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Teacher advocacy
is our business.

Student achievement
is our goal.

April 21, 2017

Dear Ravenswood City School District Board of Trustees:

This letter expresses our lack of confidence and trust in Dr. Gloria Hernandez-Goff to lead the Ravenswood City School District. This letter is a vote of no confidence by the teachers of Ravenswood City School District in her leadership of Ravenswood City School District.

This past summer, the Superintendent was given an extension of her initial three year contract. While RTA was not a part of this evaluation process as it stands, we respectfully offer the Board some insight regarding the Superintendent's performance and in the future would encourage the Board to take a 360 Degree Review process into consideration. After all, the leadership and work of the Superintendent has a direct impact on teachers, support staff, administration, and most importantly, our students and community. RTA has done a great deal of research and has many positive ideas on ways to craft goals for leadership that would help facilitate the transition to a 360 Degree Review and increase the performance of our leaders that would trickle down in a way that would increase instructional effectiveness and the work-culture of our district.

In an effort to be transparent and forthright, we will highlight the negative impact Dr. Hernandez-Goff has had on the teaching and learning environment in the Ravenswood City School District. Granted, she brings positive assets to the table, but the negative consequences of her actions FAR outweigh the positives.

RTA has framed our grievances by referencing the standards of excellence from the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders. These standards originate from the State of California's Commission on Teacher Credentialing and are used by reputable educational organizations such as West Ed and the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) to measure the effectiveness of school and district leaders. **RTA has provided the language of the standards, outlined the important points of each standard, and explained how our current administrator has failed to meet each criterion.** We encourage the Board to meet with RTA representatives and ask questions of clarity and/or expand on the points described.

Standard 1: DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A SHARED VISION

Educational leaders facilitate the development and implementation of a shared vision of learning and growth of all students.

Standard 2: INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Educational leaders shape a collaborative culture of teaching and learning informed by professional standards and focused on student and professional growth.

Standard 3: MANAGEMENT AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Educational leaders manage the organization to cultivate a safe and productive learning and working environment.

Standard 4: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Educational leaders collaborate with families and other stakeholders to address diverse student and community interests and mobilize community resources.

Standard 5: ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

Educational leaders make decisions, model, and behave in ways that demonstrate professionalism, ethics, integrity, justice, and equity and hold staff to the same standard.

Standard 6: EXTERNAL CONTEXT AND POLICY

Educational leaders influence political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts affecting education to improve education policies and practices.

In the past four years, there have been a number of issues surrounding the performance of Dr. Hernandez-Goff, however, the 2016-2017 school year has produced the most blatantly unprofessional and aggressively hostile actions we have seen. To follow is a detailed account of some of the most heinous actions taken by the Superintendent to date:

The Comprehensive Middle School (CMS)

Standards Violated: *Standard 1, Standard 2, Standard 3, Standard 4, Standards 5*

Few if any stakeholders have been included in the CMS Task Force though the Superintendent and District leadership would have you believe otherwise. Teacher involvement in the plan has been minimal at best; the task force had few teachers on it and there has been zero teacher input since October of 2016. In the beginning, there were multiple committees setup within the Task Force, however no structures were in place for those committees to make decisions, speak to each other, or have input in the overall plan within the larger Task Force. All information was directed upward, and was never disseminated to the groups; therefore, no committees were able to plan collaboratively or understand the framework and structure needed in order to plan a comprehensive middle school. All decisions have been top-down; there has been almost no transparency through the process, limited teacher involvement, limited parent involvement, and the CMS has been all for show as no stakeholder input has been taken into account in any way. As well, there has been no feedback loop at all. When undertaking a project of this size, a plan should be presented to staff, feedback collected, plans adjusted, and that process should continue until suitable mission, vision, and plan has been laid out. In other words, the teachers who will work there, the classified staff who will work there, the students who will learn there and the parents who are trusting the district with the education of their children, their future, has been and remains completely disenfranchised from any substantive impact on the CMS plan.

Not only has the plan not been transparent, but the way that it has been communicated has been illogical and offensive to teachers. Since no communication was going out to teachers, teachers were not able to give answers to parents and were only able to share with families what they had heard via rumors and hearsay. This leads to confusion and eventually, administrators were told by Dr. Hernandez-Goff to direct teachers to not speak about the CMS to parents, and that information would be shared to staff after Spring Break. This is a questionable directive on many levels- first amendment rights being one of them.

On April 20th, 2017, a parent meeting was called by the district to present the CMS Plan to the parents. Teachers were not informed about this meeting and the only way that we found out about it was when students informed us that their parents received an all-call. For a meeting of this magnitude, parents should have received more than a simple all-call; they should have received a formal letter and invitation to attend. All of the information that was shared at that meeting was information that has not been shared with staff. We learned that multiple grade levels will be shifted either to or away from certain sites, which means that teachers are learning that their positions will be re-assigned through parents and students, not from the district. This is not only highly inappropriate but belittling and disrespectful to teachers.

