

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT FROM EAU CLAIRE SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES:
CRONRATH, EVERSON, AND WINTER**

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. (March 1, 2022) — On Friday, February 25th, Eau Claire Area School District (ECASD) teachers were required to attend a staff development day. It has been brought to our attention that content included direction to teachers that “...parents are not entitled to know their kids’ identities. That knowledge must be earned.”

We are appalled that ECASD would display such blatant disregard for the parents and guardians of our community’s children. We are equally dismayed that current school district leadership would pressure teachers into breaking a social contract that we all know and understand—that parents and guardians hold primary responsibility and decision making for the welfare and care of their children.

This blatant disregard for parental rights and responsibilities that has been allowed to creep into our schools under current board leadership is communicating three very dangerous messages to parents and the wider community:

- 1.) **Schools are in control of children, not parents and families**—When you entrust your child into the walls of ECASD, you no longer have the right as a parent to be informed of major developments in your child’s school life. In fact, you must “earn it”.
- 2.) **Current Leadership is willing to pit teachers against parents**—Open communication between the classroom and home has always been critical to healthy school communities and student development. ECASD is putting teachers in a difficult and dishonest position by instructing them to actively withhold information from parents.
- 3.) **What goes on in the walls of ECASD is privileged information**—By indicating that information about your child is “knowledge that must be earned”, ECASD is setting a dangerous precedent. If identity questions for your child can be hidden from you, is diet, curriculum, healthcare, inappropriate relationships, mental health concerns, etc. also no longer the business of parents? Just what are parents and guardians allowed to know and when?

As your school board candidates, we want to reassure teachers, parents and the wider community that:

- 1.) We view parents and guardians as critical partners and primary decision makers across all areas of academic and school life.
- 2.) We will always advocate for transparency and two-way communication.

- 3.) We will unite our community—families, students, teachers, and citizens around the common goal of restoring learning excellence by fostering a culture of unlimited potential for all students and staff.

And as fellow parents, **we demand that ECASD leadership issue an apology to teachers for placing them at odds with families and also to parents and guardians for breaking the trust and partnership that is critical for thriving students and a stellar school district.**

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Slide 56– Talk amongst yourselves!

Facilitators, guide this discussion. Remember, parents are not entitled to know their kids' identities. That knowledge must be earned. Teachers are often straddling this complex situation. In ECASD, our priority is supporting the student.

Source: ECASD EDI Professional Development Session THREE Facilitator Guide
Staff Professional Development Day 2/25/2022

2021-2022 ECASD Equity PD for All Staff
Facilitator Guide – Session 3: Safe Spaces