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Livermore Charter Schools, School District Battle Over Rumors

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LIVERMORE — The Tri-Valley Learning Corp. and the Livermore school district have begun a back-and-forth battle as each claims the other is spreading false rumors.

Earlier this month, TVLC, via its Menlo Park-based Procopio law firm, sent a cease-and-desist order to the school district, claiming the district was intentionally spreading false rumors about its Livermore charter schools and creating unfair competition.

“Your harassing conduct taken in bad faith is an intentional interference with the TVLC schools’ attendance and a serious violation of parents’ right to school of choice,” the letter stated.

Last month as school began, the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District reported that it gained 500 new students, most of them former charter school students who were fleeing Livermore Valley Charter School and Livermore Valley Charter Preparatory.

TVLC, the company that runs the charter schools, is facing allegations of financial mismanagement, illegally charging foreign exchange students tuition and transferring them to a school in Stockton against their will, and recently, hiring a principal who made an online reference to empathizing with mass shooters.

Former TVLC employees or those associated with the organization were charged last month by the Alameda County District Attorney’s Office on suspicion of child cruelty and failing to report suspected child abuse.

In their letter, the TVLC’s lawyers stated they had evidence school district officials are meeting with parents to persuade them to pull their children out of the charter schools.

One day later, the school district responded with its own cease-and-desist letter, stating that no district officials were present at such a meeting. The letter states that if such a meeting did occur, “it is even more troubling that TVLC is attempting to suppress their (parents)

discussion.”

Chris Van Schaack, the associate superintendent of the school district, said that even if the district had a meeting, it would be within their rights.

The district’s letter, written by its attorney John Yeh, also states that TVLC is making “fabricated and false allegations” against the district, which does a disservice to both the district and the charter schools.

“One would hope that TVLC would focus its energies on addressing its serious institutional deficiencies ... instead of sending baseless legal accusations against the district and suppressing its own parents’ constitutional rights to meet and discuss their public school options,” Yeh wrote.

Livermore Valley Charter School sent a letter to parents earlier this month letting them know at least seven teachers had to be laid off because of declined enrollment and “the prior administration’s deficit spending.” Other teachers have resigned, as the letter cites a first-grade teacher who is no longer with the charter school.

Eric Dillie, a former principal for both of the charters, and former vice principal Randy Taylor, were charged by the DA’s Office for failing to report suspected child abuse. They resigned last month.

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