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Better Never Than Late

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At its first meeting in April, the Board of the Burbank Unified School District voted to approve changes in the contract for Ali Kiafar, the Chief Facilities and Development Superintendent. Among the changes, gone is the clause known euphemistically as a "performance bonus." In fact, it has been a legal kickback scheme from the start.

When his three year contract was first created and approved by a previous school board, the agreement paid Kiafar a percentage of every dollar he brought into the district for the purposes of remodeling or building district facilities. When the district applied for and received state school construction bond funds, Kiafar got a piece. When the federal government provided a grant for building, Kiafar got a piece. In short, Kiafar was paid twice for doing his job once (and some argue he barely did it once). The first payment was the salary he received. The second was the so-called "performance bonus."

The board was set to impose the new contract in March, but the discussion was tabled at that time. According to sources, members of a board-appointed budget study committee wanted a chance to convince the board to drop Kiafar completely. That effort was unsuccessful, but at least Kiafar did not get the options for additional years that he'd once asked for.

In fact, there has been rampant talk about attempts to oust Kiafar, an executive beloved by the previous administration, and a player at the center of some of that band's most ludicrous scandals. But his role helming the years-long program of modernization and construction in the district has made some reluctant to try and replace him in the final year of those projects.

Kiafar did not surrender his bonus without something in return. The district has changed the formula used to provide certain benefits and compensation. In the end, the change will allow Kiafar to leave with larger pension than he'd have enjoyed as a result of his previous contract.

For some background on Kiafar's special contract, coverage that has been exclusive to this column over the last three years, see the "Willy Award" he received in the January column found at [Previous On-Line Columns](#)