District Feedback Survey Results

Standards Violated: *Standard 1, Standard 2, Standard 3, Standards 5*

The district made an effort to collect feedback about why people are not staying in the district. This is great! We would love for the district to take this information and create a comprehensive plan on how to recruit and retain great teachers. While the effort is a good front, its execution has been tragic. In order to share this information, the district called an all staff meeting at the last minute. Instead of holding our regular staff meeting at our site (which teachers and principals had spent time planning), the district decided the night prior to call all staff to the Costano/49er gym to share their findings from the staff satisfaction survey they conducted. To be clear, instead of having a meeting that had been planned at each site, the district asked that we leave our busy parking lots immediately after school, drive to Costano/49er where there is not sufficient parking during their busy dismissal, and then listen to a presentation that was not presented on a big enough screen for all to see. On March 28th, when we arrived, the district did not plan enough seating and in the middle of the presentation, they had to roll out extra tables while the presenter was talking. When it came time for Questions and Answers, the external firm's presenter was abruptly cut-off by Dr. Hernandez-Goff, and instead Dr. Hernandez-Goff made Director of Human Resources field questions alone with no support from district staff.

We were told that our questions would be "noted and the PowerPoint would be sent out later." It took the district 24 days to send out the PowerPoint slides and the questions from the meeting. When this email came out that night (which only sent to some teachers), it had zero answers to our questions. How can they sit on the presentation and questions for 24 days and have zero answers? This adds to the frustration and lack of transparency that teachers feel, considering that the majority of the feedback was about the teachers' distrust and lack of faith in district leadership.

Teacher Assignments and Communication

Standards Violated: *Standard 2, Standard 3, Standards 5*

The way teachers have been informed of reassignments this year is insensitive, and in some cases opens up the district to legal action. In the case of next year, parents and families were informed of school grade level closures before staff was. This means that teachers are learning that their positions will no longer exist at their current school site from parents and students, not from the district or site administration. This is disrespectful, unfair, and generates a serious air of distrust from Dr. Hernandez-Goff toward her own staff. On top of this, throughout the year, the Superintendent has informed staff members of the re-assignment of other staff members before the person

being re-assigned had even been told. This is both illegal and a major violation of trust by the Superintendent. In addition, many teachers have been “reassigned” from their classroom positions to district positions such as AVID tutors, district substitutes, and secretarial-type positions instead of giving them the support they need to be successful in their position as a classroom teacher.

Superintendent Visibility and Responsiveness

Standards Violated: *Standard 1, Standard 2, Standard 3*

A final example of Dr. Hernandez-Goff’s failure as a leader is her lack of visibility at schools and unavailability to teacher leaders. In her first 3 years as Superintendent, her only sightings at schools were for meetings with administration; she rarely visited classrooms. Dr. Hernandez-Goff is unfamiliar with many of the teachers’ and administrators’ names, positions, or grade levels and subjects taught. While we understand that she should not be on campuses every day, for Ravenswood being such as small district, with only 8 sites, it should not be hard to visit the classrooms of the schools you are responsible for. She should be able to visit all of the school sites at least once a month or once every other month. How does one effectively lead change if they rarely see the daily work in action? It is unacceptable that it has taken the principal walk-throughs this school year for the Superintendent to be visible in just a few classrooms at each site, which allowed at least 3 or 4 of our colleagues at each site to witness her presence in their classrooms for the first time in their careers as educators in Ravenswood.

As well, throughout her time in the district, Dr. Hernandez-Goff is noticeably absent when difficult conversations must take place. In fact, even when her presence is requested, it is often refused. If she is not willing to be at the table for these conversations, how can she lead us into the future? This visibility and lack of responsiveness is not just a one-of scenario; she has demonstrated her desire to be heard and not seen over and over again throughout the years despite calls for her presence.

These are only the most egregious accounts of Dr. Hernandez-Goff’s actions over the last number of months; they do not account for previous years. We encourage the board to engage with the educators of Ravenswood in order to gain a deeper understanding of each of these issues. We know that the Board will do its due diligence as elected representatives to safeguard our district and student success, but RTA would like to be very clear on its position regarding her future employment. RTA requests Dr. Hernandez-Goff’s resignation and removal effective immediately. After four years of failed leadership, time is of the essence. There is no time to put together an improvement plan or delay change. The District cannot afford to have her here for another year. We are ready for change. In fact, we embrace change. However the systemic change we long for that will positively impact student achievement must be led by someone whose communication skills and decision making process inspires, empowers, and supports ALL those involved to work together and work to his/her fullest potential. Educators cannot continue to work under these hostile and draining conditions. As long as Dr. Hernandez-Goff leads this district, we continue to see a flood of educators leaving us each year. We are certain that RTA Educators are not the only concerned stakeholder and encourage you as a board to reach out to other stakeholders such as CSEA, Administrators, and the greater Ravenswood community.

In closing, our students deserve a strong education leader who fosters an environment conducive to rigorous teaching and learning. The current Superintendent has her own agenda; she is operating under the guise of student achievement while simultaneously hindering others’ abilities to maximize their efforts to increase student achievement. We owe our students and community so much more. We have one simple request and two invitations:

1. Call for the immediate resignation of Dr. Gloria Hernandez-Goff
 - a. The Asst. Superintendent would become the Interim Superintendent
 - b. Create a Superintendent Search Committee, comprised of the necessary stakeholders (RTA, CSEA, Principal, DO staff, Parents, Funders, and Community members to find our next Superintendent
2. Begin a meaningful and deep conversation with RTA and its constituents about the needs of our district and any other stakeholders who express interest.
3. Assign each board member to 1-2 school sites where they can engage in our daily work. Come to our schools, see our classrooms, see the kids, and experience the amazing things that take place daily in Ravenswood.

We implore you to do the right thing and make a change.

With Confidence,

The Concerned Teachers of the Ravenswood Teachers Association (signature pages attached)