MINUTES

Lyon County School District
Board of Trustees

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of Lyon County School District was held October 27, 2026, beginning at 6:30 pm Meeting at Professional Learning Center, PLC, located on the SSES Campus, 3800 W. Spruce St., Silver Springs, NV 89429.

1. CALL TO ORDER

   The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

   The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Hendrix.

3. WELCOME OF GUESTS

   President Hendrix welcomed guests and staff.
   In attendance
   Board President Tom Hendrix
   Board Clerk Dawn Carson
   Trustee Elmer Bull
   Trustee Darin Farr
   Trustee Kallie Day
   Trustee Sherry Parsons
   Trustee James Whisler

   Superintendent Tim Logan
   Deputy Superintendent Stacey Cooper
   Executive Director of Human Resources BillieJo Hogan
   Executive Director of Special Services Rachel Stewart
   Executive Director of Educational Services Heather Moyle
   Executive Director of Educational Services Jim Gianotti
   CAPRO Skyler Nicholas, Margaret Heim, Don Lattin, Michael Moore, Scarlet Garvin, Jackie Kingston, Patrick Whitehead, Monie Byers, Jed Marciniak, Amber Cross, Dusti Houk, Ted Ziegenfuss, Erin Linde, Alfredo Martinez, Hope Holt, Morgyn Phoenix, Madi McDermott, Jacob Rully, Vince Spoon, Shaunte Ibarra-Beltrami

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

   Trustee Parsons made a motion that the Board approve the agenda.
   Trustee Carson seconded.
   With no further discussion, the motion carried 7-0.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Trustee Parsons made a motion that the Board approve the minutes as written.
Trustee Day seconded.
With no further discussion, the motion carried 7-0.

6. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Trustee Whisler presented a Challenge Coin to Anna Brueher, SSHS Lead Librarian. She has been with the district for many years as a champion for students, providing unwavering support to staff and students. He also attended the Perkins Advisory meeting and learned that Fernley High School (FHS) and Yerington Intermediate School (YIS) passed the Fire locker Quality Program Review, the only two schools in the state to pass.
Trustee Parsons spoke on a successful golf fundraiser for FHS, and attended several events including volleyball and football games.
Trustee Day thanked the students who came to the dinner, gave congratulations to Anna Brueher, and congratulated FHS FFA for their recent success at Nationals. She spent time meeting with parents all over the district to hear their concerns. She attended the Healthy Community Coalition (HCC) advisory meeting and a POOLPACT conference, and attended the SES Halloween Dance.
Trustee Bull attended the Yerington High School (YHS) Homecoming games, school tours in Yerington, and visited with Yerington Elementary School (YES) admin. He participated in a meeting with district leaders and YHS to discuss opportunities to connect with the local community.
Trustee Farr attended various Fernley cross-country meets and a drama event. As a parent, he appreciated the parent- teacher conferences and the opportunity to talk to the teachers one on one at FHS and Silverland Middle School (SMS).
President Hendrix attended Silver Stage High School (SSHS) career day for students, saying it was well attended and informative. He also attended the Perkins Advisory meeting and the Northern Regional Workforce Ready Community Taskforce that connects local employers with the WorkKeys program for students. Lyon County and many local businesses/employers were present, and other school districts were there as well.

7. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Student representatives from SSHS, Hope Holt and Morgyn Phoenix spoke on current events at SSHS. Homecoming week had many activities revolving around the “Under the Sea” theme. They hosted a school-wide "F-clearing house" resulting in a 40% decrease in F's. Other events included football, and volleyball games, senior night, and the dance. They will have a Halloween bash, student lead fundraisers, and a BINGO night to support the library.

8. ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

The board read notes of attitude of gratitude written by students across the district.

9. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Superintendent Logan acknowledged the many activities the trustees attended. He spoke about the student representatives and explained that Scarlet Garvin was elected to sit with the board at meetings and contribute the voice of students. He congratulated Anna Brueher commenting that her award is well-deserved for all she does for the district and students.
At this time he had the Silver Springs principals introduce their new staff members.

10. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: At this time, the public is invited to address the Board on items over which the Board has jurisdiction or control. If you wish to speak, step up to the table, be seated, and state your name. Your comments are limited to no more than three minutes per agenda item with a maximum of ten minutes total. In consideration of others, avoid repetition or designate a spokesperson to speak on behalf of your group. Although this Board does not restrict comments based upon viewpoint, comments will be prohibited if they are willfully disruptive, slanderous, amount to personal attacks or interfere with the rights of other speakers. Comments made during this time will be monitored by the Board President. The Board will conduct public comments after each item on the agenda on which action may be taken, before the Board takes action. Comments submitted electronically will be included in the minutes of the meeting.

