



Save Ethnic Studies

May 9, 2011

Hand Delivered

Mark Stegeman, President
TUSD Governing Board Members
Tucson Unified School District
1010 East 10th Street
Tucson, AZ, 85719

Re: Mexican American Studies Public Forum

Dear Mr. Stegeman and Governing Board Members,

This letter is sent to follow-up on our invitation to join us in sponsorship of the community forum that was proposed by TUSD in lieu of any further Governing Board action on the proposed Ethnic Studies Resolution. Supt. Pedicone, apparently speaking for the Governing Board, made clear on Friday that our invitation was rejected. His reasons were obtuse and demonstrate the continuing deterioration of TUSD's relationship with the Latino community. Partnering with individuals and organizations that are not part of the Latino community is a recipe for disaster. Expanding to other issues, such as SB 1070, is naive and preposterous. It conflates issues that TUSD, Supt. Pedicone and the proposed partners have no history with or role in.

In four short months Supt. Pedicone's actions have evaporated the good will that existed between TUSD and the Latino community and created a relationship that can only be described as completely acrimonious. The violence he has committed upon our community will never be forgotten and is now a part of our history in Tucson. In the absence of complete contrition on his part and immediate cessation of his "behind the scene" efforts to discredit and impugn the Mexican American Studies leadership and faculty, there is no basis for any further discourse. Thus, our respective organizations will go our separate ways with respect to providing a legitimate forum for public dialogue about Mexican American Studies.

It is unfortunate that the Governing Board has relinquished leadership concerning the future of Mexican American Studies to Supt. Pedicone. He has no expertise in the area, is unqualified to offer any professional insights, and is imposing his personal agenda upon TUSD. Within a few weeks the Huppenthal "2281 Findings" will be released, and at a moment when we should be united, the gulf between us will grow wider and deeper. Supt. Pedicone announced long ago that he would not defend Mexican American Studies, but recommend elimination of the program to avoid any economic sanction. This of course will not be well received in the Latino community and result in the instigation of all measures available to challenge TUSD's actions to obtain all legal and equitable remedies available.

Should TUSD proceed with planning for or conduct a community forum, you are requested to leave SES and the *Acosta* plaintiffs out of the “conversation” and program. Supt. Pedicone does not speak for us, has no expertise in our curriculum, and lacks any legitimacy within our community. You cannot impose his will upon our community; self determination demands recognition, respect and then positive engagement. These are fundamental principles that Supt. Pedicone has demonstrated no knowledge of, let alone adherence to.

One can only hope that there will be a day in the not too distant future when TUSD has new leadership and steers away from the current course. The future of TUSD is dependent on delivering quality educational services to the Latino community. If that does not occur soon, many will follow the example set by the Anglo community and exercise the option to have our children educated by other institutions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deyanira Nevarez', written over a horizontal line.

Deyanira Nevarez
Save Ethic Studies Director

c: John Pedicone, Supt.