

CHRISTOPHER AREND  
9610 Nacimiento Lake Dr.  
Paso Robles, CA 93446  
USA

Tel: (805) 239-0614  
Mobile: (805) 234-2854  
E-Mail: [chris@arendlaw.com](mailto:chris@arendlaw.com)

29 January 2021

**By email**

Paso Robles Daily News  
attn.: Mr. Scott Brennan

cc: Dr. Curt Dubost

**re.: Your article on 29 January 2021 "Paso Robles School Board meets Saturday to respond to Grand Jury report"**

Dear Scott,

I tried to contact you at the Paso Robles Press telephone number but landed in voicemail and decided not to leave a message. I subsequently sent you an email from my school board address to give you a heads-up about this letter.

Your above referenced article contains some inaccuracies:

1. The article states: "All seven board members may meet Saturday morning at the PRJUSD District Office to write a formal response to the board, although Nathan Williams may not be able to attend." The board member who said he would not be able to attend tomorrow's meeting is Lance Gannon and not Nathan Williams.
2. The article states that the Board's discussion will address "An alleged violation of trust laws by the previous (2018) board". The discussion tomorrow will actually be focused on the draft response to the specific "Findings" and "Recommendations" on pp. 21 – 25 of the Grand Jury report. At no place does the Grand Jury report refer to "trust laws". I am attaching a Word® data file which I produced by converting the pdf version of the Grand Jury report so that you can easily search for the term "trust laws". You will not find it in the report. I am aware that some members of the community who are obviously not lawyers have referred to "trust laws" in conversations, but I have no idea what they are talking about. In one telephone conversation I had with a member of the community a few days ago, it was obvious that the individual also had no idea what he was talking about.
3. The article refers in point 2) to an "allegedly illegal gift of public funds (\$235,999 to Chris Williams). The financial arrangements when C. Williams left are, of course, a subject of the Grand Jury report and will be addressed in the Board's response to the specific Finding. However, the words "illegal gift" are an inaccurate description of the legal issues involved in the financial arrangements.
4. The article refers in point 3) to "Numerous alleged Brown Act Violations including secret meetings". The Grand Jury report has only one sentence on pg. 6 concerning alleged Brown Act violations; "In Paso Robles there were reported violations of the Brown Act

committed during Board of Trustee meetings when counsel was not present." I have no knowledge about such alleged violations, nor are they mentioned in any Findings. The reasonable conclusion is that the Grand Jury did NOT identify any such violations. Since no such violations are mentioned in the Findings, we will not be addressing such allegations in the response.

5. The article states, "School Board President Chris Arend, who is an attorney, is recommending that the board ask San Luis Obispo County District Attorney Dan Dow to review the report and recent findings of the board to ascertain if there's enough evidence to file criminal charges against former Superintendent Chris Williams, Assistant Superintendent Jennifer Gaviola, and the trustees who served on the school board during Williams' tenure." First, I am a retired attorney. Second, I have not made such a recommendation, nor am I currently recommending any criminal referral, nor do I see any indication that a referral to the District Attorney is warranted, be it against Chris Williams, Ms. Gaviola or any of the former trustees. Whoever told you that is completely wrong. You should really have contacted me before writing such an inflammatory, false statement. I am easy to contact.

By-the-way, I have heard various nasty rumor concerning Ms. Gaviola, and I have not found any of them to have any merit whatsoever. In my two years on the Board, I have found Ms. Gaviola to be extremely competent and honorable. She is quite possibly the best human resources officer I have ever seen, and I have worked with many in my career as a lawyer. The rumor campaign against her is frankly disgusting, which is why I have repeatedly said, "Put up or shut up." So far, nobody has come forward with a single substantiated accusation that goes beyond innuendo and outrageous falsehoods which appear to be based solely on the fact that Chris Williams hired her.

I request that you publish a correction/retraction with regard to the errors in your article. Finally, I ask that you take greater care when reporting about the PRJUSD and especially when referring to statements that I have supposedly made. It is really quite easy to contact me to verify whether what others are telling you about my views is correct.

Best regards,



Christopher Arend