

Date:

May 4, 2025

For Office Use

Gresham-Barlow School District
Citizens Comments to the Board

Name: David Hall

Phone: _____

District Resident: ☒ Yes ☐ No

Group / Organization: _____

Topic: Kelly Creek Elementary School

- Please submit this form with your written public comment to the board secretary, Sarah Avery, at avery4@gresham.k12.or.us by 4:00 p.m. the day of the meeting.
- The Board Chair, may require that a proposal, inquiry or request be submitted in writing, and reserves the right to refer the matter to the administration for action or study.
- Written comments may offer criticism of school operations and programs; however, the board will not review personal complaints concerning school personnel or against any person connected with the school system. If there is a legitimate complaint involving individuals, the chair will direct them to the appropriate means for board consideration and disposition.
- Please make sure to include your name for the record, whether you are a resident of the district, and the name of the group or organization you are representing, if applicable.
- Questions asked by the public will be referred to the superintendent for response at a later time.
- The board's regular business meetings are digitally recorded. They are also televised by MetroEast Community Media (www.metroeast.org) and Willamette Falls Media Center (www.wfmcstudios.org).

The board sincerely appreciates your interest in the Gresham-Barlow School District and thanks you for attending this meeting. ■

Gresham-Barlow School District
Citizens Comments to the Board

Board Members and Mr. Koch,

My name is David Hall. I, and many of us here tonight are the parents of students who attend Kelly Creek Elementary School. We're here because we are deeply troubled by the conditions at this school and the absolutely out of control behavior that is often endangering our children and causing many families to withdraw from this school district. Unfortunately, we are having a lot of trouble learning all the facts, and we ask for your help.

We have never asked a teacher or staff member to reveal confidential information about another student, yet we strongly suspect that the District has actively discouraged Kelly Creek staff from answering our questions about the appalling conditions at our school. We do not believe that Kelly Creek staff are at liberty to speak to us about the challenges at school and about what our own children are experiencing every day during class and at recess. As a result, many of our parents remain in the dark.

Our children are accustomed to witnessing multiple fights at recess. Students destroy classrooms, assault staff members, and force classroom evacuations due to their out-of-control behavior. They have racial slurs and hate speech hurled at them or in their vicinity. All these things occur on a regular, if not daily, basis. They have become so accustomed to this behavior that they often don't share these stories with us at the end of the day. It has become normal for them. A recent incident included a student bringing a knife to school and threatening to stab another child in the neck. The notification to parents only went to one classroom and was vague to the point of misleading as to the severity of the incident.

We do not accept this as the new normal for our children. We acknowledge that there may be much that we do not understand about the challenges the District faces, but we know that the status quo is unacceptable. It is not working. Things are getting worse.

We have an incredibly conscientious and dedicated group of teachers and staff at Kelly Creek who appear at the end of their rope. Multiple teachers have left the school or taken leave during the year due to these problems. There are a few particular 4th grade classrooms that have been so overwhelmed with behavioral problems that multiple teachers and substitutes have taken leave or even left their positions to avoid returning to these classrooms. And now, the plan next year is to institute a fully blended 4th and 5th grade to evidently dilute this problem and expose even more children to the behavior that has traumatized many of them and might help explain this school's dismal assessment scores. The classrooms are that out of control.

We ask for your help tonight. We ask to meet with the District management who are making decisions for this school so that we can gain some understanding of what our teachers are allowed to tell us about our own child's school and their safety within it. We want to be clear that we're committed to learning the facts and that we have many concerns about systemic issues. We want to understand who is making the decisions, who is determining how safety and disciplinary policy is applied at our school and what the District is actually doing to address these issues.

Several families at our school have already chosen to withdraw their children from Kelly Creek. This includes even GBSD employees who work at this school. The decisions to blend the entire 4th and 5th grades, if it remains in place, will result in more families choosing to leave. It's a certainty.

Many of us are trying to make a decision about where our children will be attending school next year. We ask for your help in enabling us to obtain accurate information with which to make our decisions and that this Board and District staff do everything in their power to improve conditions at Kelly Creek so that we, who all share a deep commitment to public education, are not forced to conclude that we must abandon it for the sake and safety of our children.

Thank you.

Please check the box below and include a phone number if you would like to have someone contact you regarding the topic described above.



I would like to have someone contact me regarding my questions/ concerns at:

Phone Number



Cell



Home



Work

The best time to reach me:

Anytime.