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For Immediate Release

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## District Attorney Arraigns Defendants in South Bay Corruption Case

San Diego County District Attorney [Bonnie M. Dumanis](#)' office today arraigned five defendants in a wide-ranging public corruption case involving Sweetwater Union High School District School Board members, the former district superintendent and a South Bay contractor.

All of the defendants pleaded not guilty and were allowed by Superior Court Judge Michael Smyth to remain out of custody on their own recognizance. A readiness hearing date was scheduled for all defendants on March 23 at 9:00 a.m. in Department 50 of the San Diego Superior Court downtown.

Defendants arraigned today include former Sweetwater Union High School Superintendent Jesus Gandara; school board trustees Arlie Ricasa, Pearl Quiñones, and former 16-year board member Greg Sandoval. Also charged is Henry Amigable, a contractor who worked for a construction company hired by the school district.

The defendants face the following charges and maximum exposure if convicted of those charges:

Gandara – perjury, filing a false instrument and wrongful influence. He faces up to seven years in state prison.

Quiñones - perjury and filing a false instrument. She faces up to five years in state prison.

Ricasa – perjury, filing a false instrument and wrongful influence. She faces up to five years in state prison.

Sandoval – perjury, filing a false instrument and wrongful influence. He faces up to seven years in state prison.

Amigable – bribery and obtaining a thing of value to influence a member of a legislative body. He faces up to four years in state prison.

(More)

The defendants from the school district, who were entrusted with making decisions on behalf of the best interests of students and schools, received tens of thousands of dollars worth of meals, tickets and hotel stays from construction companies vying for voter-approved bond projects. Shortly after board members received financial favors, they approved contracts with the contractors for bond projects stemming from Sweetwater's \$644 million Proposition O.

The District Attorney's investigation is ongoing and additional charges are possible.

Earlier this week, San Diego County District Attorney [Bonnie Dumanis](#) announced the establishment of a new Public Corruption Hotline for the public to call in with tips that may lead to public integrity investigations. Thanks to this new hotline, whistleblowers with valuable information will have the opportunity to provide tips confidentially. The Public Corruption Hotline number is 619-531-4000. The phone line should only be used to report possible corruption at **public agencies** in San Diego County.

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