



**LITTLEFIELD UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #9  
GOVERNING BOARD MEETING  
Administrative Services Site  
3490 East Rio Virgin Road  
Thursday, October 12, 2023  
5:00 P.M.  
(Doors Open at 4:45 p.m.)**

**Mission Statement**

The Littlefield Unified School District is committed to excellence. Therefore, we are committed to providing opportunities for all students to learn and develop socially, emotionally, and academically. We are committed to providing resources to our students, parents and teachers in an ongoing effort to help students transition from childhood to adulthood.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Board President Graham called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. There were approximately ten (10) members of the public in attendance.

2. ROLL CALL:

Sonny Graham, Board President  
John Reyes, Board Secretary  
Susan Burch, Board Member  
Sean Hogan, Board Member  
Patricia Schoppmann, Board Member

Troy Heaton, Superintendent/Secondary Principal  
Jeremy Clarke, Elementary Principal  
Kevin Boyer, Business Manager  
Sheree Goessman, District Secretary

**CEREMONIAL ITEMS**

3. Pledge of Allegiance: By invitation of Board President.

**AGENDA**

4. Consideration of approval of the October 12, 2023 LUSD9 Board Meeting agenda.

Board Member Hogan made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Board Member Burch. The motion passed unanimously.

**Board Member Burch: Yes  
Board President Graham: Yes  
Board Member Hogan: Yes**



**Board Secretary Reyes: Yes**  
**Board Member Schoppmann: Yes**

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

At this time, the public may speak to the Governing Board on topics of concern with the public body's jurisdiction, even if the topic is not specifically included on the agenda. The public must state their full name for the record and will be allowed up to three minutes to address the Governing Board. No action will be taken as a result of public comments. The Board expects that citizens who address the board will present concerns regarding the activities in question rather than make personal attacks upon Board Members, District Personnel or other persons in attendance or absent. In addition, questions or comments on matters that are currently under legal review will not be accepted.

### 5. Public Comment.

Board President Graham read the public comment (Attachment #1) submitted by Kortney Zuk, Elementary Teacher.

Board President Graham read the public comment (Attachment #2) submitted by Shannon Fjeld, Elementary Teacher.

Board President Graham said the Governing Board cannot discuss these public comments and noted it is an ongoing investigation.

## **SPECIAL ITEMS**

### 6. Presentation and possible approval of adding wrestling and cheerleading to the stipend list.

Coach Briggs said in 2009 when he first started working for Littlefield School District he started a wrestling team. He advised that the wrestling team took 17<sup>th</sup> place in State out of 41 schools. He said he had 2 kids that also took state. Coach Briggs said there were major changes in 2010. He said the wrestling program was kept for a few more years and then went away.

Coach Briggs said if the Governing Board approves wrestling then the coach will be Rulon Gardner, the 2006 gold medalist in wrestling. He said Mr. Gardner is excited about coaching here. He had planned to help him coach wrestling at Dixie State, but they eliminated the wrestling program. Coach Briggs said he's talked to Cesar Martinez about possibly helping out as an assistant coach. He noted he distributed a survey and he has 9 boys and 9 girls interested in wrestling. He also has 8 boys and 2 girls in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade that are interested. Coach Briggs advised wrestling is a winter sport. He said initially they would be independent because they are not eligible to have conference and state this year. He said the District would need to purchase approximately 10 girl singlets. He said it would cost approximately \$4,000 for equipment for wrestling.

Board Secretary Reyes said this might be a great opportunity to reach out to the community and have an organization cover the costs for something like this. He said he feels wrestling has a legacy in Beaver Dam. He said he thinks it is one of the best programs we can offer the kids because it is an opportunity to have the individual kids shine. He said he is fully in favor of this. Mr. Heaton asked if we have it on here for approval of a stipend. Mrs. Goessman said yes there is an approval for putting it on the stipend list. Board Member Hogan asked if these things would be available through Big 5. Coach Briggs said the previous athletic director has used The Locker Room. Board Member Hogan suggested reaching out to Big 5 and maybe corporate would cover the cost of the equipment.

Coach Briggs said he has at least 2 girls from every grade that are interested in cheerleading. He



noted Cheerleading was approved in 2009 and then went away in 2010. Coach Briggs said Heidi Conley would be the cheer coach. He noted she helped Virgin Valley High School with their cheer program when cheer was eliminated in Beaver Dam. Coach Briggs said the cheerleaders would need uniforms which would cost about \$900. Board Member Hogan asked what grades would be involved in cheerleading. Coach Briggs said it is a sport and you want them to get to where they compete in the state competitions. You do not want to cut anyone. He said they need to practice and learn every year. Board Member Hogan said maybe there could be an elementary cheer. Coach Briggs said cheerleading is a great opportunity to do a mentoring program.

