

# SAN GABRIEL VALLEY TRIBUNE



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## Protesting parent ousted from council

By **Amanda Baumfeld**  
Staff Writer

WEST COVINA — A month after participating in a one-day protest in support of teachers, a parent was ousted from an Options Preschool Parent Board.

Vanessa Madrid, 25, was voted out of the Head Start Parent Council by fellow members on Jan. 5 after serving on the board for five months.

"I wasn't even allowed to defend myself," said Madrid, whose daughter is in Head Start. "They said I will never find out exactly what I did, but I was very ignorant in helping the teachers."

West Covina-based Options administers the state's Head

Start low-income preschool program, among other services.

The company is a childcare and human services agency providing early care and education to families in the Valley.

Deputy Executive Director Dolores Meade would not say if Madrid's participation in a boycott with 200 other parents on Dec. 15 played a role in her dismissal. The parents kept their kids home for a day in protest of teachers' rights.

"I am assuming the person who brought the motion forward felt Vanessa was not following the rules she is expected to follow," Meade said. "What role her participation in the boycott had? I can not speak to that."

Meade would not disclose who made the motion or disclose the names of any of the parent council members.

Madrid's dismissal comes in the midst of the teachers' union — Service Employees International Union Local 99 — negotiating a new contract with Options officials.

"We want the parent to be reinstated," said Terry Carter, spokeswoman for SEIU Local 99. "The ultimate goal is a fair contract with very basic protections."

But Options officials said the union is using Madrid as a leverage in negotiation talks.

"It is disheartening to the administration of the agency and the board that the union has decided to use parents as a

tool to influence what they believe needs to be in the contract," Meade said.

On Monday, Madrid along with about 20 other parents went to a Board of Directors meeting pleading to be reinstated to the parent council.

Also at the meeting and speaking on Madrid's behalf was Board of Equalization Chair Judy Chu and a representative from State Assembly Member Ed Hernandez, 57th District — West Covina.

Madrid is hopeful she will be reinstated.

"I love being part of my daughter's education; it hurts me," Madrid said Wednesday. "Why would this happen?"

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Out of concern for their kids, informed and involved parents of Options students have been trying to talk to Options management, asking for basic rights for teachers.

Options has a long history of intimidating its teachers. Now it's utilizing the same kind of scare tactics against parents, attempting to silence them. The latest aggression was kicking parent Vanessa Madrid off the parents' Head Start Policy Council in retaliation for her outspoken support of her daughter's teacher.

Isn't Options here to serve the children and parents at its sites? Why does Options instead try to silence involved parents? Why is a large, publicly-funded agency so afraid of parent involvement?

Read the article here... →

*(and also note how Options refers to parents as "tools being used" rather than the child advocates they really are)*

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Con el propósito de obtener la mejor educación y el mejor cuidado posible para sus hijos, los padres de familia de la agencia Options se han unido con los maestros en un esfuerzo por ganar derechos básicos en el sitio de trabajo.

Options tiene una larga historia de intimidación con sus empleados. Ahora está utilizando esas mismas tácticas para silenciar a los padres que apoyan a los maestros.

El acto de agresión mas reciente ha sido la expulsión de Vanessa Madrid, mama de un alumno, del concilio de pólizas de Head Start por su apoyo activo al maestro de su hija.

¿No existe Options para servirle a los alumnos y a los padres de familia?

¿Por qué es que Options quiere silenciar las voces de los padres de familia?

¿Por qué es que una agencia tan grande que recibe fondos públicos tiene tanto miedo a la participación de los padres?

Lea el articulo adjunto... →

*(También note que la representante de Options se refiere a los padres como "herramientas" o en ingles "tools" que se traduce como personas ignorantes en lugar de personas informadas y educadas actuando en el mejor interés de sus hijos.)*

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