

RESPONSE TO SOME COMMENTS REPORTED IN THE SACRAMENTO BEE WITH REFERENCE
TO THE VOTE FOR OR AGAINST MEASURE “B” AND THE ELECTION OF A NEW BOARD OF
TRUSTEES IF IT PASSES

By: Paul R. Green Jr., Candidate **Area 3** (North Highlands)

The article, *North Sac district's fate, board up for vote*, appeared in the Sacramento Bee on Sunday, October 14, and some of the comments attributed therein and by some concern me - therefore, this response.

The major reason I support and encourage you to **vote YES on Measure “B”** on November 6 is that it will bring about **accountability** so that there can be no circular excuses or pseudo-reasons why failure or success occurs. Measure “B” will remove this capability, and will provide true accountability to the public because there only will be one Board.

The local elementary and high school District leaders, save for approximately six months between November of 1998 and June of 1999, have been at loggerheads for years. Each set of leaders blamed the other for failures, and then took credit for successes. (“I send you *young geniuses*” based upon their test scores and you ‘messed them up’” or “students you sent me require remedial training regardless of test scores.”) **NOTE:** previous quoted statements are not true statements, merely to capture the thrusts of comments made and to identify a key divide that has festered here both privately and publicly for years.

The result of this thrusting and parrying between our local education leaders has been that time and energy was siphoned from them. This is time and energy that could have gone into carrying out their primary duties as Board members and benefiting the community even more.

One “side” constantly attacked and the other “side” constantly was forced to defend. I attribute most of the problem to the “attack” side because of the documented single-purpose commitment that I have seen that can be put into the context of: “I will not seek to help you do your job better; rather, I will, through a continuous negative campaign, attempt to replace you (and along the way, thwart you by placing impediments in your path).”

Therefore, because of the negative impact this type environment has on the education of our children and the additional justifications I provide below, I recommend that you **not vote for any of the seven people running on a “slate” (as identified in the Sacramento Bee article)**, and that you give caution to those who are running on a “slate” representing theoretically “the other side.”

The remainder of my comments will be general in part, but understandably I hope, will reflect a bias toward the “slate” whose position I believe will cause the most negative should all or perhaps any of them be elected.

I believe that the reason we have two groups running as “informal slates” (a misnomer as there is reciprocal endorsement both implied and actual) is that the fighting still persists especially from an adamant group of Board members who exhibit a disdain for apparently anything “Grant.”

They do this in open discussion and made it a badge of honor at previously held candidate forums that this unification proposal is their second choice and that they still prefer their previous Grant Restructuring proposal that was rejected at the County Board of Education level because the two proposed Districts would have created relatively unequal districts along racial lines (a condition about which those who put

forth the proposal were advised of from the beginning, but persisted in moving forward with – and again, to the detriment of students as “time and energy was siphoned” from primary duties).

The group of seven identified in the article appears to have anointed themselves as omniscient. I’ll provide this in context. In July, 1998, a group of 12 – 18 community leaders under the combined leadership of a county supervisor and two city council members, stepped into the breach and brought together other elected and titular community leaders who invited “all” identified candidates for school board to interview for endorsement. That group of community leaders, representative of a cross section of interests and disciplines, selected me and two others from among approximately 18 candidates to run as a “slate” with the purpose of putting children first and “fixing” the Grant District. We were victorious. I consider that action to be representative of the broad community.

This group of seven, however, came together differently. They came together “informally” by the choice of the “slate” members themselves without (to the best of my knowledge) directly interviewing many of the other candidates – thereby giving the impression that they have within them the wisdom to know who will be a “good” Board member, and thereby implying that any **they did not choose** would not be “good” Board members. I question this possible premise and ask whether or not there is some other underlying unifying factor that remains unstated.

Then there is the question of endorsements by the teacher Unions of the four Districts. To assume that teachers have more concern for your children than do you or those performing other District functions also is a misnomer. Once you elect a Board of seven, those seven people are accountable to you and are to represent the same stated goals through the Superintendent irrespective of the fact that the classroom teacher has the most important relationship with your children on a daily basis; a relationship, however, that does not make them clairvoyant.

And with regard to teacher Unions, they are chartered to look out for the best interest of teachers (pay, discipline, dismissal, or generally work conditions, among others); functions that no more qualifies their leaders to identify who will be the best persons to perform non-teacher duties for which they are seeking to be elected or even hired to perform.

Were the teacher Unions to wield such clout as they apparently are attempting to wield - to choose who is elected - then I envision an ineffective Board that is beholdng to the Unions and a “**sandwich**” **Superintendent**” whose effectiveness will be diminished because he or she will be caught between the Governing Board and the teachers he or she is responsible to vet, hire through the board and, through site or other subordinate leadership, supervise.

When a Union leader states, as in the Bee article, that he wants Board members who are “more friendly toward teachers and parents,” that implies that he has a unique definition of “friendly” and that Board members do not know for whom they work once elected – specifically, all citizens within the District boundaries, parents or not. And how brash to even state that “**his colleagues are trying to sweep in the elementary leaders,**” a statement that says none of the other non-incumbent Board members are even worthy of consideration, but most importantly, that the teachers Union members represent the will of the public when many, if not most, do not live within the District Boundaries.

And the idea that just parents are interested in the comings and goings of the local district is false. What transpires within the District affects more than just those who have children in one or more of the schools and that they also need to be considered. Why, because education in a vacuum may result in someone who is educated, but education with the purpose of developing someone who will contribute to society in a

positive way is even more important. And that requires being concerned with all factors associated with the *education matrix*, other than just a single component no matter how representatively important that component may be.