Mrs. Goessman requested the Governing Board they determine the amount for the stipend before making a motion. Mr. Heaton said head coach for both would be \$3,000. He said then if they have more than 14 kids they can hire an assistant coach. Mr. Boyer said he would like to recommend a head coach and assistant coach for both.

**Board Secretary Reyes mad a motion to approve adding wrestling and cheerleading. Also to approve the stipends for the wrestling and cheer head coaches in the amount of \$3,000 and \$1,300 for Assistant Coach. The motion was seconded by Board President Graham. The motion passed Unanimously.**

**Board Member Burch: Yes  
Board President Graham: Yes  
Board Member Hogan: Yes  
Board Secretary Reyes: Yes  
Board Member Schoppmann: Yes**

## **INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION:**

7. Jeremy Clarke, Elementary Principal
  - a. School Update.
    - i. October 10, 2023 – Fire Prevention Assembly
    - ii. October 12, 2023 – Parent Teacher Conference – Early Out for Students
    - iii. October 23-26, 2023 - Red Ribbon Week
    - iv. October 26, 2023 @ 9:00 a.m. – Pumpkin Run
  - b. Student test results.
  - c. Other

Mr. Clarke reviewed the school events. He noted there will be a carnival and trunk or treat on Monday, November 30<sup>th</sup>. On the October 31<sup>st</sup>, there will be a costume parade. Mr. Clarke noted there will be a professional development day on Friday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Mr. Clarke said BDES received a D as the school report card last year. He noted this year they are up to 69.5%. He said assuming they do not change the cut scores, they will be a B status which is the highest since 2017. Board Member Hogan said this is what the community needs to hear. He said they do a great job. Mr. Clarke said the biggest jump they had was in growth and noted it is the teachers doing a really great job. He said he thinks the Heggerty Program will help them increase more.

8. Kevin Boyer, Business Manager.
  - a. Budget Update.
  - b. Student Activity Balance.



- c. Food Service Financial.
- d. Maintenance quarterly expenditure report.
- e. Transportation Update
- f. Liquidated Damages update.
- g. Other

Mr. Boyer reviewed the budget update. He said we are still working on filling the counselor position at the Elementary School.

Mr. Boyer noted part of ASBO is Chuck Essig that sends out updates. The state is looking at a deficit of \$400 million with their budget. He noted it could potentially come down and impact the budget for the school districts. He noted the deficit is from the voucher program because it is higher than they anticipated. Mr. Heaton said that doesn't mean it's going to necessarily affect the schools, but they traditionally look at education. Board Member Burch asked what fund 515 is. Mr. Boyer said it is the fund we use to fix the wells.

Mr. Boyer reviewed the student activity balances. He noted the senior class has also taken over the concessions for the ball games.

Mr. Boyer reviewed the food service financial and noted they are in the positive. Board President Graham asked about showing donations on the food service report. Mr. Boyer said he can see if he could do that. Board Member Burch said she would like to see it recorded somewhere on the report.

Mr. Boyer reviewed the maintenance report.

Kevin Boyer said right now we only have two buses allowed to transport to and from school. Minor repairs are needed on the other three buses. We will be getting some vans to transport the volleyball team to their games. He noted the transportation staff currently consists of 2 full time drivers, 1 mechanic, and 1 that just got licensed. One of the current bus drivers wants to go back to being a substitute. If she still wants to be a full time driver he will look at resuming the 3<sup>rd</sup> route. If we have 2 drivers that want to be a substitute then we still have a driver issue. The construction on Jones Flatt has been an issue with dropping kids off due to delays.

Mr. Boyer said we have 4 staff members that have defaulted and owed liquidated damages. Two of them have paid and there are two in collections. Board Member Burch said she would like to be transparent and would like to know what we collect and what month. Board President Graham asked if those fees go to something specific. Mr. Boyer said the fees go towards the costs to hire a new employee.

