



LEGAL SERVICES OFFICE

1515 Hughes Way, Long Beach, California 90810 \* (562) 997-8251 \*FAX (562) 997-8092

June 25, 2002

Reyna Akers

Re: Your letter of June 19, 2002 – Selection of Superintendent Considerations

Dear Ms. Akers:

Thank you for your letter to me of June 19, 2002 in which you requested information considered in the appointment of Chris Steinhauser as the new Superintendent of this school district. Since you addressed your letter to me, I will take the liberty of including some of my own observations in this response.

Your comments indicate that you think very highly of Mr. Steinhauser. The Governing Board, the staff, and the various communities which have had occasion to work with Mr. Steinhauser are very much in agreement with you.

Chris is a true educator, one with a track record of educational success in our schools, and one with a hands-on plan for further success in our schools. The Board was very aware of his competencies and experience when they entered into negotiations for his employment as Superintendent. I give the Board credit for having the clarity of vision to see that they had the strongest candidate already in their employ. It is human nature to think that others elsewhere have skills and answers which our own staff may not have. It is an easy error to make, as we do not see the weaknesses and failures of those at a distance, but we do see the day-to-day struggles of those who work close to us. Thus it is not surprising that we may erroneously start from a position that others at a distance solve problems better than our local staff.

Our Board members and staff, in carrying out their duties, have had occasion over the years to interact with others in school districts both within California and elsewhere. In doing so, we have learned that other school districts see our school district and our staff as at the forefront of educational success and leadership. Our Board and staff are very aware of the successes and struggles of other school districts, and we are very aware that they consider our staff to be among the best in the profession. While these other school districts may have some talented staff members, none, I believe, come close to the team which presently work for this school district. Mr. Steinhauser's career in our school district exemplifies that standard of excellence. Fortunately for our community, our Governing Board understood that and took action to retain his services for this district.

Ms. Akers  
June 25, 2002  
Page 2

In doing so, they saved the significant costs and time associated with conducting a search. Given their existing awareness of the candidates available, the costs would have been a waste of funds. Further, Mr. Steinhauser was already widely known in our community. Since the Governing Board announced on May 21, 2002 that it wished to open negotiations with Mr. Steinhauser for his employment as Superintendent, the Board has not received a single negative comment about its choice. It is obvious that the community agrees that a search was unnecessary and that Chris is held in high regard by all who know him.

Once the Governing Board entered into negotiations for a new Superintendent, it was required to negotiate terms of employment which would obtain for the school district the services of a Superintendent and to compensate the candidate in accordance with those duties. In another context, everyone would agree that the services of a police officer are of the highest importance to a community. However, when a city negotiates to hire a city manager, it does not negotiate to pay the candidate the salary of a police officer. The city council must negotiate terms of employment which will obtain for it city manager services, and the negotiations must prevent the desired candidate from leaving the city and seeking employment elsewhere. Our Governing Board is required to function in the same competitive manner to ensure that this school district will have the services of a quality Superintendent.

In order to assist the Board in its contract negotiations, staff obtained information regarding salaries from three sources. Please see included herewith a one page LACOE salary survey for 2001-2002 which lists the salaries of the Superintendents of Los Angeles County school districts, from Los Angeles Unified with an student population of 700,000 and a salary of \$250,000, to tiny Acton-Agua Dulce, with a student population of 2,200 and a salary of \$107,800. Also included herewith is a one page listing of information provided by OCDE showing the Superintendent salaries of the larger Orange County school districts, from Capistrano Valley Unified at a salary of over \$216,000 and with a student population of about half of that of Long Beach Unified, to Orange Unified which is about one-third the size of Long Beach and at a salary of over \$163,000. Obtaining the services of an administrator with Mr. Steinhauser's experience to serve this, the third largest school district in California, with some 95,000 students, and at a salary of \$198,000, is very reasonable when compared to other districts.

We also obtained on-line the October 2001 Council of Great City Schools salary and tenure survey of eight pages which is also included. The CGCS member districts are listed on the last page. I find astonishing the statistics on tenure which state that the average time on the job for CGCS Superintendents at the time of survey was only 2 ½ years, and that 2/3 had been in office between one and five years.

Long Beach Unified routinely keeps its Superintendents for ten years or more, and we consider that fact to be critical to our long term success. It is easy for an outside candidate to provide a glowing interview, be selected, come into a district with a showy campaign, shuffle all the pieces around in a weak imitation of accomplishment, and, when the results are disappointing in 2 or 3 years, make a hasty exit. Our Governing Board has the experience to understand the pattern illustrated by the CGCS tenure statistics, and have consistently steered the district on a more responsible course.

