



# Draper Notes

August 30, 2015

## Blowing the Dust off of My Soapbox and Stepping-Up

By Nicole Adams

Facebook Posting

August 26, 2015

There was not a single place on this planet that I would have rather been on Tuesday (August 25, 2015) night than 530 LaSolona Avenue. Typically, over the course of the last few years, I admittedly avoided that address like the plague because, in my opinion, its overall productivity can be compared to an average night on *Let's Hear it Arcadia*. This Tuesday became the exception to my rule because I felt led to show my face in support of not only the teachers in this district, whose contracts remain in limbo, but also in support of a local family who was suffering the latest wrath of the current regime.

I arrived early to standing room only. A sea of red clothes and familiar faces filled the room as shoulder-to-shoulder attendees we were asked to move into the hallway in order to clear paths to the exits. Let me pause for effect...to say that this meeting was better than the Super Bowl would be a resounding understatement...I'm going to go ahead and throw in my overall opinion synopsis at this point, before I break into highlights from the evening; I have been waiting two years for our board to do what they did last night. I was so proud of our school board members for finally tabling their own differences and banding together to demand that our superintendent account for her actions. Side note: even though her standard *no comment* answer was still the go-to response for the evening, her dirty laundry was certainly hung high for all to see. I would be remiss if I didn't say that this collaborative effort made by our school board was about 1.78 years too late, however, as it all unfolded in front of my face. I decided to suppress my urge to shout *I told you so*, but instead smiled on the inside while repeating in my head the mantra *better late than never*. Reflecting on it now, as prepared as I was to speak my mind, I think that my decision to fall in with the crowd and participate in the many bursts of revival-like applause and *amen* shouting was a respectable decision (it was, after all, going quite well).

They say that you should not ever go a day without learning something and if that is the rule for judging whether a day is successful or not, then the meeting on Tuesday night would have made

my whole day a complete success. I learned a tremendous amount. I learned that our district received over \$600,000.00 several months ago that NONE of our board members were made aware of by Dr. Gary and when asked why, her basic answer was, I'm paraphrasing, *Blah, blah, blah, law something, point something, something...I didn't tell you because I didn't have to.* (audible gasps filled the room). I also learned that *open-investigations* are her and her lawyer's way of saying, *I'm not going to talk about it because I don't have to.* After an impressive legal introduction alluding to my above stated point, our board finally called uncle. In fact, I would go so far as to say that **IF** the board had a secret *B.S.* button they certainly pressed it that night. After unanimously repealing one of her latest suspension requests and a laundry list of complaints and reports by board members, our superintendent had the body language of a child whose sucker had just fallen in the dirt.

I know that this school district is full of wonderful, loving teachers and professionals that are more than capable of teaching our children everything that they need to know in order to successfully move forward in school and in life. I know that there are and have been honest, hardworking, competent leaders in this district that deserve better treatment than they have been afforded over the last few years. The simple facts are that our students and teachers are **NOT** being given the tools that they need to be successful, and many of our teachers are doing everything in their power to fill that void. Our children **DO NOT HAVE BOOKS** for all subjects and our teachers **DO NOT HAVE TEACHER'S EDITIONS** for all of the textbooks that they are using to teach. Entire curriculums are completely **NON-EXISTANT**, classrooms and schools are overcrowded, understaffed, and undersupplied. These are major issues, but this is only the tip of the iceberg. I know these things not because I'm nosy or because I pry. I know because I care to know. It's not difficult to get your hands on this list of grievances; you simply have to care enough to ask. I talk to mothers and families. I talk to teachers and professionals within this district that feel as if they have no choice but to quietly go along with what is being dictated. History has shown us that any opposition to Dr. Gary, her policies, her requests, her rules, her team, or her taxes has time and time again been spun into a *threat* which lands qualified, professional, well-intentioned people on the receiving end of yet another of her malicious, damaging tirades.

For too long teachers and professionals within this district have been faced with a daily struggle to make the best of the cards that they have been dealt and after last night's meeting, I can say, with hope, that maybe, just maybe, the Queen of Hearts will no longer be allowed to roll heads at will. She will now, God willing, have to face the wrath of an enlightened school board at every possible turn. It's my desire that our board will meet her head-on at every decision, that they will question every penny, and that they will do as promised and leave no stone unturned.

Transparency from a superintendent should always be a requirement.