

BOE - Concerns

email: "ktkash@aol.com"

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To: email: "sbrogan@ridgewood.k12.nj.us sbrogan@ridgewood.k12.nj.us"

Hello Sheila -

I wrote the following email to Mike Lembo. I wanted to share it with you as well. As a resident with a son in school, I am really disturbed at what I see happening now with the Board and the trickle-down effect to the schools and district as a whole. I just feel that I must try to make change within my rights as a parent and without overstepping my bounds as a principal.

I am writing as a resident right now. I hope that's OK!

I have some major concerns with the level of micro-managing of certain Board members. I feel that our Superintendent and Central Office Administrators are being needlessly harassed and having hours and hours of time taken up by Board members who are not following their guidelines and responsibilities as Board members. I am also concerned about the fact that our Business Administrator resigned. I have seen needless questioning of her abilities, questioning of her ethics and actions, and hours of her time wasted inappropriately by certain board members. If you look at the Code of Ethics for School Board Members in New Jersey, there are a few areas where I have concern. I have highlighted them, below.

18A:12-24.1 Code of Ethics for School Board Members

A school board member shall abide by the following Code of Ethics for School Board Members:

a. I will uphold and enforce all laws, rules and regulations of the State Board of Education, and court orders pertaining to schools. Desired changes shall be brought about only through legal and ethical procedures.

b. I will make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of children and will seek to develop and maintain public schools that meet the individual needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex, or social standing.

- c. I will confine my board action to policy making, planning, and appraisal, and I will help to frame policies and plans only after the board has consulted those who will be affected by them.
- d. I will carry out my responsibility, not to administer the schools, but, together with my fellow board members, to see that they are well run.
- e. I will recognize that authority rests with the board of education and will make no personal promises nor take any private action that may compromise the board.
- f. I will refuse to surrender my independent judgment to special interest or partisan political groups or to use the schools for personal gain or for the gain of friends.
- g. I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to the schools which, if disclosed, would needlessly injure individuals or the schools. In all other matters, I will provide accurate information and, in concert with my fellow board members, interpret to the staff the aspirations of the community for its school.
- h. I will vote to appoint the best qualified personnel available after consideration of the recommendation of the chief administrative officer.
- i. I will support and protect school personnel in proper performance of their duties.
- j. I will refer all complaints to the chief administrative officer and will act on the complaints at public meetings only after failure of an administrative solution.

L.2001,c.178,s.5.

There are some Board members who clearly are violating the Code of Ethics. There is a complaint system that can be filed with the Board of Regents and the Commissioner of Education. I would hate to see a complaint filed against the Board. Rather, I would prefer that corrections be made.

I feel my son's education is in jeopardy. Way too much time is spent questioning the knowledge and experience and expertise of the Central Office staff. I see the trickle-down effect this is having in the district. It is divisive, much the way the current administration of the United States has been divisive. Authority is being questioned. Critical time is being needlessly wasted. I am extremely concerned.

Isn't there mandatory training for Board members? Don't you take an oath? Who will make sure that members are doing what they are supposed to and not violating the Code of Ethics so that a complaint does not have to be filed? What can be done?

Thanks so much for paying attention to my extremely serious concerns.

Regards,

Katie Kashmanian

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