Public comment was made by FHS Leadership teacher Jackie Kingston. She spoke on Item 14. She stressed the experience that students need before being placed in elected positions, and recalled requirements that are already in place for Student Council and other leadership organizations. Her comments are attached to the minutes of the meeting.
Michael Moore asked general questions about getting information on the schools.
Ashlee Cross, SSHS advisory teacher, and Jordyn Ward spoke on the selection process for students placed in leadership positions. This letter was part of the supporting documents of Item 14. They shared their opinion that the policy would not be beneficial to the students.
Madison McDermitt, a student council liaison, read from Kingston's comment on Item 14, stressing the importance for students to be in leadership before taking lead roles.
FHS Principal Ryan Cross pointed out that Jackie Kingston is well qualified to share guidance on leadership processes. Other districts and advisors turn to her for guidance with their programs and recognize her success. He commented that many students wanted share with the board, but other commitments prevented them from attending.
Patrick Whitehead, Fernley teacher, spoke on Item 21, the School Culture Survey. He explained how the data from the survey helps to inform the SIP team, and other groups, tracking the changes in the community, and making goals to benefit the schools and students. They can't do this effectively when most of the student body doesn't take the survey. He argued that the identity question, that made the board hesitate in making the survey an opt-out, is inconsequential. They need the other pertinent information that the survey gives them. Also, for Item 14, he stressed that more regulation from the district in policy is the last thing teachers need. Teachers are professional and competent and don't need stifling policies.
Shaunte Ibarra-Beltrami spoke on Item 21 and agreed with the last speaker. She is resident and parent of LCSD schools. She commented that forms don't always make it home for parents to sign. She spoke on her work with victims of domestic violence and the need for students to have this tool, especially students who are in difficult situations.Her comments are attached to the minutes.

11. **CONSENT AGENDA (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION):** Per LCSD Board Policy BDD: Board Meeting Procedures, all matters listed under the consent agenda are considered routine and may be acted upon by the Board of School Trustees with one action and without discussion. During this meeting, any member of the Board may request that an item be removed from the consent agenda, discussed, and acted upon separately.

Trustee Bull made a motion that the Board approve the consent agenda as presented.
Trustee Farr seconded.
With no further discussion, the motion carried 7-0.

A. Trustee Questions & Answers: This information will be posted after 12:00 pm the day of the board meeting if questions are asked.
B. Request for Early Graduation/HSE (confidential)
C. Personnel Reports
D. NWRPDP Annual Report
E. Enrollment Report
F. Class Size Reduction Report
G. Travel
H. District Financial Report
Vouchers 1051, 1052, 1059, 1060, 1062, 1063, 1076, 1077
Total $3,965,691.01

12. ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS

Trustee Farr made a motion that the Board accept the donations made to our schools.
Trustee Day seconded.
Trustee Parsons commented that FHS teams will benefit from the donations. There was discussion about donations to the district and how they are dispersed to the general fund when not stipulated for specific purposes.
With no further discussion, the motion carried 7-0.

13. **(For Possible Action)** Discussion and possible action regarding Special Services Contracts. This item is being presented by Executive Director of Special Services Rachel Stewart and Executive Director of Human Resources BillieJo Hogan.

Directors Rachel Stewart and BillieJo Hogan presented the item on the process of special services contracts. The district is dedicated to ensuring that every student's needs are met that are unique, and fluctuate and change often, sometimes daily. The Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings could reveal needed changes in staffing. Some students have nursing requirements of 3 or up to 6 hours a day, based on unique needs. The first course is to hire full-time employees. However, there are times when the law requires specialists without delay for students and families, when hiring a full-time person is not possible. NRS, bargaining agreements, laws, and policies all need to be adhered to, along with Policy IICE: Services Provided to Students by Outside Entities. The district maintains a fundamental fiduciary responsibility to our taxpayers to deliver student services in a cost-efficient manner, and contracting specialized services helps to meet that standard.
Trustee Whisler spoke about a specific situation to convert a full-time position to part-time or contract it out.
District and school administration frequently review the special education needs in regard to staffing.
There was discussion and clarification in regard to the fluid changes that can take place as students' needs change. Accommodations are made, workloads are changed, and contracts are updated as needed.
LCSD currently has three students participating in the Path to Independence Program. They live on campus and have financial assistance.
No action was taken.

