

Pleasanton Unified School District



PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release
July 9, 2014

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PUSD Statement re: Settlement of Tort Claims

Pleasanton, California— Administrators of the joint powers authority that provides liability coverage to the Pleasanton Unified School District have reached settlements in two claims filed by district employees alleging sexual harassment and a hostile work environment at Walnut Grove Elementary School. The settlement came following a formal mediation session with retired Alameda County Superior Court Judge Bonnie Sabraw.

Under the terms of the agreement, the joint powers authority will pay each of the two employees \$245,000. These funds will not come from the district budget and will not impact district revenue or operations. In exchange, the employees have agreed to release the district from further claims.

The claims and information provided described a pattern of behavior by former Walnut Grove principal Jon Vranesh including the use of derogatory, vulgar and sexual terms to refer to female subordinates, discussing inappropriate subjects with employees, and making statements perceived as threats to the safety or job security of employees.

Claims filed against the district go through a process of evaluation and investigation. Options include rejecting the claim, negotiating a settlement or litigating the claim. In this case, an independent investigation found these complaints had merit and that the described sexual harassment did, in fact, take place. The administrator was placed on leave in 2013. Further, administrators of the joint powers authority reviewed the evidence in this case, concluded the allegations in the claims had been substantiated, and advised that the claims should be settled without delay.

Our district seeks to ensure that each of its schools and offices are workplaces where employees are treated with respect and dignity. Since the time the actions described in these claims were brought to our attention, we have taken deliberate steps to ensure that Walnut Grove Elementary is the kind of workplace we expect all of our facilities to be.

We are deeply grateful to the interim administrators, staff and parents at Walnut Grove for the hard work they have done this year, and we are proud to have hired Ms. Jan Steed as the new principal of the school. We anticipate a productive and fulfilling year for the Walnut Grove community.

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