

Statement of Palo Alto School Board Vice President Dana Tom

One of the Board's highest priorities has always been to maintain a safe and respectful school environment for all students and staff. Our District has high expectations for professional conduct, and when these standards are not met, we expect a prompt, informed and fair response from District staff.

Last June, complaints of inappropriate behavior regarding the former Palo Alto High School Principal were reported to District administrators by school staff members. These concerns were taken seriously and an investigation began immediately, with assistance from the District's legal counsel.

While disputing some of the allegations, the employee accepted responsibility for his behavior. Citing matters both related and unrelated to the complaints, he requested support and a reassignment to a classroom position for the 2013-'14 school year.

Following the investigation and further consultation with legal counsel, the Board approved a corrective action plan in accordance with California Education Code, including - clear notice of unsatisfactory performance; clear guidance on expected conduct; clear consequences; and clear provisions for District assistance.

The Board authorized the requested reassignment to a classroom position after thoroughly considering the circumstances, the employee's successful record as a District teacher, and the employee's legal rights. He has been successful in meeting the District's high performance and behavioral expectations in his current teaching position.

Providing a welcoming and safe setting for students and staff continues to be of the utmost importance and we believe all staff members are committed to this goal.

April 8, 2014