Break called at 8:07 pm
Meeting called to order at 8:20 pm

14. **(For Possible Action)** Discussion and possible action regarding NEW LCSD Policy IO: Student Leadership/Governance as a first reading. This item is being presented by Board Member Darin Farr.

Trustee Farr expressed his appreciation for the response to his proposed policy IO: Student Leadership/Goverance. He defended his proposal, noting inconsistencies between policy and individual school practice in regard to curricula, student activity, and when they mix. He called for greater access, transperancy and accountability through policy. He called for 2 principles: Firstly, that when there are limited educational offerings, students need the criteria in advance and that selection not rest with only 1-2 individuals. Secondly, that prior admission to leadership electives not be required for an otherwise qualified student to seek an elected student office. He stressed that the entire student body be allowed to select. He hopes that, regardless of the passing of this policy, existing policies will be reviewed that need further clarity and transparency, and ultimately better alignment between district and schools.
There was discussion about students researching requirements prior to taking on leadership roles, the need for experience, the typical process to participate across the schools, and the systems they have in place that are unique to each school.
Various students spoke about the advantages of being part of leadership. All follow the guidelines of the Nevada Association of Student Council (NASC) and Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association (NIAA). NASC allows school organizations to determine student representation at some level. SSHS caps class at 30 kids to keep it manageable.
Trustee Farr stressed the need for a set of district guardrails to have in place with transparent minimum requirements across the schools, especially in regard to the changes coming to our variance policy.
After further discussion regarding the current policies and existing rules in place, Trustee Farr withdrew the item. He feels that attention has been made to the improvements that are needed and leaves it to the district to follow up on them.

No action taken.

15. **(For Possible Action)** Discussion and possible action regarding the extension of the superintendent's contract. This item is being presented by Board President Tom Hendrix and Superintendent Tim Logan.

Superintendent Logan presented his employment contract that would end on June 30, 2027. He has not asked for any changes, just extension for 2 more years. The board memo listed the positive evaluations, and 28 years of experience in the district and with the Nevada Association of Superintendents. He would like to continue the good work and improvements currently being done.
Public comment was made by Vince Spoon who felt a negotiation is appropriate.
Trustee Bull spoke on his positive experience working with Superintendent Logan and made the motion to approve the contract.
Trustee Farr seconded.
Other board members spoke in favor of the contract, noting that it included no pay increase, remained comparable to peer superintendent salaries, and aligned with goals established by the board. The general consensus supported the district’s current direction under Superintendent Logan’s leadership.
With no further discussion, the motion carried 7-0.

16. **(For Possible Action)** Discussion and possible action regarding revisions to LCSD Policy JECBB: Student Variances as a first reading. This item is being presented by Deputy Superintendent Stacey Cooper.

Revisions to policy JECBB: Student Variances are due to state initiatives allowing parents to choose schools outside their attendance areas within defined criteria. The enrollment priorities are tiered, beginning with student residing in attendance zone, students requesting to attend a higher performing school, sibling/familial connections already in place at a school, and general inquiry. The policy was written in collaboration with other districts and the state guidelines. Deputy Superintendent Cooper noted that there is a second draft of the policy, presented at this meeting with an edit address questions that the school administrators posed to the district. See last paragraph highlighted on Policy JECBB.
The state required that top priority would be given for students looking to attend higher performing schools, and also required a lottery process to be established. The application window opens on June 1, closing on June 25. Families are notified of acceptance or placement on waiting lists, and capacity numbers are updated by the end of the quarter and published, notifying families of approval of variances at that time. The variance is permanent for the life of that student's career at that school. To change, it would need an application. Per state requirements, the policy no longer includes a curtesy to teachers who, in the past, could enroll their child at the school where they worked. Teachers will need to submit applications if they want to send their child to the school out of their residential zone.
Current variances will be honored. No longer based on attendance, behavior, (except long term suspension), etc. This is state mandated, driven by Senate Bill 460. School office staff will have training to fulfill quarterly capacity and posting reports.
Transportation is not part of this. Parents will be responsible for transporting students to schools out of their original zone.
LCSD will start the application process for the Spring 2027 semester.
The board spoke on several scenarios. Parents will need to submit applications and work with their schools.
Trustee Day made a motion to approve the revisions to LCSD Policy JECBB: Student Variances as a first reading.
Trustee Carson seconded.
With no further discussion, the motion carried 7-0.

