



Public Comment <public.comment@isd709.org>

Questions about Duluth Public School Curriculum

2 messages

Eddie Bashaw <public.comment@isd709.org>
To: public.comment@isd709.org

Wed, Jun 2, 2021 at 3:49 PM

Hello School Board Members,

Thanks for taking the time to address my questions and concerns. My name is Eddie Bashaw and I have 3 children in the Duluth Public Schools. Two of my children are at Lester Park and one at East High School.

I have 2 specific questions with regards to the current curriculum being taught. My first question is rather simple. Will the ideas or concepts of critical race theory be taught or explained in any way to any child in the Duluth Public Schools? And if yes, when would that time be?

My second question is in regards to the "sexual education material" that was handed out to my son who will be finishing 5th grade this year. I received an email from his teacher about the "talk." I watched the video that was presented to him, which I thought was completely fine. I do however have a problem with the pamphlet that was given to him entitled Always Changing and Growing Up. The pamphlet does provide some excellent material I have no problems with. My problem is with page 18 titled Sex, Gender & Society. This page goes on to explain some definitions, which include terms such as "Biological Sex, Gender Identity and Gender Roles and stereotyping." The second sentence on this page says "At birth, most people are either male or female." I am curious if "Most" are male or female what gender are the rest? Science tells us there are only 2 genders at birth. The other paragraph talk about "Your biological sex shouldn't define what you can or can't do..."

So my question is who decided introducing "Sex, Gender, & Society" to children that are 10, 11, and 12 years old was appropriate? These children should be talked to by their parents not a teacher about "Sex, Gender & Society." I do not send my child to school for teachers to share their opinions about what is happening in society. In my opinion this page serve no purpose being taught in school. Terms such as this are not based around science but rather terms society thinks should be mentioned.

Thanks for taking the time to address my 2 questions in your meeting and I will be attending online and I look forward to hearing your response.

Eddie Bashaw
[Redacted]

P
T

[Quoted text hidden]



Public Comment <public.comment@isd709.org>

HS hockey coach

1 message

Kelly Spenningsby <...@isd709.org>
To: public.comment@isd709.org

Fri, Jun 4, 2021 at 9:16 PM

Good evening -

I am writing in response to the resignation of Coach Randolph.

I gather and respect the decision of Coach Randolph to resign from this position after he's given many years to the program and players due to the parental pressures from parents and the pressures from the on-going investigation. My child has been in the program for 2 years and has had the utmost respect for Coach Randolph and the coaching staff. He feels they have helped guide him in discipline, training, healthy habits, and staying out of trouble. He was deeply saddened and frustrated by the way that the school district handled communication of the on-going investigation (receiving late in the afternoon before spring break) and no follow-up provided to the players/families re: the results of the investigation that the children participated in. He also felt that the investigation was biased - in that anyone that was in support of the coaching staff were given minimal time/questions, whereas the "complainers" were given much more time/questions to respond to. Questioning should have been more uniform across the board, and results should be shared w/ the invested parties. He also has been deeply saddened by the resignation of Coach this week (especially when they can start to have contact w/ coaching staff again...).

Irregardless of this, we truly want the best for our child and his friends in his remaining 2 years at Duluth East High School and w/ moving forward w/ HS sports at East. My hope going forward is that the School District and School Board actively start the search for a Head Coach and coaching staff ASAP so that these kids that are invested in continuing to pursue their HS dreams can rest easier and have some contact w/ their new coach this summer yet during their contact period and/or be w/ the team at Summer Fest in July. We are interested in hearing more from the District on their plans to move forward. With that being said, we were pleasantly surprised to see communication today re: player/parent meetings setup for next week, which we believe is a move in the right direction.

Kelly Spenningsby



Public Comment <public.comment@isd709.org>

Comment from Support Staff

1 message

Lisa Wentworth <[redacted]>
To: Public Comment <public.comment@isd709.org>

Wed, Jun 9, 2021 at 11:33 AM

Thank you for sharing the district survey requesting feedback regarding ESSER funding. We would like to share feedback based on our experiences as support staff at Ordean East Middle School.

We believe ESSER funding should be used to hire more Licensed School Counselors and Licensed School Social Workers. Because of the hiring of these licensed staff, there are no barriers to service within the school (all students/families can access us at school without a referral or diagnosis). The problem is that we don't have enough of us. The national recommendation for School Counselors and Social Workers is 1:250. Ordean East has approximately 1100 students with 2 School Counselors and 1 School Social Worker appointed 1 day per week for General Education students, 4 days for Special Education. Our ratios require us to work very reactively and truly limit the skills and support we are able to offer.

School Social Workers and School Counselors are highly trained to address a variety of student needs, including, but not limited to:

- Behavioral & Academic supports
- Social & Emotional Learning
- Mental Health
- Home life difficulties
- Cultural Development
- Post-Secondary Guidance
- Self Advocacy & Leadership
- Crisis Work (Abuse, Neglect, Suicide)
- Supporting students of all abilities
- College & Career Readiness
- Relationships & resolving conflict
- Advocating for trauma-informed practices
- Consulting with teachers, administrators, families, and community agencies on best practices
- Emotion Regulation
- Transition to Middle and High School
- Contributing to the Crisis, IEP, 504, Leadership, Assessment teams
- Liaison to community supports

Some ISD 709 elementary schools have social workers, though many are part-time. Only one elementary school has a part-time School Counselor in our district. The school districts surrounding Duluth Public Schools have K-12 School Counseling programs and Social Workers who work together to meet student needs.

