

Chronology Related to Grievance Against Denise Herrmann

(Prepared by Palo Alto Weekly)

August, 2014

Herrmann begins as principal at Gunn

Wednesday, September 17, 2014

"Informal meeting" between Herrmann, site representatives and Teri Baldwin regarding the use of Schoology by unit members at Gunn High School. (Source: 11/10/2014 Grievance)

Wednesday, October 15, 2014

Gunn 2014 graduate Quinn Gens dies by suicide

Friday, October 17, 2014

Meeting with Herrmann, Teri Baldwin, Nicole Menache (Site Representative) and Marc Iglar (PAEA Executive Board member at large) to "remind her that this was in violation of the contract." (Source: 11/10/2014 Grievance)

Wednesday, October 22, 2014

Herrmann sends out "Principal's Update" stating that "although PAEA contract does not specifically require teachers to use Schoology, it goes require teachers to post assignments and grades regularly. At our October staff meeting, I shared my expectation that all teachers post assignments using the calendar feature on Schoology and include an estimate of the time required for a proficient student to complete the task." "I am appealing to the 'spirit of the law', not the 'letter of the law.' I presented this expectation as a challenge—not a directive." (Source: "Principal's Update, Quarter 1, October 2014")

Wednesday, October 29, 2014

Minutes from Instructional Council meeting sent to all teachers stating that "Schoology, Gunn's software for conveying classroom information to students and parents, should be used by all teachers to post assignments and grades." (Source: 11/10/2014 Grievance)

Tuesday, November 4, 2014

Gunn junior Cameron Lee dies by suicide

Monday, November 10, 2014

PAEA Executive Board notifies Herrmann of their allegation she violated Appendix C, Section 1 of the union contract and demand that she issue a written retraction to parents and Gunn teachers, "previewed" by Scott Bowers and Teri Baldwin. (Source: 11/10/2014 Grievance)

Wednesday, November 12, 2014

Email from Director of Elementary Education Barbara Harris to Herrmann after learning of the grievance: "You will be just fine. This is just showing you the real deal of what you will be facing leading in this district." (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Email from Herrmann's secretary, Martha Elderon, to Herrmann asking how to handle Herrmann's statement about Schoology and the grievance at recent Instructional Council meeting. (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Thursday, November 13, 2014

Email from undisclosed person to Gunn staff: "PAEA would like to express their condolences and support all of you in your healing process. Please join us in the guidance office tomorrow, Friday, morning, for coffee and pastries. Just a little something to feed the soul." (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Response from Gunn staff member, copied to Teri Baldwin: "We are all very emotionally exhausted, and it seems rather insensitive to serve our new principal with a grievance at this very moment (especially since our entire staff was not in agreement that we wanted this grievance to be filed)! We have lost two students from our community in the last month, and Denise has been extremely supportive of us all! It is very hard to lose a student to suicide, and this past week has been extremely challenging. This action of filing a grievance within a week (!) of hearing the news of [Cameron] was just insensitive!" "Teri, I hope that moving forward that you can encourage our staff to work through our differences with our principal first before filing grievances. I wish you would have encouraged our staff to engage in conversations with Denise before moving to a grievance. I do not agree with this line of action at all, and am rather upset that the union is not listening to my voice!!!" (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Sunday, November 16, 2014

Letter to Denise Herrmann from Gunn faculty member: "...I wanted to express how very sorry and frustrated I am that this issue regarding Schoology posting has exploded into an official union grievance. It makes me very upset, and as far as I can tell this official union action was taken with no real sense of the Gunn faculty's wishes, and I know that this turn of events does not represent the feelings of most of the Gunn teachers..." (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Tuesday, November 18, 2014

School board meeting; nothing on published closed session agenda pertaining to grievance.

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

Herrmann circulates draft response to grievance for input to McGee, Bowers, Marilyn Cook. (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Friday, November 21, 2014

Herrmann draft response to grievance sent to Teri Baldwin by Scott Bowers. (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Herrmann email exchange with Bowers pleading for approval to share her response with her staff and asking about the timing for union review and approval of the final draft. She wanted to discuss at Monday all-staff conversation (in-service day) but Bowers says it must wait until PAEA meeting with him, Baldwin and CTA's Christal Watts on Tuesday 11/25. (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Confidential Weekly (completely redacted) sent to school board. (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Monday, November 24, 2014

Herrmann sends email to Gunn staff about minimum days on Monday and Tuesday and stating she had submitted a response to grievance but wasn't allowed to share it with the faculty until after Tuesday meeting between Bowers, Baldwin and CTA. (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Herrmann verbally conveys her response to the grievance to Gunn staff. (Source: Interview with Herrmann.)

Dauber and Godfrey contact Max McGee about grievance after receiving Bowers' Confidential Weekly; they ask about Brown Act and why it's considered confidential. (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Tuesday, November 25, 2014

Bowers, Baldwin, Watts meet at 11 a.m. to review Herrmann response. (Source: Documents released in response to PRA)

Thursday, December 4, 2014

Baldwin emails Bowers (completely redacted) to set up another meeting on the grievance. After email exchange, meeting is set for Dec. 15. (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Sunday, December 7, 2014

Herrmann emails Bowers asking if there is an update on the grievance and stating she wants to send letter to her staff about it. (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Friday, December 12, 2014

12:11 p.m. Palo Alto Weekly reporter Elena Kadvanly emails Teri Baldwin asking about grievance. Baldwin responds at 1:27 p.m. the same day that "According to our contract, a grievance is a confidential claim, so as the union president I wouldn't release the details of a grievance for confidentiality reasons. I will say it is in the beginning stages and will probably be resolved to everyone's mutual satisfaction."

