



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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VENTURA, California - District Attorney Gregory D. Totten announced today the conclusion of the review of the allegations against Arthur Joe Lopez, a former member of the Oxnard School District Board of Trustees, for misappropriating public funds. The District Attorney's Office has rejected the case for prosecution because charges cannot be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

Two audits conducted at the request of the Oxnard School District (OSD) found evidence that Lopez had used his OSD credit card to make personal purchases. Detectives from the Oxnard Police Department conducted a thorough investigation, interviewing pertinent witnesses and obtaining financial records.

Lopez charged a number of meals for himself and others on the credit card, but there is no evidence to refute his claim that the meals were district-related business meetings. Lopez also used the card to purchase gasoline for his personal vehicle; although the law provides that he should have sought mileage reimbursement instead, it cannot be established that the charges were for other than district-related business.

In November 2009, Lopez's OSD credit card was charged \$600 to pay for his 19-year-old son to attend a baseball academy. In a letter to the auditor, Lopez claimed that his son had taken the credit card off the dresser at midnight and used it to make the payment online. Subsequent investigation determined that the academy did not accept online payments, and that the charge was authorized on a handwritten payment form. However, it could not be determined whether

Lopez completed the information on the form. Despite the obvious personal nature of this expenditure, there is insufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Lopez knowingly authorized the misuse of his OSD credit card.

Lopez reimbursed OSD for the baseball academy and some other expenditures. He is no longer on the school board. Since these expenditures were brought to light, OSD has implemented new policies designed to improve accountability for credit card usage.

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