

TO: ALL AGENCY STAFF
FROM: ROBERT HILL, SUPERINTENDENT
DATE: APRIL 22, 2013
SUBJECT: RECENT EVENTS

The Agency has been flooded with rumors, accusation and untruths in the last few weeks, which are being spread by a select group of individuals. I want to thank the many employees who have focused their efforts in attending to the educational programming of students, and displayed continued professionalism in the wake of the fabrications and potential distractions.

A number of employees have reported they have been asked to sign petitions to support the efforts of this select group and have expressed fear of retaliation if they don't sign. I want employees to know they have every right to sign any petition they so choose. It is also important for employees to know they do not have to sign any petition and that ASDB does not tolerate reprisals of any kind. Therefore, it is extremely important for employees who are concerned of retaliation to report their concerns to the Superintendent and/or the Human Resources Director. ASDB cannot address employee fears if no reports are filed or if anonymous reports are filed. I want to assure employees that confidentiality will be maintained to every extent possible, and ASDB will take the necessary actions to protect employees from inappropriate treatment.

The false information being spread is a concerted effort to instill fear in others so as to further the "cause" of a group of individuals. I wish to address some of the false information you may have heard. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive, but is intended to address the more significant concerns that have been brought to my attention.

Termination of Deaf Staff

Perhaps the most outrageous falsehood is that ASDB is firing all Deaf individuals. There is no evidence to support this accusation. The facts are that in the past four years, ASDB has had to discharge individuals who are required to follow the policies and rules of the agency. No single individual, or group of individuals, is given special treatment. All employees are held to the same standards.

Closing the Cooperative Programs

There is no truth to the rumor that ASDB is planning to close the Cooperative Programs. To the contrary, the Cooperative Programs are legislatively mandated and serve a significant role in the continuum of services ASDB provides to students ASDB is obligated to serve across the State of Arizona. If the Cooperatives were to close tomorrow (though they are NOT), neither the Tucson campus nor the Phoenix campus could successfully meet the needs of all the students served by the Cooperatives. Firstly, the site-base schools would not be determined the LRE for many of the students. Secondly, the site-base schools would not have the space and resources to meet the number of students. Likewise, if the site-base schools were to ever close (though they are NOT), the Cooperatives do not have sufficient staff in the rural locations to meet student needs.

Closing the Tucson Campus

It is true that enrollment has declined at the Tucson Campus; however, the Tucson campus provides a residential option for ASDB and again offers a valuable component in the continuum of services provided to students. No plans are in place to close the site-base schools or the Cooperative programs. Any comments to the contrary are simply designed to create fear.

Closing the Phoenix Campus

As current enrollment continues to rise in Phoenix, the closure of PDSD makes no sense. When this topic came up three plus years ago as a cost-savings initiative, this was quickly dismissed. A need may actually exist in the future for a second campus in the Valley. Also, ASDB is working to secure the necessary funding (approximately 11 million dollars) to build a new elementary and preschool facility at PDSD, as well as a new athletic complex (5 million dollars). This, coupled with the short-term plans for a new freezer (\$100,000), insulation of the gymnasium \$90,000, and culinary program \$45,000, serve to confirm there are no plans to close the Phoenix campus.

Closing the Dorms

ASDB has spent nearly a million dollars in the last 15 months to improve the dorms and has expended additional dollars to update the fire/emergency alert system. These dollars would not have been spent if ASDB had plans to close the dorms. Plus, ASDB has obtained another one

million dollars to begin work on three more dorms (Manzanita, Palo Verde, and Pima).

Building New Dorms to convert the Campus into a new branch of the Pima County Community College System

Simply put, this is not true. Again, the dorm improvements in the past and the dorm improvements in the near future do not support such a rumor.

Shutting Down the Agricultural Program

The Tucson Campus agricultural program has not been shut down. Parts of the program have been put on hold until proper research can be conducted to ensure the agreed-upon program is operating within laws, codes, policies, rules, and procedures. ASDB's goal is to build a viable agricultural program that minimizes liability exposure to ASDB, and ensures health and safety issues for students.

The truth is as follows. It was reported to me in February that goats were on loan and two students needed to finish their SAE Supervised Agricultural Experience. I allowed the pigs to stay until the project at the Fair had been completed to avoid a negative impact to students. The Agricultural Teacher was asked to remove all animals by last week after students had finished their projects. The Teacher was told that if more time was necessary for students to participate at the Fair, he needed to let us know. Instead, he opted to have the pigs slaughtered and goats removed from campus. The Teacher also directed blame for the shortcomings of the program on dorm staff. Unfortunately, students have been told that ASDB administration shut down the program and ordered the slaughter of animals. These lies were told to students by those individuals who caused the violations and who blamed ASDB administration.

In addition, I learned that the necks of chickens were being snapped and the dead chickens were being tossed into the metal trashcans at the back of campus. This, among other things, exposed staff and students to unnecessary diseases.

ASDB took what was believed to be the appropriate action. The fear mongering and "bullying" of a select group of individuals will not be tolerated.

Summary

As Superintendent, I am accountable to nine Board members and am tasked to ensure the health and safety of both staff and students, and

compliance with laws, policies, regulations, rules and procedures, with the goal to minimize ASDB's liability exposures. Unfortunately, individuals have resorted to personal attacks and lies in an effort to punish me and others who have acted in the best interests of ASDB. I ask you to continue all the wonderful work you are all doing as we address these matters.

Robert Hill
Superintendent
Administration

Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind

<<https://mail.google.com/mail/mu/mp/477/>> Robert.Hill@asdb.az.gov

Office: 520.770.3704 <tel:520.770.3704>

VP: 520.762.7882 <tel:520.762.7882>

Fax: 520.770.3711 <tel:520.770.3711>