



Cupertino Union School District

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June 18, 2015

Dear West Valley Elementary School Parents:

We have received many e-mails following our meeting with you on Monday night, June 15th. I'll try to answer your questions with the caveat that I cannot address individual personnel issues, by law, in this letter.

There has been a great deal of tension at West Valley among and between teachers, support staff, parents, and administration. If you and your family did not experience or were unaware of this tension – that's a good thing.

Collectively, the group dynamic created a culture that was not serving educational needs.

Pointing fingers at individuals or playing the blame game isn't productive.

The action to reconstitute West Valley was not taken lightly. Multiple interventions took place throughout the year. A new principal was put in place at the beginning of the year. District level union leadership talked with staff. An all-day session with a facilitator took place at the end of the year to assess the school climate. At this meeting it became clear that progress was minimal and internal change seemed unlikely.

While unprecedented, a conscious step to re-imagine the school, with a common vision and with staff that wanted to work collaboratively towards a common vision was chosen as a corrective action. Staff was asked to individually interview and commit to the school.

The district administration, the full board, and the District level union leadership all agreed this was the best approach.

All along the process District union leadership was consulted and present as the decisions were made. Union leadership agreed to all steps along the way until this week when we were asked by them to stop the interviews.

After our parent meeting on Monday, the teacher's union leadership asked for a process change and requested we not interview teachers to return to West Valley, but simply reassign all teachers. We have agreed to the union request.

It's time to look forward. To provide a fresh start, a new principal has been chosen. She has a proven track record and has experience opening a 'new' school. Interviews are taking place for teachers.

A parent meeting is scheduled for August to talk about integrating a parent voice into the vision for the school. I have high hopes for a school that provides a collaborative innovative place to work and an emotionally safe and strong academic learning environment for both students and staff.

Two Clarifications:

The 2014-15 principal was not fired. She was offered, and she accepted, another position within the District.

No staff has been fired – all will have jobs within the District in the fall.

We are committed to staffing West Valley with the best team possible. We have already begun consultations with West Valley teachers to determine suitable assignments at other District schools. We are also interviewing and placing new staff members both from within and outside the District.

Sincerely,

Wendy Gudalewicz
Superintendent