

Hi, Fred Nelson for Community Comment,

Over three months have passed and the Northern Humboldt Union High School District, from what I have read, has yet to find itself in a satisfactory settlement of the plagiarism issue that began with Trustee Dan Johnson's June Thirteenth commencement speech at Arcata High School's graduation ceremony. Let me begin with the fact that I personally do not know any of the players in the Northern Humboldt District. I have heard of some of them over the years but take no sides. Plagiarism is serious business and anyone involved in speaking to the public should be aware of the results. Mr. Johnson's delayed response to the charges did not show much regard for all of those involved nor did the rest of the school board do much better with their lack of a timely organized reaction to address the problem. Trustee Johnson's apology was not accepted by many because of the last paragraph stating that "self-appointed referees of good and evil" in the community are intolerant and have a "far more profound flaw than his". Evidently there is a reason that Johnson included this paragraph. I would like to know what it is. Three trustees are up for re-election with one claiming the current problem is interfering with campaigns. Can't these people see that a controversy such as this could be used to aid them in campaigning? At the September Tenth meeting, trustees were asking restitution of some sort from Johnson. The School Board does not have the authority to fire or discipline a fellow trustee. One of three things can happen: a resignation from Mr. Johnson, a recall election by the voter or he finishes out his term which is up next year. From what I read, about half the number of persons present at the September meeting showed support for Johnson as did one Trustee. So, the question arises: What has been Dan Johnson's track record prior to his speech? It must not be too bad to have that much support. The September Fifteenth edition of the Times/Standard contains an editorial stating there was "shouting and general unpleasantness" at the September meeting. With a divided audience showing obvious hostility, there has to be more than an act of plagiarism involved. Is this a spark from a smoldering fire? Is there an underlying problem in the District? I would suggest to the voters of the Northern Humboldt Union High School District to stay involved and study closely each school board candidate before casting your vote later this year. To those presently seated Trustees: Pay attention to the Brown Act and make decisive not divisive decisions. Each of you has to show leadership. That is why you are there. And don't forget who you work for! To the students of the district: Sorry that the adults are getting so involved with themselves that your education suffers. Fred Nelson for Community Comment