17. **(For Possible Action)** Discussion and possible action regarding a report on the Nevada Educator Performance Framework. This item is being presented by Executive Director of Human Resources BillieJo Hogan.

The latest Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) results were presented in accordance with Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) evaluation requirements. The data highlighted the impactful leadership and ongoing professional development provided by administrators, whose daily coaching and targeted feedback continue to drive educator growth across LCSD.
Trustee Farr made a motion that the Board approve the report on the Nevada Educator Performance Framework results.
Trustee Parsons seconded.
With no further discussion, the motion carried 7-0.

18. **(For Possible Action)** Discussion and possible action regarding updates from the Silver Stage school principals. This item is being presented by principals Erin Korf, Jed Marciniak, and Amber Cross.

    Silver Stage Elementary, Middle, and High School principals reported on the highlights and goals of the schools as presented in the supporting documents.

Break called at 10:18 pm.
Meeting called to order at 10:28 pm

19. **(For Possible Action)** Discussion and possible action regarding revisions to LCSD Policy GBBD: Employment Disabilities as first reading. This item is being presented by Executive Director of Human Resources BillieJo Hogan.

    Revisions to policy GBBD: Employment Disabilities do not change the policy. However, they streamline the administrative regulations to make them clearer and easier to follow.
    Trustee Farr made a motion that the Board approve revisions to policy GBBD: Employment Disabilities as a first reading.
    Trustee Bull seconded.
    With no further discussion, the motion carried 7-0.

20. **(For Possible Action)** Discussion and possible action regarding revisions to LCSD Policy GBBE: Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace as a first reading. This item is being presented by Executive Director of Human Resources BillieJo Hogan.

    Revisions to policy GBBE: Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace do not change the contents of the policy. However, edits include "prohibited substances" to the administrative regulations and clean up the language.
    Trustee Bull made a motion that the Board approve revisions to policy GBBE: Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace as a first reading.
    Trustee Carson seconded.
    With no further discussion, the motion carried 7-0.

21. **(For Possible Action)** Discussion and possible action regarding revisions to the following LCSD Policies as a second and final reading. No changes were made to these policies after the first reading. Any member of the Board may request that a policy be removed and discussed and acted upon separately.

    A. Policy JF: Protection of Pupil Rights Student Surveys
    B. Policy GABB: Negative Information
    C. Policy GABC: Verification of Employment
    D. Policy GBBB: Employee Dating

    President Hendrix made a motion to pull 21.A. Policy JF to be discussed separately, and to approve the following:
    GABB - Negative Information
    GABC - Verification of Employment
    GABC - Employee Dating
    Trustee Parsons seconded.
    With no further discussion, the motion carried 7-0.

The Board discussed the policy JF: Protection of Pupil Rights Student Surveys revision to switch the Nevada School Climate Social Emotional Learning (NVSCSEL) survey from opt-in to opt-out. It was clarified that this item only applies to the state-developed climate survey, not the federally mandated Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). Under an opt-out policy, parents would still receive advance notice and maintain the right to withdraw their children, while students could also skip questions or decline to participate.

Opponents of the change, including President Hendrix and Trustee Parsons, argued that the survey asks sensitive questions that belong in discussions at home rather than in school. They expressed concern over topics like gender identity and felt that parents must actively consent before students are exposed to the material, suggesting that personal issues can be handled individually by school counselors instead.

Supporters of the opt-out change emphasized that low participation under the current opt-in rule—around 22 percent—harms the district. Staff and several trustees noted that participation rates directly impact school star ratings by up to 15 points and determine state funding for essential resources like school social workers, mental health supports, and health services. They argued that the anonymous survey is vital for school safety, identifying campus issues, and giving a voice to struggling or at-risk students who need help. One benefit from this survey has been the inclusion of the Advisory class to high school schedules. This was implemented years ago and provides a familiar staff member for students to connect with.

Public commenters were also split on the issue. Vince Spoon opposed the shift, citing objections to outside influences. However, school staff and other parents, including Principal Ryan Cross, Jake Day, and Shaunte Ibarra-Beltrami, strongly supported the opt-out model, pointing out that parents still have full authority to decline, that opt-in suppresses data through simple apathy, and that refusing to collect accurate student feedback ties the district's hands when addressing campus safety and mental health.

It was also noted that it is misleading to the public when a trustee, during a public meeting, is allowed to refer to a survey that is not part of the agenda item.

Trustee Farr made a motion that the Board approve the revisions to LCSD Policy JF: Protection of Pupil Rights Student Surveys as a second and final reading.

Trustee Whisler seconded.