- 9. Troy Heaton, Superintendent/Secondary Principal
  - a. School Update.
    - i. October 16, 2023 – Dixie Tech @ 10:00 a.m. and Army National Guard at 12:30 p.m.
    - ii. October 17, 2023 – Paul Mitchell @ 10:00 a.m.
    - iii. October 18, 2023 – College of Southern Nevada (CSN) @ 10:00 a.m.
    - iv. October 20, 2023 – Utah Tech University @ 10:00 a.m., SUU @ 11:00 a.m., Snow College @ 12:30 p.m.
    - v. October 23, 2023 – Senior Class tour of UNLV
    - vi. October 24, 2023 – Duct Tape Fundraiser.
    - vii. October 25, 2023 – Book Mobile @ 7:00 a.m.
    - viii. October 27, 2023 – Blood Drive & Health Fair – 12:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.



- ix. October 30, 2023 – Halloween Carnival @ 3:00 p.m.
- b. Wellness Fair Update.
- c. Soccer Program.
- d. Student test results.
- e. Other.

Mr. Heaton said next week is college week. The colleges are coming into the school and talking to the students. He noted Ms. Okelberry has done an amazing job. All of the seniors last year filled out FAFSA and they all received scholarships.

Mr. Heaton reviewed the upcoming events. He said the seniors have been working very hard to raise money for the senior trip.

Mrs. Goessman gave an update on the wellness fair. She noted letters were sent to 34 area doctors, Beaver Dam Fire, Mohave County Sheriff, and Mohave County Health Department. She noted we only had 3 agencies RSVP for the wellness fair. She further noted that there was a wellness fair recently in Mesquite and thinks that may be the reason we are not getting very many to RSVP. She suggested we cancel the Wellness Fair and possibly have it in the Spring.

Mr. Heaton noted there are no soccer programs in Division 1 of NIAA. He spoke with AYSO and was told they have a program in Mesquite that the students can take part in. He said he is still looking into that.

Mr. Heaton reviewed the school accountability report. He noted last year the High School was a C. He said they do not do their testing until the end of the second semester. He then reviewed the preliminary results. He said he thinks they will be close to a C again when final numbers come out.

- 10. Board Reports.
  - a. Other

Board Member Schoppmann said on August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, there was a fire at the 1910 school house. The fire department knocked part of the fence down and she was not notified that they had the accident. When she saw the problem, she found out it was the fire department. Board Member Schoppmann said she has to go before the Fire Board next month. She noted the fencing needs to be put back as is because it is part of her agreement with the School District. She apologized to Dan Reber, Manuel Zarate, and Bob Frisby when she said she had no help, she actually had help from them.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

Approval of Routine Orders of Business. Documentation concerning the matters on the Consent Agenda may be reviewed at the Littlefield Unified School District Office, located at 3490 East Rio Virgin Road, Beaver Dam, Arizona. Any Board Member may request an item be pulled off the agenda for further discussion.

**Board Member Burch made a motion to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Board Secretary Reyes. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Board Member Burch: Yes**  
**Board President Graham: Yes**  
**Board Member Hogan: Yes**  
**Board Secretary Reyes: Yes**  
**Board Member Schoppmann: Yes**



- 11. Consideration of approval of the September 14, 2023 Regular Governing Board Meeting.
- 12. Consideration of approval of Vouchers and Stipends:
  - a. LUSD9 Payroll Vouchers: 06/2406 and 07/2407.
  - b. LUSD9 Vouchers: 1006 and 1007.
  - c. Stipends

(Members of the public may view the content of the vouchers 24 hours prior to the board meeting in the district office.)

- 13. Consideration of approval of the following staff resignations/retirements/terminations:

Name	Position	Effective Date
Feick, Steve	Athletic Director, Substitute, Softball Coach	10/13/2023

- 14. Consideration of approval of FY2023/2024 Substitute Personnel per the attached list.

Name	Position	Effective Date
Brown, Shelly	Substitute Teacher & Substitute Aide	10/02/2023
Brown, Steven	Substitute Aide	10/02/2023
Durbin, Rhonda	Substitute Teacher	10/02/2023

- 15. Consideration of approval of FY2023/2024 Certified Personnel, Classified Personnel, and Stipends per the attached list.

Name	Position	Effective Date
Briggs, Richard	Head Softball Coach	02/17/2024
Briggs, Wayne	Athletic Director	10/14/2023

- 16. Consideration of approval of donations received by the District per Policy KCD.
  - a. Western Tri-State Equipment - \$500 – Sports Sponsorship
  - b. Dixie Power - \$1,500 – Sports Sponsorship
  - c. America First Credit Union - \$500 – Sports Sponsorship

## **ACTION ITEMS AND/OR DISCUSSION**

- 17. Consideration of approval of Annual Financial Report for FY 2023.

