Mr. Kim Huggett, Hayward Chamber of Commerce

Bishop J. W. Macklin, Glad Tidings COGC
The Rev. Joy Atkinson, Starr King UUA
Ms. Betty DeForest, South Hayward Parish
Supervisor Nate Miley, Alameda County, D-4
Mr. Ed Bullok, Hayward Realtor
Ms. Elisa Márquez, Hayward City Council