The district survey asked about support services but did not specify School Counselors or Social Workers. **To meet the mental health needs of students, we must hire highly qualified School Social**

Workers and School Counselors. We would never hire a non-licensed teacher to teach our students. We must follow the same protocol with mental health and social, emotional, and behavioral needs. Please do not create “new positions” that don’t require highly educated, licensed professionals trained to work within the school system. Hire more Licensed School Counselors and School Social Workers. Needs can be met by hiring more of these positions. Thank you for your time and consideration.

OEMS Licensed School Counselors: Ashley Kedrowski, MSE, Sarah Seglem, MSE. Lisa Wentworth, MSE.
OEMS Licensed School Social Worker: Tracy Litman, MSW, LICSW

--

Lisa Wentworth

M.S.E., Licensed School Counselor

[Ordean East Middle School](#)

2.5 days/week

218-336-8940 ext. 2167

&

[Congdon Park Elementary School](#)

2 days/ week

218-336-8825 x2167

Confidentiality Notice: This E-mail message, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential and privileged information. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure or distribution is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply E-mail and destroy all copies of the original message.

**Coach Randolph**

1 message

Diane Tureson <...>
To: public.comment@isd709.org

Thu,

Duluth School Board Members,

I am very saddened by the resignation of COACH Randolph. Why is it when wishes of the vast majority of players, parents, grandparents, fellow workers, etc. are ignored for a few unhappy, most likely uniformed, families. Do they really understand what playing for a team is about? It is about TEAMWORK, hard work, practice, listening and playing to WIN! I understand many students today do not like rules and regulations or competition. Good luck to them in their future. How do they expect to succeed if they stop looking for the easy way out?

Mike Randolph came on board at East the same time my two girls started. They were on the X-C Ski Team and we, as parents, were at meetings with many different coaches in attendance. I can vividly remember Mr. Randolph saying he was interested in winning. That is what coaches are supposed to want. Even though our children were in another sport, we loved hockey and rarely missed a game.....East, UMD whatever. We, as most, were very impressed with the "new" coach right from the beginning. He was very strict and caring for his team.

Several of our friends that had their sons on Randolph's team right from the beginning of his time, have nothing but high praise for his work with all the team members. Strict, yes! Coddled, no! And in my opinion that is how EVERY aspect of high school should be.

My grandson being pulled into an investigation fueled by the rumors of players who quit on their team half way through the season is ridiculous. East hockey will no longer be the gold standard for hockey in the state of Minnesota. You are setting a poor standard allowing parents to bully out a coach that has dedicated 32 years to East High School. Look at the way youth sports are going, it's disgraceful. Look at the referee shortages and coaching shortages - all because of parents!

Please do not let poor parenting win. Please do not accept his resignation. Please allow East a fighting chance to restore the reputation that in recent weeks has been torn to pieces. My grandson tells me that 100% of the players want him back, please consider this before making the final decision.

Sincerely,
Larry and Diane Tureson



Reply

Forward

Comment - Mike Randolph Resignation

1 message

Jesse T. Murray
To: "public.comment@isd709.org" <public.comment@isd709.org>
Cc: "Kelly.durickeder@isd709.org" <Kelly.durickeder@isd709.org>, "schoolboard@isd709.org" <schoolboard@isd709.org>

Sun, Jun 13, 2021 at 10:05 PM

Dear School Board Members,

The last two weeks have been tough for players, parents, coaches, administration, and school board members. The steps taken over the last year have resulted in stress, legal fees for the coach and the district, an investigation, and many questions regarding the procedures and process involved in the recent resignation of Mike Randolph.

We are requesting the board double check the process and procedures followed prior to Mr. Randolph's decision to "resign" to confirm to your stakeholder groups that the steps taken were accurate and correct, and not misused. A few specific examples include:

1. Did the parents requesting the investigation follow the handbook in their grievance/complaints? The ISD709 Extracurricular Conference Process is very specific. Were all three levels followed by the parents who initiated the investigation? The process states "Any deviation from this plan will result in the expiration of the process."
2. Did the investigation process follow district protocol? Was it managed in a way the district can stand behind? What criteria was used for the discovery process, question development, and determining who gets interviewed. If so, why weren't all coaching staff interviewed? Why were only disgruntled parents/students interviewed initially, and the parents who felt the program was strong need to request the investigation be expanded to include them? Why were the interviews so different from one student to the next? Not to mention the process was allowed to occur without parental involvement and no school administrative guidance or support for parents or students provided? Did the school administration know about this investigation?
3. Was the investigation a factor in the employee's resignation? And if the investigation process bypassed a grievance process, or was established on grounds that put the district procedures in question, should the resignation be accepted without further investigation?

Beyond maintaining an accurate process, Mr. Randolph indicated his reason being the lack of administrative support and the challenge of vocal parent groups. If the district respects and applauds the legacy of East Hockey, should the school board first look inward and address these two issues before taking this step of accepting a resignation and/or hiring a new coach? If these two factors (admin support and negatively vocal parents) were something a 32-year veteran coach could not afford (legal fees, stress on the family, division on the team), do we believe a new coach will be able to handle this once his/her honeymoon period is over?

We are asking that our school board make sure that if any steps in this process resulted in the current coach to submit a resignation, that we correct those steps, be transparent about it, and move forward with a plan that respects process, authority, and a future with clearly defined succession planning. Yes, people are tired, and yes, people want next steps quickly. We should not delay, but we should also do what is right to build a foundation for solid future process/decisions.

Jesse and Sarah Murray
Parents of current player