Mr. Boyer reviewed the AFR. He noted the fund balances improved from last year. Mr. Heaton asked if it would be hard to finance one bus and 2 vans. Mr. Boyer said no, noting there would be a payment of around \$40,000. We do qualify for a capital small school adjustment. If we could keep it around \$17,000 we could get approved. Mr. Heaton noted transportation has been an issue. Mr. Boyer said right now we can't send out two activity buses in one day. Board Member Hogan asked if leasing is a less expensive option than purchasing. Mr. Boyer said it would be, over time. He noted one company came to him and said we could do a 2 year program and then





sell it.

Mr. Boyer said as far as the budget and cash flow, we are doing well.

**Board President Graham made a motion to approve the Annual Financial Report for FY 2023, seconded by Board Member Burch. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Board Member Burch: Yes  
Board President Graham: Yes  
Board Member Hogan: Yes  
Board Secretary Reyes: Yes  
Board Member Schoppmann: Yes**

18. Discussion regarding Governing Board Self Evaluation per Policy #BAA.

Board President Graham said this is the annual evaluation. This is just to give the Governing Board the evaluation instrument. Mrs. Goessman said we will send out the evaluation form through Google Docs. No action was needed on this item.

19. Discussion regarding Superintendent Annual Evaluation per Policy #CBI.

Mrs. Goessman said this is to give the Governing Board the Superintendent Evaluation Instrument. Since he is in his first year of the contract, the evaluation will be informal. No action was needed on this item.

20. Discussion and possible approval of school bus options and other transportation options.

Mr. Heaton said we are leasing vans out of necessity right now. Mr. Boyer said we are looking at getting 10 passenger vans and the coaches could drive them because a CDL is not required. Board Secretary Reyes noted they used the Ford Van in the past. Mr. Boyer said if the van is built for 15 passengers then you cannot use them. Mr. Heaton said they apparently are not selling the 10 passenger vans. Mr. Boyer said their goal is to find something with 10 passengers. He noted our travel bus is 5-6 years old and we are looking for another travel diesel bus. Mr. Boyer noted we received 3 quotes for the electric buses and they all are quite a bit higher than the grant. Also the cost of the infrastructure is high. Mr. Heaton said we are going to stick with diesel buses right now because we can't afford electric buses. Mr. Boyer noted the heaters in the electric buses and uses the charge. Mr. Heaton said the electric buses will not work for us with the length of travel. Board Member Hogan said he has an electric car and noted his car will not charge when it is 100 degrees outside. Mr. Boyer said he thinks it would be detrimental to not get a new diesel bus right now. He noted all of our bus payments are paid off.

Board President Graham made a motion to approve the purchase of a school bus and two ten passenger vehicles, Board Member Hogan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Board Member Burch: Yes  
Board President Graham: Yes  
Board Member Hogan: Yes  
Board Secretary Reyes: Yes**



**Board Member Schoppmann: Yes**

21. Consideration of approval of a revision to the Master Calendar by changing graduation from May 22<sup>nd</sup> to May 17<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Heaton said he's never been in a school district where graduation is the last day of school. He said once the seniors graduate then things settle down for testing the other grades. He said the kids that do not qualify to graduate would come back the last week of school and work towards graduating. The seniors will be busy planning their senior trip anyway. Their hours will not be an issue. Mr. Boyer said so many seat hours are required in a year and they are well past that. Mr. Heaton said the last day of school is Tuesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. He noted he would like to change graduation to Friday, May 17<sup>th</sup>. He said the teachers have complained that it was hard for them to get their grades in the same day they had graduation.

**Board Secretary Reyes made a motion to approve the revision to the Master Calendar by changing graduation from May 22<sup>nd</sup> to May 17<sup>th</sup>, seconded by Board Member Hogan. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Board Member Burch: Yes  
Board President Graham: Yes  
Board Member Hogan: Yes  
Board Secretary Reyes: Yes  
Board Member Schoppmann: Yes**

22. Consideration of approval of the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum, ELA Supplemental Curriculum, for Beaver Dam Elementary.

