

# De La Cerda's bold defiance amid disaster

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We've referred to him as a "Useful Idiot" and criticized him as he let Michael Hanson do his worst.

But when it seemingly mattered most, Fresno Unified trustee Chris De La Cerda stood up in defiance – by not showing up at all.

A week ago, Superintendent Hanson attempted backdoor trickery to hire three criminal defense attorneys to personally represent himself, CFO Ruth Quinto and COO Karin Temple using taxpayer funds. Hanson attempted this by holding a special closed session meeting on a Tuesday (one day prior to a regular meeting), De La Cerda sent a silent message that spoke volumes.

"No."

De La Cerda was absent from the special closed session meeting, the ultimate act of defiance toward a Superintendent who has run amok with power.

While De La Cerda has approved questionable proposals from Hanson in the past, the McLane representative – a shrewd trustee and man of conviction – made a statement last week: that the Superintendent's proposal to use taxpayer money to ensure that he avoids prison time is a bridge too far.

That statement had a visceral impact: with the cameras focused on Hanson last Tuesday, he was forced to announce that his backdoor proposal was not approved (nor denied) because there weren't enough votes to go either way.

All thanks to De La Cerda's no-show.

De La Cerda has become the Anthony Kennedy of the Fresno Unified school board – attentive, focused, centrist, yet led by conviction.

Sources have told CVObserver that Hanson is attempting again to propose providing taxpayer-funded criminal defense attorneys to personally represent administrators at the next regular meeting on Oct. 28. It is serving as Hanson's goal line stand to ensure he is protected as his tenure as Superintendent comes under the magnifying glass of Federal investigators.

As he did last week, De La Cerda is well-served by sticking by his conviction that the proposal is beyond improper.

It is totally immoral.

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