Ms. Akers  
June 25, 2002  
Page 3

When a Superintendent serves on the job for 10 years or more, your successes and failures are apparent to the entire community. That hard reality is a powerful motivator. The results of that motivation to succeed are written in the history of success of this district. It is no accident that, for virtually its entire existence, this school district has retained quality staff and has also been considered to be an exemplary school district. Success is elusive and difficult to maintain; failure is always waiting just outside the door. Wise decision-making and long term accountability have kept failure at bay.

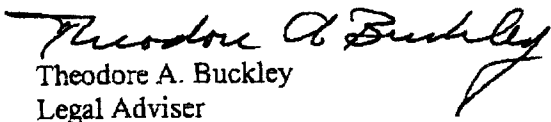
Whatever salary a Board would pay a Superintendent, there are those who will think it is too high or too low. The same holds true for cities and their city managers. However, it is the professional staff, acting under the direction of elected officials, who carry out the myriad actions and details which, taken together, constitute a successful program. The selection of a Superintendent is the single most important decision a Governing Board makes. It is clear that Long Beach Unified's Governing Boards have been making excellent selections for many years.

On the issue of providing a term life policy for Mr. Steinhauser, he is a father with children still in school. If he were lost to them, the policy would provide only five or six years of lost income for their needs. His request to have a policy of insurance instead of other forms of compensation is illustrative of his concern for the welfare of his family. Further, given the demands of the Superintendentcy, I believe it to be a wise action.

Thank you for taking the time to hear me out on the issues raised by your request. I know that you have had a long-term interest in the school district and for that reason I thought it appropriate to share with you how I see these matters affecting the quality of the district's services.

Thank you again for your interest in the programs and activities of this district.

Sincerely,

  
Theodore A. Buckley  
Legal Adviser

Enclosures

2001-02 District Survey of Salaries and Fringe Benefits in Los Angeles County

PRELIMINARY SUMMARY OF VERIFIED MAXIMUM RATES OF COMPENSATION\*

SECTION B: UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Unified School District	Rank		V District Supt
Los Angeles	1		\$250,000
Long Beach	2		236,849
Glendale	3		177,525
Downey	4		172,394
Pasadena	5		170,000
Norwalk-La Mirada	6		166,525
Bellflower	7.5		165,000 <sup>Z</sup>
Compton	7.5		165,000
Montebello	9		164,700 <sup>Z</sup>
Covina-Valley	10		162,604
ABC	11		159,000
Athlambra City/Hi Sch	12	Q3	157,636 <sup>Z</sup>
Azusa	13		155,480
Burbank	14		155,030 <sup>Z</sup>
Hacienda-La Puente	15		155,000
Lynwood	16		152,972
Pomona	17		151,569
Santa Monica-Malibu	18		151,324
Paramount	19.5		150,000
Rowland	19.5		150,000
Manhattan Beach	21		146,832
Baldwin Park	22		146,620
West Covina	23		145,900
Walnut Valley	24	Mid	145,236 <sup>Z</sup>
Beverly Hills	25		145,000 <sup>Z</sup>
Las Virgenes	26		144,892 <sup>Z</sup>
Redondo Beach	27		144,377 <sup>Z</sup>
Arcadia	28		143,000 <sup>Z</sup>
Glendora	29		142,500 <sup>Z</sup>
Duarte	30		141,000
Palos Verdes	31		140,638
Bonita	32		140,000 <sup>Z</sup>
Charter Oak	33		138,666
Monrovia	34		138,373 <sup>Z</sup>
El Segundo	35		133,000
Claremont	36	Q1	133,224
Inglewood	37		130,000 <sup>Z</sup>
Temple City	38		128,287
South Pasadena	39		128,137 <sup>Z</sup>
Torrance	40		128,112
San Gabriel	41		125,820 <sup>Z</sup>
El Rancho	42		125,580 <sup>Z</sup>
San Marino	43		121,000
Culver City	44		119,776 <sup>Z</sup>
Bassett	45		113,000 <sup>Z</sup>
La Cañada	46		110,400
Acton-Agua Dulce	47		107,800 <sup>Z</sup>

\*Salaries reflect the last effective annualized rates excluding compensation for doctorate, longevity or extensive career service pay, merit, locatio one-time only differentials.

<sup>Z</sup>Not settled

Capo USD	45M ADA	\$216,318
SVUSD	35M ADA	\$216,137
SAAna USD	61M ADA	\$199,120
GGUSD	50M ADA	\$198,465
PlacentiaUSD	28M ADA	\$186,097
NptMsaUSD	21M ADA	\$182,720
IrvineUSD	25M ADA	\$179,579
OrgUSD	32M ADA	\$163,835