

Opinion/Editorial,
By Bill Weaver, Sept 13, 2014;

The GUHSD Superintendent, Mr. Ralf Swenson has issued a statement beginning by saying, "September 11, 2014, was the first school board meeting of the Grossmont Union High School District for the 2014-15 school year. During the meeting, our Governing Board passed Resolution 2015-02."

Ralf Swenson, in the GUHSD Superintendents' statement is not fully truthful, this and the Resolution 2015-02 are both filled with distortions of fact and truth. An original of both documents is linked and/or attached on this site for your review. Our comments on the GUHSD non-factual elements are backed by facts, it is our fact-checked opinion that the GUHSD isn't truthful in their assertions.

The Grossmont District maintains that it would be forced to distribute \$93 million altogether to a newly created Alpine Unified School District. The resolution as written, states that the board was taking "strong opposition" to the recommendation of unification by the SDCOE Board, acting as San Diego County Committee on School District Organization.

It also says the district is "appalled that said committee would recommend an alternative funding model that would require that the Grossmont Union High School District distribute up to \$70 million in cash and \$23 million in property, thereby creating a 38 percent deficit in our operating budget, effectively bankrupting the district."

These statements by the GUHSD are a complete distortion of the truth and facts. The \$23 Million referred to is already spent money from bond funds, a previous budgeted GUHSD bond expenditure. The \$70M is also bond funds, not operating budget money. The GUHSD Board was to "escrow" or set aside \$65M for construction of the Alpine High School. GUHSD in a previous resolution passed, promised to escrow or set aside bond funds. This is a verifiable fact.

Further, \$70M is an estimate of the Alpine legitimate vested share. The claimed of a 38% deficit is untrue. No funding for Alpine is meant to come from the GUHSD operating expense budget (OPEX Budget). All money due Alpine on a unification is due from bond money not operating budget. This statement is a gross distortion of fact. At best this is a horrible error by the GUHSD, and/or it's Superintendent, or is another intentional GUHSD disingenuous distortion. The \$23 Million to purchase the land was paid for out of bond funds, not GUHSD operating budget money, all non-truths.

The GUHSD board resolution 2015-02, said it was "further appalled" that the County Board would recommend to the state that only voters in Alpine should weigh in on the matter. The resolution states that if the state should allow for it to be on a future ballot, that "all voters encompassing the (district) shall be entitled to participate given the impact the unification Alpine USD would have on the entire Grossmont UHSD community."

There is precedent and good reasons for this recommendation, and for this to be "only voters in Alpine". The SDCOE Board Committee researched this fact. This is not contrary to CA Education Code. Further, in the light of facts, this is another disingenuous distortion by insinuations that 95% of the District will lose 38% of its OPEX, a non-truth, a total distortion of the facts.

Those who attended the SD County Board Of Education Committee Hearings on Alpine Unification know that the GUHSD is blind to the truth, and the facts. It is Alpine High who received the unanimous positive finding after three non-biased SDCOE hearings heard evidence from both sides.

There was 6 to 9 hours of public testimony and fact finding, all of the testimony was fact checked by an unbiased third party report covering the hearings themselves. The third party did not find The SDCOE to do ANYTHING not per State Education Code, i.e., all is legal. The hearings were to review GUHSD re-organization through AUSD unification, and the SDCOE Board followed all State Education Code procedures and rules, jurisprudence at it's finest.

The Prop H (\$274M) and Prop U (\$417M) Bond money cannot be renamed by the GUHSD. Bond money cannot be used for OPEX, nor for GUHSD convenience, nor can it be called OPEX, the SDCOE Board was right in finding against you, just like the San Diego County Grand Jury Report and Investigation on GUHSD use of Bond funds was not to GUHSD liking. Be truthful, this is not District "Operating Expense" Budget Money.

I have attended, and testified at all three San Diego County Office of Education hearings on Alpine School District Unification. Resolution 2015-02 has insinuated the County Board Of Education is mistaken, and wrong. No, they are correct. The GUHSD Board is appalled by SDCOE Board actions. The GUHSD should be appalled by its own actions. The GUHSD should take ownership of its own poor decisions, not lay blame on others, like the County Board, after all it's hearing, considering testimony, then it's committee making unanimous decisions based on evidence.

This same GUHSD Board has already called the San Diego County Grand Jury mistaken, and wrong; in it's investigation and findings. (Prop H \$274M – 2004 and Prop U \$417M – 2008) These two bonds were both passed promising to build a high school in Alpine.

Prop H had as its basis a GUHSD Long Range Facilities Master Plan that budgeted ~\$73 M to build the new Alpine High School. This, at 26% of the \$274 M Prop H total, was its' largest and #1 prioritized project, as approved by the voters of the entire GUHSD.

The SDCOE in its final hearing, discussed each of its recommendations' in detail, they were well thought out, with legal council advisement, and under guidance of a third party expert who issued a report, studying the merits of the Alpine Unification proposal and hearings.

This is public information, the full hearing is streamed on the SDCOE website. The hearing begins at 1 hr. and 16 minutes into the meeting video, liked an article covering the hearing by East County Magazine. It lasts two full hours. (<http://www.eastcountymagazine.org/grossmont-learns-lesson-county-board-education-votes-support-unification-alpine-district>)

The GUHSD Board is now per its Resolution 2015-02, "appalled" that the SD County Board Of Education. They adamantly disagreed with the SD County Grand Jury. Both spent countless hours of its own time, staff time, 3rd party consultants' time, and legal advisors time, to review GUHSD practices, and issues recommendations as a result.

Let's also let it be known that the San Diego County Taxpayers Association has also gone on record criticizing GUHSD Board practices, for not applying its "best practices" recommended policies at its Citizens Bond Oversight Committee, and it's own GUHSD Board inner workings.

The GUHSD Governing Board has been called to task before, criticized by two of its own internally created Commissions and Committees. In 2007, a GUHSD Bond Advisory Commission was critical. See its report issued: (http://guhsd.net/index.php/component/docman/cat_view/114-governing-board/138-board-appointed-committee-reports).

In 2011, GUHSD Boundary Committee wasn't critical, however, after the Board ignored its demographic findings, its Chair, Doug Deane said in an editorial to East County Magazine, "I'd like your readers to know that this argument by the GUHSD is made with the benefit of a number of inaccuracies, misstatements, and a questionable cost analysis", see (<http://eastcountymagazine.org/readers-editorial-doug-deanes-response-guhsd-response-grand-jury-report>)

By reviewing and searching articles in the Union-Tribune, La Mesa-Mt Helix Patch, or in East County Magazine online, this GUHSD Board, along with Member Jim Kelly, and the Board majority influenced by Kelly, all are responsible for repeated odd, disingenuous, and many out-right-ridiculous behaviors.

Try this: do a key word search here at, www.EastCountyMagazine.Org, read a few other articles, then come to your own conclusions, search these two Key Words; "GUHSD, Kelly"... where you'll find a history of questionable allegation, practices, and unprofessional antics, not in compliance with CSBA, CA School Boards Association, ethics codes, or recommended best practices, See <http://www.csba.org/GovernanceAndPolicyResources/DistrictPolicyServices/PolicyServicePrograms>