

CITY BEAT

Embarrassment of a School Board Meeting

By John Schutt
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The February meeting of the Clark County School District Board of Trustees once again has demonstrated to the public just how out of touch this board is. We would tell you to go to the CCSD video recording site to watch the video, but it seems that since even the Trustees are embarrassed by their meetings and don't want the public reliving those dog and pony shows, there have not been new meetings posted online for the last several weeks. We do commend them for having a public meeting though, as opposed to the typical secret ones. Here is what they do not want you to know:

The first hour of the school board meetings is commonly ac-

knowledged as "Happy Hour." This is the time when the Trustees typically wallow in self-congratulations or find anyone to congratulate just to have some positive spin on the management incompetence that they are advocating.

Trustee Carolyn Edwards led the awards with an award nomination ceremony recognizing a principal of an elementary school that has consistently failed "No Child Left Behind." Edwards announced and read the nomination accolades for the Board's nominee for "School Administrator of the Year." This was heaped with the sort of praise that a teacher would place upon a failing student who was trying really hard. The principal was apparently embarrassed, but accepted the

nomination anyway.

Such embellishments as leadership dedication and service were duly noted in the commentary, but no mention of actual success. In the absence of any successes, Edwards and the other Trustees had to pick from their failures to nominate those who have failed the least. Following in the footsteps of their recent mistake in nominating Walt Rulffes as Superintendent of the year, the Trustees then announced that they were nominating Dr. Lauren Kohut-Rost, Deputy Superintendent of our failing district, for another award. Similarly Rost was cited for such qualities as "Participation," "Speaking Out" and "Supporting Families" without mention of the continued failure of her school

leadership to actually measure up to national standards in education.

The Board then went on to have a severe roasting by parents and members of the school employees unions for secretly providing bonuses to the top five administrative staff in the district. Speakers were periodically interrupted by audience applause and comments about the Board. Mr. Mendoza said that the Latino community saw that the five CCSD staff were lining their pockets while schools are in need of funding. Mendoza and Parent Kevin Donovan called for the resignations of Rulffes and the board members who apparently failed to comply with the spirit and letter of the open meetings laws in providing public notice of the money given the top staffers. School Board candidate Ken Small referred to their actions as "disgraceful" and a "slap in the face to the remaining employees in the district" who are told to

expect salary cuts and or layoffs.

The Trustees apparently did not know what to do with the money-saving suggestions presented and failed to ask for additional details because it's easier to blow it off than to ask for further clarification. The Trustees then wrapped up the meeting similar to its beginning, with Trustee Carolyn Edwards mentioning another award for Rulffes and congratulating the other Trustees on how well they did at disagreeing politely during the meeting.
