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April 22, 2025

BY EMAIL ONLY

Olivia Flores

Board President

Pajaro Valley Unified School District Board of Trustees

294 Green Valley Road

Watsonville, CA 95076

Dear President Flores,

As you may know, ADL is a leading anti-hate organization whose mission is to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and secure just and fair treatment to all. Our goal is a world in which no group suffers from hate, discrimination, or bias.

I am writing to you today regarding reports of antisemitic statements by members of the Pajaro Valley Unified School District Board of Trustees during the Pajaro School Board meeting on April 16, 2025.

Members of the Trustees engaged in divisive rhetoric during the meeting, including using stereotypes and sweeping generalizations about Jewish people, including references to Jewish economic power and influence. Whether these comments were intentionally hateful or the result of ignorance and a lack of education, the use of these stereotypes is deeply troubling. The Pajaro Valley Unified School District has a responsibility to foster a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all students, staff, and community members, including members of the Jewish community. Antisemitic rhetoric and falsehoods undermine that responsibility.

It is critical that the Board of Trustees addresses these concerns directly and decisively to uphold the values of inclusivity and respect throughout the school district.

As Board President, we urge you take this situation seriously and take immediate action. This may include, but is not limited to:

- **A formal investigation:** Implementing a clear and independent investigation to examine the evidence related to the allegations.
- **Engagement with relevant community stakeholders:** Consulting with Jewish community leaders and organizations to understand the impact of the alleged behavior and to inform appropriate responses.

- **Consideration of Board ethics policies:** Reviewing existing Board policies regarding conduct and ethics to determine if any violations have occurred.
- **Exploration of disciplinary measures:** If the allegations are substantiated, consider appropriate disciplinary actions as outlined by Board bylaws and applicable laws.
- **Public statement and commitment:** Issuing a clear public statement acknowledging what occurred at the meeting, the Board's commitment to combating antisemitism and fostering an inclusive environment.
- **Educational initiatives:** Implementing training for Board members and staff on antisemitism awareness and prevention.

Addressing the reports stemming from the April 16 Board meeting proactively and transparently is essential to maintaining the trust of the community and ensuring a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. ADL is here as a partner and a resource. I look forward to your response and welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss these issues further.

Sincerely,



Marc Levine
Regional Director, ADL Central Pacific

Cc: Watsonville City Council
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
Santa Cruz County Board of Education
Assemblymember Robert Rivas
Assemblymember Dawn Addis
Assemblymember Gail Pellerin
Senator John Laird
Congressman Jimmy Panetta
Tony Thurmond, Superintendent of Public Instruction