

CaLBOC CALIFORNIA LEAGUE OF BOND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES

REVIEW

HELPING SCHOOL BOND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES SERVE THEIR COMMUNITIES

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Santa Monica School District's Conflict of Interest Investigation Expands to Three Board Members

Dec 23, 2017 | By Adam Elmahrek & Benjamin Oreskes

EXCERPT: Santa Monica school district's conflict of interest investigation has grown to include three of the board's seven members, a school district official confirmed Friday. ...

Santa Monica-Malibu launched its probe after *The Times* revealed last month that Leon-Vazquez cast a series of votes spanning several years that included hundreds of thousands of dollars in contract approvals with her husband's clients, the financial advisory firm Keygent, LLC and TELACU Construction Management. ...

Prosecutors with the public integrity unit of the Los Angeles County district attorney's office have also [opened](#) a review.

Leon-Vazquez's husband Tony Vazquez - who is also a Santa Monica councilman and a candidate for a state Board of Equalization seat - was paid to open doors at school districts by using his political access to arrange meetings with high-level district executives, he testified in a sworn deposition obtained by *The Times*.

This included a meeting he set up three years ago between a TELACU executive and then-Santa Monica-Malibu Superintendent Sandra Lyon, according to the deposition. He also said that his income from TELACU started at \$1,000 per month but peaked at \$8,000 a month around the same time he was asked to arrange the meeting between TELACU and Lyon, according to the deposition.

Since the *Times* article was published, the school district's retired head of business Jan Maez acknowledged she also had a meeting with Vazquez in 2012 about financial advising and construction management involving "several other people" whose affiliations she could not recall, according to Pinsker. ...

The school district's review of potential conflicts of interest involving Mechur and Vazquez began after *The Times* asked the district about the business relationship. ...

To read complete article, please visit:

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-santa-monica-schools-outside-agency-20171222-story.html>

San Jose School Board Member Charged With Campaign Fund Theft

Dec 15, 2017 | By Sharon Noguchi | mercurynews.com

EXCERPT: ... In a case described as "textbook corruption," longtime Franklin-McKinley School District schools trustee John Lindner has been charged with stealing nearly \$30,000 in bond campaign funds that prosecutors say he spent on travel and personal expenses.

Lindner, 55, turned himself in to authorities Thursday on felony charges of grand theft and perjury, and misdemeanor violations of the Political Reform Act. He was freed after posting \$35,000 bail. ...

The criminal charges piggyback on an investigation earlier this year by the state's Fair Political Practices Commission probing Lindner's management of funds for the "Franklin-McKinley for Our Kids - Yes on Measure J 2010" campaign. In October, he agreed with the commission to pay a \$18,500 fine to the state.

The FPPC report found that Lindner, while serving as the campaign's treasurer, used unspent funds to "make personal purchases of lumber and travel" and "withdrew cash and transferred money to his personal bank account," prosecutors said. ...

The five felony and five misdemeanor counts are fairly serious, Chase said. "It's stealing money that people expected to be used to get public support for a school bond measure."

Chase called the case "textbook corruption" and pointed out that Lindner was not just an ordinary community volunteer. Chase noted that Lindner was in a place of public trust with decision-making power over how contracts would be awarded. Most of the funds for the bond campaign came from contractors and others hoping to do business with the district. Voters ultimately approved the \$50 million bond measure in November 2010.

According to prosecutors, Lindner "had bled the account almost dry," but "continued to file periodic disclosure forms reporting that the fund had \$13,000."

Lindner had declared in a filing that he was terminating the bond campaign committee. He also claimed he distributed remaining funds in amounts less than \$100 to "unnamed civic donation recipients," according to the FPPC.

An alert employee in the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voter's office notified the FPPC of that unusual claim. ...

The FPPC reported that Lindner told its investigator that he had placed cash in envelopes and anonymously donated to about 140 schools and nonprofit groups, but he could not name any of the groups.

...

He is scheduled to be arraigned in Santa Clara County Superior Court on Jan. 19. The crimes he's accused of committing are punishable by jail time and fines in excess of \$250,000, according to the District Attorney's Office....

To read complete article, please visit:

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2017/12/15/school-board-member-charged-with-stealing-bond-measure-campaign-funds/>

In This Issue

[District's Conflict of Interest Investigation Expands to Three Board Members](#)

[San Jose School Board Member Charged With Campaign Fund Theft](#)

[Archived Newsletters](#)

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SAVE THE DATE
April 24, 2018
7th Annual CaLBOC
Conference
SACRAMENTO

Mission Statement

To promote school district accountability by improving the training and resources available to California's Proposition 39 School Bond Oversight Committees and educating the state legislature, local school boards and the public about the oversight and reporting powers these Citizens' Bond Oversight Committees (CBOCs) have, and to advocate on a state level, where appropriate, on issues of common concern to all CBOCs.

2017 6th Annual CaLBOC Conference
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www.calboc.com/2017-conference.html

Archived Newsletters

To view all with topics visit:
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ISSUE 119 - Dec. 5, 2017

- Alum Rock Building Lagged
- CaLBOC Business Plan

ISSUE 118 - Nov. 6, 2017

- Alum Rock Manger Sought Secret Deal on Bids
- San Ysidro Trying to Recover Funds from Ex-Superintendent

ISSUE 117 - Oct. 16, 2017

- School Bond Secrecy Lobby
- CBOC Says West Contra Costa District is Mismanaging Bonds

ISSUE 116 - Sept. 25, 2017

- New Issues in Alum Rock CBOC Bylaws
- Bond Legislation Update
- Watchdog Blasts Pasadena Unified

ISSUE 115 - August 28, 2017

- PVUSD Pushes Against Grand Jury Report
- Gov. Brown Vetoes SB 341, CBOC Member Terms
- Court Sides With District Employee Who Balked at Order to Purge Emails

ISSUE 114 - July 11, 2017

- State Puts Fiscal Oversight over Alum Rock Schools
- State Superintendent Political Ties with Alum Rock Contractor

ISSUE 113 - June 23, 2017

- Mello Roos Property Tax Lacks Oversight
- The Untold Story Behind the Sweetwater Schools Scandal

ISSUE 112 - June 1, 2017

- Alum Rock Bond Review
- School Bond Watchdogs

ISSUE 111 - April 21, 2017

- Field Turf & 1,000 lbs Glue
- Conference Agenda

ISSUE 110 - April 18, 2017

- Alum Rock, Non-existent Construction?

ISSUE 108 - March 16 2017

- Little Hoover Commission Report Flaws in Oversight