**Board Secretary Reyes made a motion to approve the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum, seconded by Board President Graham. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Board Member Burch: Yes  
Board President Graham: Yes  
Board Member Hogan: Yes  
Board Secretary Reyes: Yes  
Board Member Schoppmann: Yes**

23. Consideration approval of a first reading of Policy Advisory #748-762:
- a. Policy BCB – Board Member Conflict of Interest.
  - b. Police BDA – Board Organizational Meeting.
  - c. Policy BE – School Board Meetings.
  - d. Policy BEDA – Notification of Board Meetings.
  - e. Policy BEDB – Agenda
  - f. Policy CBI – Evaluation of Superintendent
  - g. Policy EBC – Emergencies
  - h. Policy GCG – Part-Time and Substitute Professional Staff Employment
  - i. Policy IHA – Basic Instructional Program
  - j. Policy JFABDA – Admission of Students in Foster Care
  - k. Policy JK – Student Discipline





- l. Policy JKD – Student Suspension
- m. Policy JKE – Expulsion of Students
- n. Policy JLH – Missing Students

**Board Member Hogan made a motion to approve the first reading of the policies, seconded by Board Secretary Reyes. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Board Member Burch: Yes  
Board President Graham: Yes  
Board Member Hogan: Yes  
Board Secretary Reyes: Yes  
Board Member Schoppmann: Yes**

24. Consideration of approval of the schools receiving the Mutualink Program provided by the state.

**Board Secretary Reyes made a motion to approve the school receiving the Mutualink Program provided by the state, seconded by Board President Graham. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Board Member Burch: Yes  
Board President Graham: Yes  
Board Member Hogan: Yes  
Board Secretary Reyes: Yes  
Board Member Schoppmann: Yes**

25. Consideration of approval of a request by Laurie Call to waive the liquidated damages fee of \$2500 per the Certified Teacher Contract.  
\*The Employee may request this item be discussed in Executive Session pursuant to ARS § 38-431.03 (A)(1).

Board President Graham asked Mrs. Call if she wants her item heard in open or closed session. Mrs. Call said she would like it in closed session.

**Board President Graham made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session, seconded by Board Secretary Reyes. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Board Member Burch: Yes  
Board President Graham: Yes  
Board Member Hogan: Yes  
Board Secretary Reyes: Yes  
Board Member Schoppmann: Yes**

**The Governing Board adjourned to closed session at 6:24 p.m.**

**Board Secretary Reyes made a motion to resume the regular meeting, seconded by Board President Graham. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Board Member Burch: Yes  
Board President Graham: Yes  
Board Member Hogan: Yes  
Board Secretary Reyes: Yes**



**Board Member Schoppmann: Yes**

**The regular meeting was reconvened at 6:39 p.m.**

**Board President Graham made a motion to waive half of the liquidated damages in the amount of \$1,250, seconded by Board Member Schoppmann. The motion failed.**

**Board Member Burch: No**

**Board President Graham: Yes**

**Board Member Hogan: No**

**Board Secretary Reyes: No**

**Board Member Schoppmann: Yes**

26. Suggestions for Future Board Meetings.

- 1) 2<sup>nd</sup> reading and adoption of policies
- 2) Governing Board Evaluation
- 3) Superintendent Evaluation

Board Member Burch said she would like the PTO Calendar included on the agenda.

Board Member Hogan said he would like to talk about the Tax Credit Program. Board Member Hogan said he would like to discuss using zoom for meetings and discuss possibly using microphones during the board meeting. He said the Governing Board also needs to make a plan for their presentation during the Dixie Power Dinner.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

27. News articles about the schools.

28. Upcoming Governing Board Conferences:

- a. Mohave County Meeting, October 23, 2023.
- b. ASBA-ASA 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, December 6-8, 2023.

29. School Calendar 2023/2024

30. Football and Volleyball Schedule.

31. Next Meeting – November 9, 2023

32. Policy Regulations & Exhibits per Policy Advisory 748-762:

- a. Exhibit CBI-EB – Evaluation of Superintendent.
- b. Exhibit IHA-E – Basic Instructional Programs.
- c. JRCA-R – Request for transfer records.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Board may move to discuss items in an Executive Session pursuant to ARS §38-431.03 (A)(1), (3) and (4), which authorizes discussion and consideration of employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, dismissal, salaries, disciplining



or resignation of a public officer, appointee or employee of the District.

1. Motion to adjourn to executive session.
2. Motion to return to open meeting to vote on items discussed in Executive Session, as needed.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Board Member Burch made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Board President Graham. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Board Member Burch: No  
Board President Graham: Yes  
Board Member Hogan: No  
Board Secretary Reyes: No  
Board Member Schoppmann: Yes**

**The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sonny Graham, Board President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Troy Heaton, Superintendent

Respectfully Submitted by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sheree Goessman, District Secretary

My name is Kortney Zuk. I have worked for LUSD9 at Beaver Dam Elementary School for seven years. I have been an aide, 2nd grade teacher, 3rd grade teacher, Kindergarten teacher as well as Summer School teacher and more recently Summer School Director. In my seven years, I have seen a lot.

