



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Statement by Los Angeles Unified School District General Counsel David Holmquist Regarding the District's Handling of Allegations of Teacher Misconduct

Los Angeles — The Los Angeles Unified School District issued a statement today regarding the school district's handling of allegations of misconduct made against Armando Gonzalez, a teacher at El Sereno Elementary School.

“In 2012, we began dismissal proceedings against this teacher for alleged misconduct. Unfortunately we are required by law to go through a set of potentially lengthy proceedings to make the dismissal final.

As soon as we were made aware of the allegations of misconduct against Armando Gonzalez in March 2010, we immediately reported it to law enforcement and housed the teacher. Gonzalez has not been in the classroom since. We remained steadfast throughout that process to not settle with this teacher, and he subsequently resigned during the dismissal proceedings on September 11, 2013. The school district reported Gonzalez's resignation to the CTC on September 12, 2013, which would allow the CTC to revoke his credentials.

It is unfortunate that the state has created such a cumbersome and costly dismissal process. As a school district, we took the leadership to work with state legislators to give us the final authority to fire teachers accused of misconduct. Unfortunately, the bill that was passed this session does not provide adequate protection for our students.”

Over the last two years we have taken numerous steps to ensure student safety in our schools, including:

- Adopted a 72-hour parental notification policy for allegations of employee misconduct. Parents must now be notified in that window unless the school district is specifically directed otherwise by law enforcement.
- Updated internal reporting structure for notification of alleged misconduct to the CTC. This enhanced review process has allowed the school district to improve the flow of information and report to the CTC more quickly.

- Increased specialized resources at the local level. Through the reorganization of the school district into Educational Service Centers, there are now more dedicated specialists available to the school site to advise on and investigate misconduct issues.
- Led a statewide legislative reform effort to streamline the dismissal process for teachers suspected of misconduct.
- Continued development of a specialized team of investigators to conduct administrative reviews of misconduct allegations.
- Participated in a review by the California State Auditor into the handling and reporting of misconduct allegations. This review has included regular updates and the ongoing exchange of information.
- Implemented additional training for teachers and parents on how to identify and report potential misconduct. These training sessions included school district-wide Child Abuse Awareness Training in Feb. 2012, mandatory certification at each school-site by administrators that employees received bi-annual child abuse awareness training, and training of parents in Darkness to Light program, which aims to help them understand and spot the signs of potential child abuse.

The school district appreciates all feedback that could potentially help us in our ongoing efforts to provide the safest learning environment for the students that we serve.

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