

# Amid federal probe, Fresno Unified's Michael Hanson receives positive review

By Mackenzie Mays  
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Amid an ongoing federal investigation of Fresno Unified's no-bid construction contracts, a majority of the school board gave Superintendent Michael Hanson a positive review as part of his annual performance evaluation Wednesday night.

The 5-2 vote extends Hanson's contract by one year, securing him the position through June 2020. The extension did not include a raise. Hanson earns about \$300,000 a year.

Trustees Brooke Ashjian and Carol Mills were the "no" votes. Trustees Luis Chavez, Christopher De La Cerda, Cal Johnson, Janet Ryan and Valerie Davis voted in his favor.

Both Ashjian and Mills have voiced concerns about Hanson's leadership since the investigation started. Trustees did not publicly comment on the matter.

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Michael Hanson, Fresno Unified Superintendent

On Wednesday, Hanson thanked the board for the "encouragement and support."

"It is often repeated but necessary to say we have one of the most challenging cities in California, if not America, and we have staff working with our youth and doing things and changing lives everyday," he said. "I say thank you to the board for the evaluation and your confidence, but more importantly, thank you for continuing the investment you've been making across the system year after year."

Fresno Unified was served with a federal grand jury [subpoena](#) in August, which demands answers about the use of public bond money for certain multimillion school building projects, zoning in on local developers Harris Construction and Bush Construction.

The subpoena requests expansive personnel records from any Fresno Unified official who "has or had any responsibility for" the contracts in question. Earlier this week, Hanson informed trustees that they were required to [turn over](#) any electronic devices they use to conduct district business on as part of the investigation.

Hanson said he was not concerned about a negative review despite the recent scrutiny and is optimistic about what the investigation will find.

"I know what the truth is. I know what we've done. I know how our staff conducts themselves. I know what people say and what they do in a public arena may not always match the facts," he said. "I'm very, very pleased that we're continuing to move forward with this process and fully complying and I look forward to being able to have all of our documents sent over to (federal investigators) and have our conversations with them."

Also Wednesday, trustees unanimously voted Chavez to serve as the new board president. Chavez replaces Johnson, who will continue to serve as a trustee.

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