But I have never seen a fellow, dedicated staff member treated as horrendously as the recent incident regarding Ms. Rebel Rauterkus.

I am sure all have heard about the event.

The problem is the response. Ms. Rauterkus was assumed guilty upon picture and word of a student. Why was she not first asked about the item in her car? At the outset of the investigation, why was she not given a copy of the "evidence"?

She was not only assumed guilty on zero evidence, (yes I have seen the picture), but she was verbally paraded around the high school in an all-faculty email.

The fact that a student can lodge a serious allegation regarding a teacher, which turns out to be FALSE, and have that serious allegation still placed in the teacher's personnel file is simply wrong.

The picture of a lighter inside a car was turned into administration with the allegation that it was drug paraphernalia. Who is to prove whose car? Whose lighter? Whom placed the lighter? Is the picture unedited? Why was a student reaching a teachers car? 100+ more questions.

But questions were not asked, rather assumptions were made.

There are 100+ explanations for the picture. Administration jumping to demonize Ms. Rauterkus is disgusting. It does not serve anyone. It does not serve safety, fairness, students, teachers, parents

Ms. Rauterkus is due an apology from administration.

This treatment of staff sets a dangerous precedent.

The precedent this sets for how teachers are treated is frightening. It makes every teacher that stays in this district knowing we have more work, longer hours, larger classes, less support, significantly smaller paycheck than neighboring districts. It makes me question why do I stay? At some point my love for the kids will get outweighed by the disrespect, wildly varying treatment of staff, and perceived bullying from administration if this continues unchecked. The Board needs to step in, support teachers, and check this administrator. Checks and balances.

Mr. Troy Heaton, do better.

Dear members of the school board and the community

I would like to thank you for allowing my words to be heard. I am a third-grade teacher at Beaver Dam Elementary School, going on my second year now. I have worked in different positions in schools back out east for about ten years now. This school district offered me something I was looking for and that was to teach in a small rural district that really felt like a community.

However, I have slowly seen a shift in this school district that has brought both personal apprehensions and shared concerns among my colleagues. Recent events, particularly those regarding Rebel Rauterkus and the false accusation regarding vape and drug paraphernalia have raised some concerns. Rebel received no form of support from Human Resources, nor was HR notified. Rebel was put on leave and then a mass email was sent out to all high school staff from Superintendent Heaton telling them she had been put on administrative leave.

Prior to this incident, Rebel and I were approached at a school sponsored event, expressing their surprise at her presence alleging she had been dismissed from her role. Imagine our surprise as this was a clear confidential breach during an ongoing investigation. Furthermore, Superintendent Heaton inappropriately suggested that Rebel was going through personal difficulties and encouraged communication, even after she was directed to have no contact with any school personnel. Consequently, Rebel's professional reputation has been tarnished due to baseless accusations that will likely follow her throughout her career in our community.

Given these circumstances, it is not only my personal concern but the collective unease of my fellow educators that weighs heavily on my mind. The thought of one's entire teaching career irrevocably altered due to unverified claims is unsettling. It should also be mentioned that this family has made false accusations in the past, which should be investigated as well. What is the precedent that we are setting? When we allow any word, a child says to be taken at 100% truth and we can't defend ourselves? The high school administration has created an environment in which my colleagues and I feel vulnerable, anxious, and wondering about our futures within this school district.

There seems to be a culture forming in this school district where students are attaining more power, are fully aware of this power, and are using it to their advantage. When situations like this arise, there is bound to be a shift in employees' work habits and overall desire to continue to put forth continual effort. This school district is already short staffed and the employees that are here are amazing, but when you make it known that they are "working" for the students, they want to go above and beyond diminishes, and they start to just work their "9-5" duties. Then work becomes work and your children do not get to experience real life teaching. The teaching that is not taught in books. I am talking about the passion part of teaching that most of us teachers inherently just have. This is what is taken from us, when teachers work in an environment that they do not feel protected in. The lack of support from the new administration has been very clear by their actions, and we as teachers do not condone the plight faced by Rebel Rauterkus. The well-being of our educators and the integrity, or our educational environment, are at stake.

I implore the School Board to examine these issues closely and consider the ramifications for our educational community. It is my fervent hope that we can work collaboratively to ensure a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment that fosters not only the academic growth of our students but also the professional and personal well-being of our dedicated educators.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ms. Shannon Fjeld