

Rutherford recall falls short

Organizers of drive to oust school board member vow to try again

A group of parents and teachers seeking to recall Ravenswood school board member Donna Rutherford has failed to garner enough signatures to qualify for a vote, but vows to start over again.

Teacher Jackie Smith, one of the recall effort organizers, blamed the rain in January for hindering the group from being able to go door to door in the community to collect the needed signatures. The petitions fell short by 200 signatures. To have a recall, the group needed more than 2,000 signatures before its deadline last Thursday at 5 p.m.

But the group is not giving up. "We are going to start over again," Smith said.

Recall proponents charge that Rutherford knowingly voted to hire a convicted child molester to work in the school district. Board member Ruben Abrica and former board member Chester Palesoo also voted to hire the program staff assistant. But board members say the conviction was never brought to their attention, and last May, a judge set aside the conviction.

The group also charges that Rutherford authorized renting a school district building free of charge to a friend.

Rutherford denies any wrongdoing and says she hopes to move on from the recall. "I knew that those individuals who were behind the recall would not succeed because I had a lot of support from the community. My record speaks for itself. I'm trying to make positive things happen around children," she said.

Smith said the group hopes to file an intent to recall this week and begin circulating petitions again. ■

—Elizabeth Darling