

Friday, August 10, 2012

To the Hayward Unified School District community:

The school year for our year-round schools has begun. Our traditional schools are set to begin on Thursday, August 23, and we are excited to announce the Second Annual Million Father March for Hayward Unified School District (HUSD). This encompasses male figures bringing their children to school on the first day of classes.

Over the summer I was able to visit some of our summer learning sites that allowed students to recover credits for high school and graduation, attend enrichment classes, and provide learning for extended school year.

Over the last few weeks, I have been thinking about "leadership," and what leadership means and looks like. The issue of leadership continues to be an important topic to improving our school district. As trustees, we must realize that constructive conflict resolution is the best way to guarantee effective leadership for HUSD. In order for our district to flourish for our students' sake, the Board of Trustees needs to lead effectively and efficiently. We need to allow for conflict, which is healthy for any organization, and at the same time work through that conflict openly, and constructively.

There have been some developments over the last several months which I feel has distracted our community, staff, Trustees, and unfortunately, even our students. The recent articles on the news website www.ebcitizen.com has reported some alleged improprieties with members of our school board. We must acknowledge this negativity, seek the truth, learn from the experience, and move forward while remembering this lesson as it becomes history so we can put forth an effort not to make the same mistakes again. Hopefully this acknowledgement will guide and lead us to a level of increased trust and success of our school district to benefit our students in a positive way.

Bylaws, which had already been discussed at the July 25 meeting For clarification purposes, the Board held a special meeting Wednesday, August 8, with the expectation that amended bylaws would be presented. However, the discussion was a rehash of the first reading of some bylaws that were presented at the July 25 meeting. On July 25 all board Trustees were able to comment on the bylaws they felt needed amending. Staff was to work on the amendments, consult legal counsel, and bring the bylaws back to the board for a second reading at a later date. At the August 8 meeting, it was stated that the Board directed staff to bring these policies back to us at a special board meeting for another first reading. In reviewing the video (http://www.husd.k12.ca.us/cms/page_view?d=x&pid=&vpid=1343052019931) from our meeting on July 25, it was never stated to bring these policies back for another first reading. The miscommunication of the reason for this meeting shows the need to work

on clear communication strategies to minimize confusion in an effort to not waste money and staff time.

What I feel should have been one of the topics of the August 8 meeting, a request made per our current board bylaws, was the exploration and discussion of the HUSD facilities master plan (which can be read at <http://www.husd.k12.ca.us/FacilitiesMP>). Had we done so, we could have revisited plans pertaining to the retrofit, safety, modernization, and technological upgrade of existing schools in the district. We have been able to see the results of this master plan with the building of several new schools. It is unfortunate that the Board of Trustees has been prohibited from engaging in a conversation about this plan. It is my hope that through leadership, Trustees will engage in periodic discussions about the master plan, reach out to the community, and have dynamic conversations to create plans to improve our facilities for all of our students so they may have the opportunity to learn 21st century skills in 21st century buildings! This will also be beneficial for the employees of our district as they will be able to work more efficiently in modern and safe facilities, and with the latest technology. Our schools are outdated. If we expect our children to have a world-class education, we need to provide them with world-class facilities.

The HUSD has the opportunity and ability to grow into a unified district of success for all students. The community is clamoring for change, demanding improvement, and insisting upon accountability. The Board of Trustees must follow bylaws and govern through policy and hold staff accountable for executing plans aimed at raising achievement for all students. This is an opportunity to understand that we are all leaders and need to work collectively at strengthening education opportunities for all of our students.

Looking forward to the 2012-13 school year,



William McGee
Member, Board of Trustees
Hayward Unified School District