

August 30, 2017

Mr. Khanh Tran
President
Alum Rock Unified Elementary School District Board of Trustees
2930 Gay Avenue
San Jose, CA 95127

President Tran:

We write to share our concerns about the anticipated vote of the Alum Rock Unified Elementary School District Board of Trustees regarding the “job description” of a deputy superintendent reporting directly to the Board with oversight for the District’s controversial bond program. Closely related to this decision is the Board majority’s on-again, off-again consideration of the employment contract of the District Superintendent, Hilaria Bauer.

No objective observer of the Board’s contemplated actions can disassociate this decision from its factual context: the audit findings by the State of California concerning the District’s alleged improprieties in the handling of bond-funded construction contracts, and the pending investigation by the Santa Clara County District Attorney.

As we await the findings of the DA, any move by the Board to marginalize or terminate, or otherwise limit the oversight of Superintendent Bauer can only be seen as retribution against a whistleblower. More importantly, it will send a message to our Alum Rock families that the Board majority elevates the interest of politically-connected and financially influential parties, such as Del Terra Real Estate, above that of our children.

In the last two and a half years, the City of San Jose has invested millions of dollars in new programs to support Alum Rock children and families including SJ Learns afterschool programs, expanded community center youth programs, SJ Works youth employment and internships, and expanded services through our public libraries serving the East Side. Continued investment depends on the Council’s confidence that Alum Rock will use public resources in a responsible, fiscally prudent, and transparent manner.

The City of San Jose has maintained an excellent working relationship with Superintendent Hilaria Bauer. Her commitment to the District’s children and their families, and her demonstrated transparency have been vital to our collaboration.

We hope to continue this partnership with Alum Rock, and we will watch the Board's actions in the weeks ahead with great interest. More importantly, our children will be watching.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sam Liccardo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sam" being more prominent than the last name "Liccardo".

Mayor Sam Liccardo

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Magdalena Carrasco". The signature is highly stylized and cursive, with many loops and flourishes, particularly in the last name "Carrasco".

Vice Mayor Magdalena Carrasco

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tam Nguyen". The signature is cursive and somewhat compact, with a clear underline at the end of the last name "Nguyen".

Councilmember Tam Nguyen

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sylvia Arenas". The signature is cursive and clearly legible, with the first name "Sylvia" and last name "Arenas" being distinct.

Councilmember Sylvia Arenas