

Susanna Johnson-Berz
Resident
LD 1939

To all distinguished Committee members,

My name is Susanna Johnson-Berz, I have a son in RSU 14. I have this year attended quite a few school board meetings in our district. I can honestly say it's been very disappointing. There is no open dialogue with school board members, when school board members post things online regarding parents as right wing extremists there is no rules of conduct for them to abide by, even though they would like all parents to abide by such rules. It is not ok to be painted by school board members in any fashion as racist, right wing, or anti-science. Parents of this district have gone and voiced concerns and asked questions. School board members sometimes reply back or give vague answers that don't answer questions. At one point I think to intimidate parents the school board asked for a police presence when no physical threats had even been made. At the meeting prior a few parents were quite upset with a questionnaire that was given to their 11 year old regarding their sexual orientation. I'm sure everyone can agree an eleven year old just doesn't fully know their sexual orientation. The school has not apologized for this and has not said why this happened and that it wouldn't happen again. Leaving parents with more stress regarding their child's education. Parents are often cut off while speaking. Told to write emails if they have more to say.

At the beginning of the school year we had meetings regarding masks with majority of parents attending against. We were then told that parents emailed. How do you prove this? They don't have to. No transparency. Then a few months later we are told that it never mattered because due to funding they had to implement masking policy per CDC. So why even have meetings to discuss?? RSU superintendent said on the news, "that the kids have no problem wearing masks". However they've never given the students a questionnaire on this and how it makes them feel, which parents have suggested. A school assistant principle called my home threatening my son with expelling from the bus for not wearing a mask. The assistant principle had not even talked with my son, so he does not know why he didn't want to wear it or if he was in distress wearing it or feeling isolated. Then I'm told they keep a list with kids names on it that they have to talk to regarding wearing masks and correctly and they threaten expulsion. And just a reminder he had not even talked with my child and immediately threatened expulsion. When I brought this up at the school board meeting, school board members interrupted me three times. And I felt lied to by our superintendent who said "that the kids had no problem wearing masks". If they keep a list of kids they have to talk to then it sounds to me the kids do have a problem.

LD 1939 is very broad term and I fear as a concerned parent that this will undermine parents who want to address concerns. And what will constitute harassment? And when parents are left with unanswered questions, insults online, and school board members setting up meetings last minute or changing locations so parents don't know where the meeting is then parents have a right to be upset.

Thank you,
Susanna Johnson-Berz