With no further discussion the motion carried 4-3. Trustees Hendrix, Carson and Parsons voted nay.

22. **(For Possible Action)** Discussion and possible action on agenda items for future board meetings and/or information item requests, including a summary by the superintendent. This item is being presented by Board President Hendrix and Superintendent Tim Logan.
November 17, 2026 YIS MPR
Updates from SV and Yerington
Edustaff – Substitute Teacher program
Retention and Recruitment
DPP progress
Assessment Results
Policies

23. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: At this time, the public is invited to address the Board on items over which the Board has jurisdiction or control. If you wish to speak, step up to the table, be seated, and state your name. Your comments are limited to no more than three minutes per agenda item with a maximum of ten minutes total. In consideration of others, avoid repetition or designate a spokesperson to speak on behalf of your group. Although this

Board does not restrict comments based upon viewpoint, comments will be prohibited if they are willfully disruptive, slanderous, amount to personal attacks or interfere with the rights of other speakers. Comments made during this time will be monitored by the Board President. The Board will conduct public comments after each item on the agenda on which action may be taken, before the Board takes action.
Comments submitted electronically will be included in the minutes of the meeting.

24. ADJOURN:
Adjourned at 11:26 pm

The notice for this meeting was posted on _____, at Lyon County School District Administrative Office, Lyon County School District websites (http://lyoncsd.org) and the Nevada Public Notice Website (http://notice.nv.gov) in accordance with NRS 241.020 (3) (b).

_____
For the Board of Trustees

Lyon County School District Statement of Nondiscrimination and Accessibility
The Lyon County School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability or age in any of its policies, procedures, or practices, in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (pertaining to race, color, and national origin), Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and any other pertinent statute or requirement. This non-discrimination policy covers admission, access, treatment, and employment in the district's programs and activities, including occupational education. For information regarding opportunity policies, or the filing of grievances, contact your school principal.

The Lyon County School District is pleased to provide accommodations for the handicapped or disabled. Members of the public who are disabled and require special accommodations or assistance at the meeting are requested to notify the administrative assistant to the superintendent and board of trustees, in writing at 25 E. Goldfield Avenue, Yerington, Nevada 89447; e-mail at mheim@lyoncsd.org; or by calling (775) 463-6800 ext. 10034, at least one week prior to the meeting.

Good evening,

I appreciate the opportunity to speak about the importance of maintaining school-level decisions when it comes to our Leadership programs and the election of Student Council officers.

At Fernley High School, Leadership is much more than an elective class. Our students are responsible for creating school culture, organizing events, promoting school spirit, recognizing students and staff, serving our community, and representing our school at regional and state conferences.

These responsibilities require commitment, teamwork, accountability, and experience.

One of my biggest concerns is allowing students to run for elected Student Council positions without first having experience in the Leadership program.

Being a Student Council officer is not simply about winning a popularity contest or having your name on a ballot. These students are expected to lead committees, organize major events, communicate with administration, make decisions, manage responsibilities, and represent the entire student body.

How can we expect students to lead a program they have never been part of or fully understand?

When students participate in Leadership before running for office, they learn how our program operates. They understand our constitution, expectations, deadlines, committees, and the amount of work required behind the scenes. They learn to work with different personalities, solve problems, and follow through on commitments.

Most importantly, they have an opportunity to demonstrate their leadership abilities through their actions before asking their peers to elect them.

This is not about excluding students. It is about preparing them for success.

We would not expect a student to step into a varsity captain's role without understanding the team, its expectations, or the responsibilities that come with that position. Student Council leadership should be viewed with that same level of respect.

Our program also follows the expectations of the Nevada Association of Student Councils, or NASC. We attend regional and state conferences, participate in leadership development, and operate under additional guidelines and expectations. Leadership is also recognized within Nevada's school activities structure through NIAA. These responsibilities reinforce that Student Council is an organized program with standards, not simply a club where titles are handed out.

I strongly believe every student deserves a voice and an opportunity to become involved in their school. But **having a voice in student government and being qualified to hold an elected leadership position are two different things.**

Students should have opportunities to join Leadership, participate, learn, and develop the skills necessary to become effective officers.

Our constitution and selection process help establish that foundation. They give students a pathway to leadership while protecting the expectations and responsibilities of the program.

My concern with a district-wide policy is that it could take away the ability of individual schools to make decisions based on their programs, students, and needs.

We are not trying to limit who can become a leader. We are trying to make sure students are prepared to lead.

I ask that the district continue to respect school constitutions, student council structures, and the professional judgment of advisors and administrators who work with these students every day.