Atop these concerns, at one of our candidate forums, I was surprised to learn that the Rio Linda Education Association (the teachers' Union) is against approving Measure "B": this, in light of the fact that they have endorsed specific candidates, (another decision made without interviewing all candidates), thereby continuing the divide. It appears that Measure "B" is another one of those *second choices* similar to that openly espoused at candidate forums by some of the seven-member "slate" candidates, and that the candidates themselves are a distant *third choice*.

I reiterate my recommendation. **Vote for none of the group of seven candidates running as an "informal slate."** I am distrustful of their motives (not ascribing motive) based upon comments such as the "Rio Linda culture." I conclude that they believe that they are superior to the other candidates because of the "way they do business" and for which District they serve as Board members. For a long time they have advocated and preached a dual concept to the public that has said that they, themselves, are good and that those in the high school District in particular and others from whence they come generally are bad.

This, of course, is nonsense. It is based upon "non-comparable" generalization and needs to stop NOW!

Those who purvey such attitudes do so while serving in what easily can be argued as being an easier environment based upon that "non-comparable" report of normed reference statistical test scores because students' scores in their District or in their charter school within the Grant District boundaries, of course (a charter school that has removed many of the higher achieving students from their junior high school to the detriment of that schools' scores), are higher than those at the post-elementary level. **This gives the public a false impression** because relevant facts are missing.

To compare statistics of one type school against the other is impractical, at best. Elementary school leaders require a kinder-gentler approach to motivation figuratively 95* percent of the time. Junior high and high school leaders require such an approach figurative only 50* percent of the time. Why? because the children and young men and women who attend the higher grades tend to "hit back" through inattention, detrimental behavior, etc., whereas those in the lower grades representatively do not go to such lengths.

As you can tell, I believe that there is a difference in governing and providing education in an elementary school and in junior and senior high schools. Based upon the experience I and my wife had with our five children that graduated from area schools, I found that it was much easier to motivate our children to seek to excel both academically and behaviorally when they were in elementary school than it was after they entered junior high school and were enamored with sports and impressing the opposite sex, for example, and were beginning to hone their abilities to analyze, to think critically and to begin to question what they were told, along with many others.

In other words, governing and serving in an elementary school district, though still challenging, is nowhere near the "meat grinder" that governing board members and staff find themselves in at the junior and senior high school levels.

And to compare one elementary school district, in particular, Rio Linda, I recall the times when former Superintendent, **Bill Murchison**, a well-respected and multiple-times-lauded community leader, was here. He received recognition for the job he did and some of the members now on the Rio Linda Board were there then. Because of his legacy, and not to diminish the accomplishments of the current Superintendent,

it must be noted that there is a difference between being elected to govern the Rio Linda District and being elected to govern the Grant District.

To oversee something that already is running smoothly and to make incremental improvement does not require the same skills or energy as does taking something that is or is perceived to be not running smoothly. The task in the later instance is much more formidable and the skill set needed by elected Board members is different.

Board members running on a platform of “getting along with each other” are running on a platform that is not unique to them. That, I believe is something all serious candidates for election are committed to do. But the rub comes in when staff’s feet are being held to the fire and **tough** choices and prioritizations are required meeting after meeting. Those do not usually come in Districts where everything is perceived to be running “smoothly.” Choices in those District, though still hard choices at times, are usually not of the gravity as are those in a rebuilding or restructuring environment.

I encourage you to vote on November 6. I again recommend that you vote **YES** on Measure “B.,” I then ask you to define what you want in a Board member and vote accordingly. My recommendations: first, vote for me, **Paul R. Green Jr.** for **Area 3 (North Highlands)**, second, “**do not**” vote for any of the seven people running on a “slate” (as identified in the Sacramento Bee article), and third, give caution to those who are running on a “slate” representing theoretically “the other side.”

We need leaders who can stand on their own two feet on the Board, not those who even after the “compromise” has been reached, still bear ill will and continue to butt their heads against another group because of perceived “culture” differences and then have “cooperation” as a mainstay of their cookie cutter campaigns. I only can assume that “cooperate” to them only means that they should or will cooperate with one another at the exclusion of anyone else, save perhaps those who endorse them.

Find (1) candidates, like me, that are running independent campaigns, (2) candidates, like me, that put their credentials on the line without the need to piggyback on the credentials and good names of another candidate, (3) candidates, like me, that have a record of having accomplished much for the local community in the past, (4) candidates, like me, that are accomplished both educationally and by former levels of leadership, and perhaps most importantly, (5) candidates, like me, that **do not** presume that it is necessary to force the idea upon the voting public that merely because I did a “good” job relative to my job description at a given point in time that I now somehow am empowered to know and tell the voting public whether or not someone else has done an equally good job based upon their job description at a given point in time – thereby excluding those candidates unwarrantedly and backhandedly..

Who will represent your community on the new school board is too important not to give independent scrutiny of all candidates. Vote based upon your own reasons, of course, but I encourage you not to vote for or against some because a vested interest Union or others who need reciprocal endorsement say you should. Please visit www.paulrgreenjr.com to view who has endorsed me or to find out much more information about me and my qualifications.

Thank you and God bless.

Paul R. Green Jr.

* Arbitrary number for example’s sake. (PRGJr.)