

Jackie Lacey

District Attorney
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NEWS RELEASE

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CORRECTION: Defendant is charged with a dozen counts.

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Ex-Centinel Valley Superintendent Charged With Embezzlement, Conflict of Interest

A former Los Angeles area public school superintendent has been charged with a dozen counts for allegedly enriching himself by authoring and concealing certain revisions to his employment contract, executing contracts for his financial gain without school board approval, and unlawfully altering school board policies and procedures to advance his financial interests, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced today.

Jose A. Fernandez (1/16/60) is charged with six counts of conflict of interest, three counts of misappropriation of public funds, two counts of grand theft and one count of embezzlement with excessive taking allegations. He is expected to be arraigned tomorrow in Department 4 of the Los Angeles County Superior Court, Torrance Branch.

Deputy District Attorneys Terrie Tengelsen, David Barkhurst and Russell Moore of the Public Integrity Division are prosecuting case YAO96660, which was filed for arrest warrant yesterday.

Prosecutors allege that Fernandez manipulated the school board and its policies and procedures – dramatically increasing his pay and benefits – in an almost five-year period as superintendent of the Centinela Valley Union High School District.

Fernandez also is accused of unlawfully creating supplemental retirement programs for school district executives, including himself. In 2012, he allegedly made last-minute changes to a retirement plan that allowed him to spike his salary to gain lucrative retirement benefits. In 2013, the defendant's wages for purposes of the retirement plan totaled more than \$750,000, nearly \$500,000 more than the next highest paid employee in the school district.

Investigators arrested Fernandez this morning without incident. Bail is recommended at \$495,000.

If convicted as charged, Fernandez faces a possible maximum sentence of 15 years in state prison.

The case remains under investigation by the District Attorney's Bureau of Investigation.

[About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#)

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.