From: Terry Cox
To: Esmeralda Soria
Sent: 1/20/2018 10:58:54 AM
Subject: Fwd: Support for Mr. Sutton

This letter below is another good example of how our teachers and community feel about Mr Sutton.

In all my years on the board I have never made a hard decision that didn't include the community input nor value the community opinion.

If there were something compelling like Mr Sutton had been reckless with the finances etc I would be prepared to stand firm and make a change. He has done nothing to warrant release.

The community will and are turning on these board members. These board members thought by not discussing their intent and quietly running out the contract they could make a Superintendent change before anyone noticed.

If Mr Sutton is released, I see the next few years very unstable for Central. If Mark is let go how many of our assistant Sups will leave or be replaced by the new Sup hired by a board that does not listen to their constituents?

The union leaders are also being exposed with this effort to remove Mark. Not only are they not advising their membership of the pending expiration on the contract but they have been called out at site meetings and on social media for intentially providing false information to quiet the board's release from his contract.

Esmeralda you said you could help. In my opinion there are one of two ways that you could assist. I would be grateful for any assistance. You would be a huge champion for the Central Community if you were to succeed.

1) Convince two more board members to vote an extension. Not just a one year but 2 yr extension. Fact by ACSA 75% of the Superintendents in CA have 3 year contracts. With all this drama Mark will not want to be in this position again next year.

2) Convince Miguel to get out of this and distance himself from this issue entirely. Aligning himself with any of these board members now or in Nov. will cost him votes in Central.

Pics are all over Facebook with Pacheco, Miguel, Ruben and Rama. Rama and Ruben are already posting the support they have from Miguel. He will already have difficulty erasing this.

I know this was a long rant but I believe in Central and Central is in trouble.

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

-------- Original message --------
From: Lori Severt
Date: 1/20/18 12:32 AM (GMT-08:00)
To: Terry Cox
Subject: Support for Mr. Sutton

Dear Ms. Cox,
Thank you for taking the time to read my lengthy email. I'm both a parent of a Central West High School student and a teacher in

the district. As a parent and employee, I care very much about this district and the direction it's taking to improve the quality of education and public school experience that we are providing our students, as well as the positive impact that our schools have within our community. Fresno is not my home of origin, as I grew up in Ohio and taught in a very large and diverse school district there for thirteen years. I've experienced many different school sites, worked with many different administrators, and I've seen the direct impact that leadership from a superintendent and a school board can have on a school district community.

During my sixteen years in Central Unified, I have seen several site administrators, as well as superintendents, come and go. The roles of our administrators and superintendent can set the tone for how the school community communicates and participates in their child's educational experience. These roles are vital to the stability, success, and potential growth of a school district. The respected and successful people in these roles take the time to listen, interact with, communicate, and participate in the lives of those who are part of their community--students, teachers, parents, and businesses. These people develop a sense of trust and help to build pride within the school community and within the school district. Their relationships with the teachers and support staff can develop the type of community where employees will go above and beyond their "contracted duty" to do their best for students and families that we serve. For the first time in my 16 years with Central Unified, we have that kind of leader in Mr. Sutton.

Mr. Sutton is not only accessible to students, parents, and teachers, but he is also the most approachable superintendent that Central Unified has had at the helm during my 16 years in this district. As a teacher in the district, I see him at every professional development meeting at the district office, he visits our school sites to witness what's happening with students and teachers, he responds to emails promptly and with thoughtfulness, and always has explanations and looks for solutions when staff members or parents express concerns. For over a decade, our district had claimed that we were concerned for "Every Student, Every Day" but those were just words that were not demonstrated by action until Mr. Sutton arrived. Clearly, there is a huge responsibility to run a fiscally responsible district but Mr. Sutton does everything in his power to consider the impact of "crunching numbers" as it relates to students. He knows our students because he's not only visible on campuses and school events, but he actually interacts with and has such a personable approach with students and parents, which creates a sense of trust and builds pride within our communities. Mr. Sutton cares. His sincerity is evident in the way he follows up on issues that involve our students.