Our students deserve leaders who understand the work, are willing to do the work, and have demonstrated that they can lead by example.

Thank you.

Members of the Lyon County School Board:

My name is Shaunte Ibarra-Beltrami. I attended Dayton schools from kindergarten through high school and graduated with honors in 2005. A few of my former teachers are sitting in this room tonight.

My daughter is now a freshman at Dayton High School, and I believe she is going to be a standout athlete as a Dustdevil. I also have a child starting kindergarten in the fall of 2027 and a son starting in the fall of 2030. I have always been proud of where I grew up, and I want my children to have that same pride in their schools and community.

I support parents having a clear choice to opt their children out of the school climate survey. But when no form is returned, I believe students should still be allowed to participate voluntarily. A form that never makes it back to school is not the same as a parent saying no.

Parents should be involved in their children's education. We also have to acknowledge that not every child has a safe or supportive home. Sometimes the person a child needs protection from is the same person being asked to sign the form.

A U.S. Department of Justice report published in 2011, based on a 2008 national survey, found that about one in nine children experienced family violence in the previous year. About one in fifteen were exposed to violence between parents or between a parent and their partner. These are older national figures, not current Lyon County statistics, but they illustrate why we cannot assume every child is safe at home.

Children do not leave those experiences behind when they walk into school. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network explains that exposure to domestic violence can affect concentration, schoolwork, sleep, behavior, and attendance. A student who seems distracted, angry, withdrawn, or uninterested may actually be frightened and struggling with what is happening at home.

A missing permission slip tells us none of that. Maybe someone forgot to sign it. Maybe a teenager left it crumpled in her backpack and never gave it to her parents. I said my daughter is a good athlete—not that she is great at remembering to get school paperwork signed.

Maybe the family is overwhelmed. Maybe something more serious is happening. Whatever the reason, I do not believe a missing form should automatically close the door on that student's participation.

The survey asks whether students feel safe, whether adults treat them respectfully, whether students threaten or bully one another, and whether they feel accepted and like they belong. It also asks about skills such as managing frustration and knowing how to calm themselves down. These questions help us understand what students experience at school and what support they may need.

I recognize that completing a survey is not the same as reporting abuse or asking for immediate help. Whether students participate or their parents opt them out, every child should know how to

reach a trusted adult at school about abuse, bullying, threats, or anything that makes them feel unsafe.

What concerns me is when the discussion seems more focused on whether a student identifies as nonbinary than on whether that student is being abused, bullied, threatened, or afraid of a school shooting. I would like to see the same energy devoted to protecting students that goes into debating how they identify.

Students who are unsure of their gender or sexual orientation deserve to feel safe, too. They do not have to have everything figured out before we treat them with respect.

According to the CDC's 2023 national high school survey, about 26 percent of transgender students and students questioning whether they were transgender reported attempting suicide in the previous year. That compares with about 5 percent of cisgender male students and 11 percent of cisgender female students, students whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth. About one quarter of transgender and questioning students also reported missing school because they felt unsafe. These figures describe reported suicide attempts, not deaths.

Family acceptance matters as well. A 2009 study published in *Pediatrics* examined 224 white and Latino lesbian, gay, and bisexual young adults. Those who reported high levels of family rejection during adolescence had 8.4 times the odds of reporting a suicide attempt compared with those who reported little or no rejection. It was a smaller, retrospective study, and it does not establish that rejection alone caused those attempts. But the association deserves our attention.

When I hear that our priority is keeping children safe, I want to know: Which children? All students, including those who do not fit neatly into the gender categories some adults expect?

We do not have to share the same beliefs to agree that every student deserves safety and respect. Asking whether students feel accepted does not require everyone to agree about gender or sexuality. It gives students a chance to tell us what attending our schools feels like.

For the first time, I am seriously considering moving because of the overly conservative direction certain members of this board seem to be taking. I cannot speak for every parent, but this approach is pushing me away from the public schools I grew up supporting. I never expected to question whether I wanted my children to attend school here. Yet here I am.

I want my children to attend schools where learning, safety, and respect come first. I want that for every child, whether their family is conservative, liberal, religious, or none of those things. That includes students who know exactly who they are and students who are still figuring it out.

Please give parents a clear way to opt out while allowing students to participate voluntarily when no form is returned. Clearly explain how responses will be used, how students' privacy will be protected, and where they can turn when they need help.

Our children should know that we want to hear from them, that their safety matters, and that they belong in our schools.