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Kenedy charges dropped  
School chief's exit helps resolve case

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Criminal charges against former Kenedy School District Superintendent Joe N. Garza Jr. were dropped Tuesday, less than a month before he was to stand trial.

In April, a Karnes County grand jury indicted Garza on two charges of tampering with a government record and three charges of aggravated perjury.

In August, he agreed to step down as superintendent in exchange for a partial buyout of his contract, which had two years remaining.

In court filings, District Attorney Lynn Ellison called the dismissals "part of a comprehensive settlement of civil and criminal litigation against Joe N. Garza."

The record-tampering charges accused Garza of altering a purchase order to get district employee Rickey DeLeon in trouble.

They were dropped at the request of DeLeon as part of a settlement this month of his civil lawsuit against Garza.

DeLeon, who had been transferred from his job as high school principal to alternative school principal, had sued Garza, five school board members and the district. He claimed, in part, that he had been retaliated against because of grievances he filed.

DeLeon's attorney, Gail Borden Tennant Jr., said the civil claims against the district, and the board members, one of whom is out of office, are pending.

The perjury indictments alleged that Garza lied to a grand jury about asking another employee to use district property to make fencing materials for him.

Ellison said he offered to drop those charges if Garza would quit as superintendent because pressing the case could take years, and he wanted to resolve the matter and speed Garza's departure.

Pat Hancock, one of Garza's attorneys, said the dismissals were just.

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