

# EDC school board pays superintendent to quit

By Kathryn Reed

Jeremy Meyers, the disgraced former superintendent of El Dorado County Office of Education, is receiving more than seven months worth of severance – aka taxpayer money.

The attorney for the district, David Girard, did not return multiple calls or an email asking how this is not a gift of public funds. *Lake Tahoe News* also asked Girard, as well as the public information officer for the district Dina Gentry, to cite the Government, Education and/or Election code(s) that allow for the board to financially compensate an elected official upon his resignation. Neither did so.



Jeremy Meyers  
when he was  
booked Aug.  
22.

Board President John Lane also did not respond to an email from *LTN*.

After being arrested on DUI charges twice in five months and pleading no contest to the **first offense**, Meyers opted to sign a resignation agreement Nov. 13, while the board acted on in **Nov. 16**. Meyers had not worked since his **Nov. 5 arrest**.

On that day he had a blood alcohol level of 0.19 percent, more than twice the legal limit, according to the California Highway Patrol. This was in the middle of a work day. The district office shares a parking lot with an elementary school.

Meyers will receive \$114,821.55 – the equivalent of his salary through June 30, 2016. The five elected board members agreed to also give him \$10,930. This is what the value of his medical, dental and life insurance would be for that same time period.

Per the agreement Meyers has until Dec. 1 to return all property belonging to the district. This includes master keys, credit cards and security passes. A condition of getting paid off is those items must be turned in.

The agreement contained language that the document would not be released without an entity like *Lake Tahoe News* invoking the Public Records Request Act.

*Lake Tahoe News* had two attorneys with experience in municipal government law review the agreement and offer input into its legalities. Both believe it's possible the payment is a gift of public funds.

"I have not found any basis upon which the \$114K can be paid. If he had a contract with a severance clause, that would need to be examined, also the basis of such a contract in the first place," one of the attorneys said. "The salary schedule for the superintendent does not outline a severance. Ordinarily when a resignation occurs, there is no basis for payment, although they may claim that it is in exchange for a release from potential suit."

Anyone can challenge the agreement in court. This must be done within 90 days.

Because Meyers was elected and was not accused of committing a

felony the board had little recourse.

Gentry emailed this statement, "The board of education determined that the separation agreement is in the best interest of the El Dorado County Office of Education. As an elected official, the county superintendent was legally entitled to complete the remaining three years of his term of office, and any legal or other challenge to the county superintendent's right to continue in office would have been potentially expensive and lengthy."

Had the board waited for a recall to occur, the odds are the process would have taken until next summer. Meyers would have been collecting his paycheck that whole time. Plus, there is no guarantee voters would have recalled him. Without a recall, he would have been on the job for the rest of his term – the end of 2018. With a recall, the district would have to pay the expense for a special election.

The statement from the district went on to say, "The board, with strong public input, came to the unanimous conclusion that it must take all reasonable and feasible steps to effect an immediate leadership change in the El Dorado County Office of Education."

The board is looking to finalize the application process by Dec. 1, with the goal of naming a replacement in January.