

How to Rebuild Trust

OUR school board needs to become more open and communicative. Rumors and suspicion abound after the poorly handled announcement of a new superintendent last year. Since then, the level of trust hasn't improved.

The District has known for a year that it needs to build and renovate many schools. Has the Board held town hall meetings to explain needs, priorities and costs *before* the Board election? No.

The District spends hundreds of millions of your tax dollars on construction. So why does the Board discuss construction bids in private and rubber-stamp them in public? Can you find detailed information about bids on the District's web site? No.

If we're competing in a global economy, why do we *only* compare our academic performance to regional and state *averages*? Why not publish comparisons to the *best* schools in the state and nation?

If we want to improve, why not set academic goals and report progress toward them?

Why are performance scores and financial information *aggregated* and not *itemized*? Could it be to mask problems in certain areas?

I am *not* suggesting that fraud or improprieties exist. I *am* saying that trust is eroding because *the current board does not communicate well*.

Publishing construction bids inspires confidence and competition, and could lower costs. Publishing details about where academic problems exist could lead to solutions that actually fix them. For instance, did you know that almost one fourth of our seventh graders can't read at grade level? Why not intervene early – *before* kids lose years of learning? Why not partner with other governmental, non-profit, and PTA groups that can help us intervene cost-effectively?

Demand answers now. Vote April 24 through May 6. I have 45 years of experience in business and communications. I will work to improve openness and communication so that we can improve trust and, ultimately, education.

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