

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**SCHOOL DISTRICT VIOLATES PARENT'S RIGHTS – PAYS \$300,000**

A Northern California school district's decision to hide records cost the district approximately \$300,000, most of which was paid to two different law firms to unsuccessfully defend against a parent's lawsuit to obtain access to his son's pupil records.

Almost two years ago, Roseville resident Mike Harris, an information technology expert, asked the Roseville Joint Union High School District to show him his son's student records. The district showed him some, but not all of his son's records.

"They gave me what they said were my son's complete record but they didn't. One entire file was missing and pages had been removed from the files they showed me. They claimed I was only entitled to "official" records and said because electronic records aren't "official" I wasn't legally entitled to see them. They were wrong," Harris said.

Harris hired Paul Nicholas Boylan, an attorney specializing in record access law, to file a Petition for Writ of Mandate to enforce Harris' rights under the California Constitution, Education Code and Public Records Act. The district hired Trujillo & Vinson, a bay area law firm, to defend against Harris' lawsuit.

"The District's defense was vigorous," Boylan said. "But in the end the court agreed that the District violated Mike's rights."

On May 20, 2011, Placer County Superior Court Commissioner Margret Wells entered judgment ordering the district to provide Harris with access to a complete copy of his son's records, including emails and other electronic records.

"It was a huge victory," Harris said.

But the dispute wasn't over. As the winning party, Harris asked the court to order the district to pay his attorney's fees and court costs.

"That's when things got really nasty," Boylan said. "The district fought even harder to avoid reimbursing Mike for what it cost him to enforce his rights."

When Harris filed his request for reimbursement, the district hired a second law firm, Meyers & Nave, a large law firm with offices in six cities, to work with Trujillo & Vinson to oppose the claim. However, right before the hearing on Harris' motion, the case settled when the district agreed to pay Harris' attorney's fees and court costs.

To settle Harris' claim for fees and costs, the District recently agreed to pay \$139,250. In

a press release, the District admits paying their own attorneys as much as \$100,000 and records show they paid an additional \$12,310 to data consultants and court reporters.

"What we don't know yet is how much time District employees and officers devoted to this, Harris said. "Time wasted is money wasted. When everything is added up, I suspect the District spent close to, if not more than, \$300,000 to violate my rights," Harris concluded.

The District's press release states that the reason why the District hired outside data firms instead of relying on their own tech employees, was because Harris request was beyond the capacity of the District's] technology department.

"This just isn't true," Harris said. "The district has a capable technology department and they knew how to provide emails in their native format. Providing emails in their native format is easy to do and I even offered to help them if they needed it. It makes no sense, " Harris said. "It is like they have so much money they don't care how they spend it."

"This is not just a question of them trying to violate my rights," Harris added. "This is a question of how much money was wasted in the attempt. \$300,000 is a huge amount of money, especially now in hard economic times when so many teachers are losing their jobs and so many school programs are being cut. The \$300,000 should have been used to pay for teachers, books, or other costs related to educating our students, not a misguided and irresponsible attempt to deny me my rights as a parent. It makes absolutely no sense to spend so much money that way. It would never happen if they had to spend their own money but apparently they operate using different standards when they spend the taxpayer's money."

"Over the past two years I have often wondered who was in charge and if anyone would be held responsible for wasting our taxpayer dollars," Harris said. "I met with two board members to talk about this and I'm still not sure if they understand what happened here or if anyone will be held accountable. Something should be done so that this does not happen to anyone else. We can't afford it."

**(RJUHSD's Press Release is attached to this press release)**

For further information or comment, please contact:

Paul Nicholas Boylan

Tel: 530 297 7184

Fax: 530 297 7168

email: [paulboylan@aol.com](mailto:paulboylan@aol.com)