

Robert W. Graeff, Ed.D.
Superintendent
720 Ninth Street, Ramona, CA 92065

June 4, 2009

Dear parents of a Mt. Woodson Elementary Independent Research Project student,

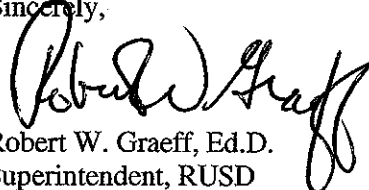
On April 28, you may have received a letter (attached) from Principal Theresa Grace detailing a particular research project presentation by a classmate of your fifth- or sixth-grade student. The letter explained that due to the content of the student presentation which centered on the life of former San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk, the school was concerned that the "sensitive" nature of the presentation might give cause for concern to some parents within our community. Accordingly, we invited parents to give or withhold permission for their student to participate in that presentation and established a presentation format for May 8 on the campus.

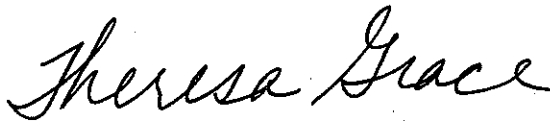
Since that time, staff members at both the District and school level have been asked to reconsider this position. Although our earlier actions were motivated by an abundance of caution in an attempt to allow parents the right to determine the participation level for their respective students in this presentation, we have since received guidance that the student who researched Mr. Milk's life should have been allowed to give the presentation during class to all students enrolled in the original independent research project class. In fact, we have apologized to the student presenter and are now arranging for a second presentation to the original class. We recognize that the mention or acknowledgment of a person's sexual orientation is not legally sufficient to require parental permission to participate in a class or view a student's presentation that is protected by the right to freedom of speech, which the District is obligated to respect.

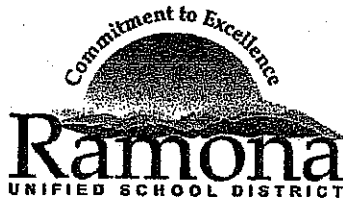
Under the supervision of Teacher Leslie Wilson and Principal Theresa Grace, your student – like the other 20 members of that original class – will attend the student presentation of approximately 15 minutes in length. Following the presentation, students will return to their normal classes to resume their daily studies.

Parents with questions or concerns are invited to contact Mrs. Grace at (760) 787-5120. In the meantime, let us both thank you for your continued support of Mt. Woodson Elementary School, its outstanding staff, and its terrific student population.

Sincerely,


Robert W. Graeff, Ed.D.
Superintendent, RUSD


Theresa Grace
Principal, Mt. Woodson Elementary School



MT. WOODSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
"Home of the Mountain Lions"

April 28, 2009

Dear Parent of an Independent Research Project Student,

As you know, your child has been in the Independent Research Project Class. In this class, each student picks a person or topic they want to research and learn about. Each session the students have done a great job with their research, as a culminating activity each student does a presentation to the Research Project Class on the person or topic they have selected.

During the spring session a student selected Harvey Milk for her project. Mr. Milk was an elected Supervisor in San Francisco, he was the first openly gay person elected to public office in the United States. While he was in office, he championed the rights of minorities and sponsored the Gay Rights Act and founded the first gay rights parade. He was assassinated in 1978 while still holding office.

We understand that this is a sensitive topic. In order to respect the rights of all of our students and their parents, we are requesting permission from a parent or guardian of our thirteen 6th grade Excel students before these students are allowed see the Harvey Milk presentation.

The presentation will take place during recess and only students who have permission from their parent or guardian will be invited to come to the presentation. Please complete, sign and return the permission slip below indicating that your child has, or does not have your permission to attend the Harvey Milk presentation. Permission slips should be returned to your child's teacher. Only the students with a permission slip indicating parent consent *returned by Wednesday, May 6, 2009* will be invited to the presentation on Friday, May 8 at lunch recess.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact Mrs. Wilson or me at 788-5120.

Thank you,

Theresa Grace
Theresa Grace, Principal

My child NATALIE JONES

_____ has my permission to see the Harvey Milk presentation.

_____ does not have my permission to see the Harvey Milk Presentation.

Parent or Guardian Signature