

Los Gatos Union School District
17010 Roberts Road
Los Gatos, CA 95032-4510
Phone: (408) 335-2000
Fax: (408) 395-6481
www.lgusd.k12.ca.us

J. Richard Whitmore, Superintendent



September 21, 2009

Mr. Don Kawashima, Foreperson
2008-09 Civil Grand Jury
Superior Court Building
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

FILED

SEP 28 2009

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

Dear Mr. Kawashima:

I am responding to your report of June 24, 2009, entitled "Who Really Benefits from Education Dollars?"

Recommendation 1

We disagree with the finding that all Boards approve overly generous benefits. Our governing board receives no health benefits or pension contribution. Our travel and conference costs are already minimized – in 2008 we sent one newly elected board member to the CSBA annual conference and in 2009 we have incurred no expense to date. We believe that continuing education is an important element of our work, as it is for any professional responsibility, and will continue to attend conferences when necessary to conduct our duties.

Recommendation 2

We disagree with the finding that each district should renegotiate its Superintendent contract. We believe our Superintendent is fairly compensated. We believe the broad-brush approach to reporting does these valued professionals a disservice. Most of the expenses highlighted in your Finding are not provided to our Superintendent.

Recommendation 3

We disagree in part with the finding. We do not believe a formula exists that would fairly calculate Superintendent compensation. We do believe in performance compensation and a small portion of our Superintendent's compensation is incentive-based.

Recommendation 4

We disagree with the finding. We believe the Superintendent search process is a bargain; for a small amount of money, we have access to a broad pool of talent that we could not access otherwise, and to a consultant who will help find the best match for our local needs. The search firm contracts are very economical when compared to private industry.

Recommendation 5

We agree with the finding. We are willing to explore County Counsel when appropriate but most of our legal work is highly specialized.

Recommendation 6

We disagree with the finding. We do not have statutory authority to reconfigure school districts.

In addition, I would like to note that our Board compensation was not accurately reported. Our Superintendent replied to the Grand Jury request for information and clearly stated that the Board received neither stipends nor benefits, yet the report says "Not Provided." He also provided full general ledger records for our Legal expenses which were not accurately reported.

Sincerely,



Phil Couchee, President
Los Gatos Union School District
Board of Trustees