

On Monday, December 17th, at the SUHSD Board meeting I was as shocked as everyone else at the magnitude of the problem revealed by the FCMAT report. Am I surprised that there has been a cover up of finances and fraud at the district that has been practiced by certain individuals for years? No. This is a situation that the current school board and superintendent inherited from the previous administrations that made such questionable decisions as establishing private charter schools within SUHSD and purchases of property that were immediately turned over to private developers.

My surprise is in how some of our members have reacted to this situation, even calling for a vote of no confidence in the superintendent and school board, and even saying that this board is as bad as past boards. While our shock, anger, and disappointment are completely understandable, let us remember how this current board was elected.

In 2013 SUHSD board members and the superintendent were involved a series of scandals that resulted in four out of five of the seated board members being convicted of corruption and the superintendent going to prison for corruption. SEA recruited several community members to run and the result was four out of five of the board elected were candidates SEA endorsed. These new board members have brought an era of cooperation that was evident in the last two rounds of bargaining. On the same date, December 17, the current school board's last decision was to pass the SERP to honor the agreement that they had made with their employees that will allow 144 teachers who have served Sweetwater for years to retire. This also guarantees no newer teachers will pink slipped on March 15th.

As we say goodbye to almost a hundred of our colleagues and leave to celebrate the holidays we will be returning to many challenges. I know that our Union and all the SUHSD employees will rise to the occasion once again and make the district even better and the union stronger.

Gene Chavira

President

Sweetwater Education Association