One example of his impact on children involves one of my 2nd graders. Due to numbers and class size, this particular student started her school year at Herndon Barstow but when numbers grew too large, she was transferred to Liddell about a month after school started. Her family had moved into our district over the summer because financial hardship caused them to lose their living arrangements, and they moved into the garage of a family member in the Herndon Barstow area, after almost facing homelessness. This situation had caused trauma in the life of my student and she had a bit of a chip on her shoulder when she arrived at Liddell. Her transition was not easy on her--her home and school life had been drastically disrupted. It took a few weeks for our classroom "family" to draw her into our community and to help her feel safe and respected. She had some issues creating bonds and didn't trust that she would be with us for very long. By late October, she had made a lot of friends, became a leader in our classroom, and her academics improved drastically. She smiled every morning as she came in the classroom and began interacting with other teachers at the school and started to embrace other students who needed to feel included. A week after our Thanksgiving break, I received an email from our school registrar that this would be her last day of school because there was space for her at her home school. My heart broke for this little girl, whose life had already thrown her too many disruptions. When my student entered the classroom, I acknowledged with her privately, that I was happy for her that she could return to Herndon Barstow and be near her home, but that I was sad that this would be our last day together. This was a complete surprise to my student and she erupted in tears. I became frustrated that our district would treat a child and family this way---simply moving a child, whose family was in distress to fit our district's number scheme, seemed so unfair. Our site administrator tried to stop the transfer from happening but was directed that we had to let the transfer happen. Maisie Young set to work to try to keep this student at our site but by the end of the school day, I was told that the transfer back to Herndon Barstow would happen the following day. After holding a class meeting so we could all send her off with our best wishes and encouragement, I decided that I was not giving up, for the sake of my student. Mr. Sutton has impressed upon our entire school district's staff that we have the responsibility to have an impact on the lives of our students, so I contacted him by email and told him about this particular student and the unfortunate events that had happened in her life. As I told him, I can't protect my little ones from all of life's hardships but I felt strongly that our district was making a poor decision by moving this child's school twice in one semester, simply to balance out numbers. Mr. Sutton responded immediately to my email and promised me he would look into the situation and get back to me. He took the time to read my lengthy background story about my student and listened to my concerns. Within 30 minutes, he replied to let me know he researched the chain of events, acknowledged that this student deserved better, and reassured me that this student would remain at Liddell through the end of the school year. She was not just a number to Mr. Sutton. He took the time to see her and hear her story and helped resolve the issue for this student's benefit. I was also impressed that Mr. Sutton responded directly to me, rather than passing my email on for someone else to manage.

Mr. Sutton's words about "impacting students' lives" are more than words to him. His actions support his philosophy and he is making Central Unified better through his leadership, genuine caring, and he follows up his words by supporting students and their families. During my 16 years teaching and parenting a child enrolled in Central's schools, this is the first time I have felt like we have a superintendent who has the skills and experiences as an educator to see the whole picture and the whole child and make sound decisions for students, while being fiscally responsible. We all know that many of the issues that are upsetting to the community are directly related to funding issues, but Mr. Sutton and his leadership team are thoughtful and careful about using our limited funds to do their best for the sake of our students.

As a parent of a high school student, I have attended many sports, band, and robotics events over the years. Since Mr. Sutton's arrival in Central, I see him at nearly every event I've ever been to over the past two years, and he takes the time to talk to

everyone. He knows students' names, he asks parents about their children, and is always displaying his genuine excitement for the success of our children. My freshman daughter thought he was the parent or grandparent of a student because she sees him everywhere. He is part of our Central community in a way that our previous superintendents have not been visible.
You may be wondering why I'm writing this lengthy email. I'm writing today because I heard this week, through parents of Central's students, that our Board has not yet renewed Mr. Sutton's contract beyond this school year. Parents in our district have also heard that we have Board members who are planning to vote against his contract renewal in a closed session meeting, to be held very soon. Parents in our district were shocked that teachers in our district were unaware of these circumstances, which led me to wonder why our Central Unified Staff members are being left out of this discussion. Teachers are the front-line, serving students and families and our opinions and experiences related to our leadership should be part of the process. This news is disheartening to every parent who has approached me about these "rumors" about Mr. Sutton possibly leaving our district. Parents and teachers want to have the opportunity to be part of this process, as it directly impacts their children. As parents and teachers in the district, we want the School Board Members to hear the reasons why we support Mr. Sutton as our leader.
I hope my examples in this letter will serve as a bit of evidence as to why students, parents, and employees of this district have faith in Mr. Sutton and the leadership he has provided thus far. The School Board has an important role to play---our community deserves to have our voices heard and to feel as if Mr. Sutton's successes are taken into consideration by the School Board members before a vote is taken regarding his contract. For the first time in over a decade, our community has felt that our district is finally headed in the right direction. I am not a follower of Keeping Central United on Facebook but I have heard about the negative posts by some of its followers. Please remember that there are many more Central Unified Families who have a lot of positive experiences to share regarding Mr. Sutton but they are not on Facebook. Take the time to talk with and listen to the community you are serving and I am certain you will discover that Mr. Sutton is well respected, well liked, and he's an asset to our Central community and families are hopeful about the long term goals that Mr. Sutton has for the Central Unified School District.

If you have further questions or wish to speak with me, I would appreciate the opportunity to talk with you about Mr. Sutton and my experiences in Central Unified.
Respectfully,
Lori Severt
parent of a Central Unified Student
2nd grade teacher, Liddell Elementary