



# No one came off looking good

## The mid-summer chapter of the Washoe

County School District Telenovela concluded last week with the firing of Superintendent Traci Davis. School board members decided the circumstantial evidence surrounding the leaking of confidential information to a former employee was Davis' responsibility, regardless of whether she did it directly or negligently allowed it to happen.

The affair was handled in a shockingly clumsy manner, inspiring a resounding vote of no confidence in the school district's professional and elected leadership. The week before the final vote to dismiss Davis was full of daily intrigue, with twists and turns no one could see coming.

Davis was badly served when she was lured to a meeting under the pretense of a discussion on strategic planning only to be told her "alleged misconduct and character" would be the subject of a special school board meeting. The public, through the media, was misled when the school board president denied any knowledge of the

reasons behind Davis' sudden request for personal leave, also refusing to discuss the abrupt departure of two high-level administrators who were married, citing confidentiality of personnel decisions. Teachers, staff and students were left in the dark when the acting superintendent abruptly closed down the administration's offices for two days when Davis threatened to come back to work prior to the Board meeting where she would surely be fired.

The Telenovela left so many unanswered questions in its wake. Why was Davis allowed to import so many personal friends from Las Vegas and promote them to highly paid administrative positions for which they seemed to be vastly underqualified? Why did they leak confidential information to a fired employee who was suing the very school district they were leading? Why did Davis absurdly liken her situation to the Central Park Five, saying "I am now the Washoe County School District One"?

The lies, both direct and of omission, were not worthy of an institution charged

with educating our future leaders. And while the drama was building within the highest administrative levels of the district, a controversy regarding one top student faded away much too quickly.

North Valleys High School Valedictorian Emily Hernandez Medina was not allowed to speak at graduation ceremonies in June when her speech was deemed too negative due to its portrayal of the pain of discrimination as a first-generation Latina American who felt ignored by administrators despite her achievement of a 5.3 grade point average while working a full-time job to help support her immigrant family. Medina was also upset that her Valedictorian portrait at school was replaced with a cartoon caricature, saying administrators didn't seem to care about the prank.

According to an article in the Reno Gazette Journal, Principal Jeana Curtis returned Medina's speech draft with red circles around areas that needed to be changed to be more positive about her

high school experience. After Medina took to Twitter to complain about the situation, writing "Ms. Curtis hates my speech and guess what? Fuck that bitch" she was told she would not be able to give any version of the speech. Medina removed the tweet and acknowledged that "it was dumb to do it" saying "At the moment, I was indignant and filled with anger," but she refused to apologize, and her voice was silenced. The school district wouldn't comment on the matter, saying it would be "unprofessional and unfair" to do so.

Surely this situation could have been handled more calmly and thoughtfully, with administrators validating the personal experience of this obviously bright and capable student by taking the time to learn why she felt so alienated from school administration and offering her guidance in using social media more wisely.

Maybe they were too mesmerized by the Telenovela over on Ninth Street. □



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Truckee Meadows Water Authority

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