1:03 p.m. Bowers sends email to attorney Sarah Levitan Kaatz at Lozano Smith; completely redacted. (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Monday, December 15, 2014

Bowers, Baldwin and Watts meet at 3 p.m. (Source: Documents released in response to PRA)

Unknown Date

Herrmann response to grievance is sent to all Gunn staff. (Source: Released in response to PRA, but document is undated.)

Tuesday, December 16, 2014

8:36 a.m. McGee receives email from PAW reporter Kadvanly asking about grievance filed by Gunn teachers and requesting copy.

8:43 a.m. McGee responds that "your information is wrong," that PAEA filed a grievance and that it is a confidential matter.

8:47 a.m. Kadvanly asks, didn't PAEA file on behalf of the teachers?

8:51 a.m. McGee responds that "PAEA Executive Board determines whether or not to file grievances. Sorry, but this is a confidential matter."

9:33 a.m. McGee forwards email exchange with Kadwany to Teri Baldwin (contents redacted) (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Friday, January 9, 2015

Kadwany emails Herrmann asking about grievance and asking to talk with her.

Saturday, January 10, 2015

Herrmann forwards Kadwany email to Bowers, Katherine Baker and Charles Young asking for direction on how to respond. (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Sunday, January 11, 2015

Bowers recommends replying that it is a confidential matter that is "now in the past." "I believe that is how Teri replied." (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Monday, January 12, 2015

Herrmann responds to Kadwany as suggested by Bowers and refers her to Bowers for any further questions.

Thursday, January 15, 2015

8:21 a.m. Palo Alto Weekly makes PRA request for grievance documents; request acknowledged by McGee.

10:45 a.m. Bowers sends himself an email with subject "Write response" and content: PAEA response to grievance." (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Friday, January 23, 2015

8:44 a.m. Bowers sends email to Kadwany, stating "Dr McGee forwarded your PRA request to me. I am in the process of gathering the information you requested. Once the material has been accumulated and reviewed for confidential information, I will send it along to you. I hope to have the information available in a few weeks."

Bowers sends "Confidential Weekly" to board of trustees, entirely redacted. (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Bowers sends email to attorney Kaatz summarizing conversation from the day before; otherwise entirely redacted except subject line: "Confidential Language and PRA check" (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Monday, January 26, 2015

4:16 p.m. Bowers emails Weekly's PRA request to California Teachers Association representative Christal Watts, asking for her thoughts. (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Wednesday, January 28, 2015

Watts emails Bowers stating she had spoken to CTA legal staff about the PRA request and wants to meet with Bowers, McGee and Baldwin, stating it's important for McGee to attend a portion of the meeting. (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Friday, January 30, 2015

Herrmann sends message to parents about suicide & school response. (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Monday, February 9, 2015

8:55 a.m. Kadwany sends email to Bowers asking about status of PRA request.

5:25 p.m. Bowers sends email to Baldwin and Watts (fully redacted) enclosing PRA request and a letter entitled "Notice of Request for Grievance Records" stating PAEA would have an opportunity to review documents the district would be releasing to the Weekly and explaining that PAEA could obtain a protective order if it wished to block release of any document. (Source: Released in response to PRA)

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

2:18 p.m. Kathleen Ruegsegger emails Kadwany asking for the names of recipients/senders of emails we were requesting in our PRA request.

2:54 p.m. Bowers emails Kadwany: "We are working on gathering the materials. I sent a letter to PAEA letting them know that the District received this request and that we are intending to provide you with the materials. Once I have the materials together I will share them with them so they can decide if they wish to challenge the release. If they don't take any action, I will send them over to you."

9:26 p.m. Kadwany emails Ruegsegger the names requested. (Email thread shows this was forwarded on to Bowers on Feb. 23.)

Wednesday, February 25, 2015

Kadwany emails Bowers, Ruegsegger and McGee asking for status of PRA response.

Friday, February 27, 2015

Ruegsegger responds: "I'm not sure if Scott Bowers responded to directly to you, but we will collect the information requested. When completed, the documents will be submitted to PAEA, and they will have ten days to determine if they will seek to block their release. I will keep you informed as each stage is worked on."

Weekly publisher Bill Johnson sends email to Ruegsegger, Bowers and McGee protesting the delays in responding; Ruegsegger sends acknowledgment email.

Saturday, February 28, 2015

Johnson sends email to school board members about the lack of responsiveness to PRA requests.

Tuesday, March 3, 2015

Email from McGee informing the Weekly that all documents would be made available on Thursday or Friday, March 5th or 6th.

Wednesday, March 4, 2015

Email from Bowers indicating PAEA and CTA had been provided with all the documents and that they would be available to Weekly on March 11th.

Wednesday, March 11, 2015

Email from Bowers to Weekly, forwarding CTA's Watts email to Bowers, indicating the district sent the documents for CTA review on March 4 and that the union needed more time to review them. Bowers notified Weekly that would be a further delay of another five business days.

Tuesday, March 17, 2015

Bowers sends Weekly responsive documents to PRA request of January 15, 2015, with numerous redactions.