

February 20, 2023

VIA EMAIL & FIRST CLASS MAIL

Kris Ganske (kganske03@gmail.com)

1138 O’Keeffe Avenue

Sun Prairie, WI 53590

RE: Your Recent Emails to Principal Kyle Walsh
Our File: 22637.82227

Dear Ms. Ganske:

I represent the Sun Prairie Area School District. I am in receipt of numerous email communications you have sent to Principal Kyle Walsh including most recently two emails you sent to him on February 15, 2023, concerning the National Day of Reading activity at Creekside Elementary School. In those emails you reflect on the National Day of Reading activity as “beyond disturbing” and describe Principal Walsh reading the book as “borderline grooming.” You offer your opinion on who should be reading the book and question why the book is so important to Principal Walsh. You claim that comments on-line, which you imply align with your views, include that Principal Walsh will “be the next SP Pedo staff member” and “what’s next a drag show.”

The purpose of this letter is two-fold. First, this letter will serve as a cease and desist letter directing that you refrain from any further communications with Principal Walsh that state, imply or even suggest that Principal Walsh is engaging in “grooming” and/or “disturbing” activities, or stating or implying that he is and/or will be the next “SP Pedo staff member.” These comments are patently false and highly defamatory. You are hereby on notice that a civil cause of action for defamation exists under Wisconsin law against persons who make false and defamatory statements about another. Many of your references in your February 15 emails to Principal Walsh are indeed false and defamatory. Principal Walsh has a civil claim against you for defamation and he reserves the right to file such claim against you for your defamatory comments. Please cease and desist making these false, defamatory and highly inappropriate comments immediately.

The second purpose of this letter is to address your persistent questioning of District curriculum and to direct you to cease and desist in any manner other than to comply with School District policy, as outlined below.

By way of background, in July of 2019 the School Board charged District Administration with forming a SPASD District Task Force on Student Behavior and Bullying. The task force identified Seven Priority Recommendations. One of those Priority Recommendations was identified as “Pro-active Support of High Risk (LGBTQ).” The Task Force identified several key components of that Pro-active Support, including “LGBTQ and Gender-Inclusive Practices” which included (1) lessons and resources; (2) developmentally appropriate and respectful vocabulary; and (3) practices to ensure an inclusive community.

The work of the Task Force was consistent with the Board’s Policy BA, Vision, Mission, Values and Beliefs. As you know, that policy identifies the “Vision” of the District as being a high performing district of choice that reflects the cultures of the diverse community. That policy identifies the “Mission” of the District as one where futures depend on the District to inspire and prepare every child, every day, by providing relevant, engaging in innovative learning experiences in and out of the classroom. In addition, District Policy OE10, mandates that the Superintendent “shall establish and maintain a learning environment that is safe and a culture that is respectful and conducive to effective learning.”

The point of all of the above is to make clear that the District, through its Equity Statement, Board Policies, District Policies, and the recommendations of the Task Force is unwavering in its commitment to provide proactive support for high risk students including the District’s LGBTQIA+ students.

While you may personally disagree with curriculum and materials the District chooses to support this directive, your personal opinion will not impede the District’s mission to inspire and prepare every child, every day, by providing relevant, engaging and innovative learning experiences in and out of the classroom. The District supports and is inclusive of all students, staff, families and community members no matter the personal and/or demographic make up of these individuals. That includes sexual orientation and gender identity as identified in the School Board’s Equity Statement. That Equity Statement specifically provides as follows:

We stand by our LGBTQIA+ students and staff. We take seriously our responsibility to provide safe, non-discriminatory, and inclusive environments for people of all orientations and identities as they reflect our diverse community around us.

Despite all of the above information, you have consistently and persistently questioned Principal Walsh over curriculum that aligns and supports the directives outlined above. To be clear, Principal Walsh will no longer engage with you on this topic due to the nature of your communications. The District will not permit one of its staff members to be harassed, defamed, disparaged and insulted like you have done. While the District tries to work with parents over concerns related to

curriculum, you do not have a right to be notified every time anything that you may personally deem to be “non basic curriculum” is used in the classroom.

You have a right to your opinion, there is no doubt about that. The District believes it is critical that people with diverse opinions express their opinions so as to ensure that the District reflects the values of the community it serves. But your right to an opinion does not give you the right to harass and defame a District employee. District Policy KBA entitled Parent and Family Engagement makes clear that communication between family, students, school staff and the District is a shared, two-way responsibility and should be “regular, meaningful and relational.” The policy explains that effective communication requires both parties to be aware of issues such as racial and gender identity, educational background, ability, cultural and language differences, and appropriate steps must be taken to allow clear communications for all participants. Your recent communications toward Principal Walsh do not embody effective communication.

With this said, I direct you to District Policy KLB entitled Handling Complaints about Learning Materials and The Curriculum. That policy provides that any resident, parent/caregiver, or employee of the District may raise objections to learning materials used in the District’s educational program on the basis of appropriateness. The policy provides that persons objecting to a particular learning material may file a complaint in accordance with established procedures. Form KLB-F is available on the District’s website for any person to request reconsideration of learning materials and curriculum. This is the process that you may use in the future if you object to what you view as “non basic curriculum.”

While it is clear from your communications with Principal Walsh that you disagree with certain curriculum used at Creekside Elementary, you should understand that all of the curriculum that you have identified in recent weeks as personally objectionable to you has been District approved curriculum. The curriculum is not implemented at the building level, but at the District level. The curriculum has the support and approval of Principal Walsh’s administrative supervisors. Nonetheless, going forward, any complaints or concerns you have concerning curriculum should be addressed in the manner set forth in Board Policy KLB and through form KLB-F.

Please cease and desist from communicating with Principal Walsh over any further concerns you have with the curriculum. In light of this directive, if you submit Form KLB-F, the District will assume that you have made informal attempts at resolution prior to filing your complaint so as to ensure that your complaint can be appropriately addressed through this District Policy.

I expect going forward that you will refrain from any communications with Principal Walsh over concerns you have regarding to curriculum. I further expect that you will refrain from making any further false and defamatory statements concerning Principal Walsh.

Please know that this communication has the full support of District Administration including District Administrator Brad Saron and Board President Steve Schroeder.

Sincerely,

AXLEY BRYNELSON, LLP



Lori M. Lubinsky

LML:kjb

cc: Steve Schroeder, Board President – Via Email
Brad Saron, Dist. Administrator – Via Email
Kyle Walsh, Principal - Elementary – Via Email