

Public Comments by LHS Principal Steve Gough at the April 8, 2024, Board of Education meeting in response to [previous comments by a parent](#) about a cease-and-desist letter.

“The information offered in that comment was inaccurate and misleading so I thought it would be appropriate for me to provide some context and clarity for the board and the community.

The parent stated, in her March comment, that the district is trying to silence her because she disagrees with us. She offered a letter that I sent to her as evidence of this effort. This claim is demonstrably false. She is allowed to speak at every board meeting while we all listen respectfully, without interrupting, even though much of what she says is misleading at best. She is allowed to comment on our social media sites, even though much of her comment is demonstrably false and arguably disrespectful. She has offered no evidence that we have made any attempt to silence her.

If you read the letter that she presented as evidence, it requests that she stop directly referencing staff in her social media because of her repeated posts that staff receive as derogatory, disparaging and disrespectful. The only directive in that letter is that she have no contact with staff prior to permission from the involved principal or superintendent so that we can protect our staff from any further inappropriate behavior.

She claims we are violating her First Amendment right by asking that she treat others with decency, dignity and respect in her public discourse. There is no First Amendment right to bullying, harassment or misinformation. Further, with every right comes responsibility. This is a core democratic principle that I used to teach eighth graders when I was a middle school history teacher. We each have a responsibility to respect the rights of others while exercising our own individual rights.

The parent claimed in her March comment that she has been as respectful as she can be while disagreeing with us. There is, again, no evidence to support that claim. Over the past several years, it has become a regular occurrence for this parent to attack staff members in her public discourse, her social media and public comment, in an apparent effort to publicly demean and diminish the district she chooses to send her children to.

The staff members she has targeted feel disrespected and much of the behavior that I can see on social media appears disrespectful to me. A good deal of the behavior is public so you can read it and decide for yourself if you believe it is respectful and appropriate. It certainly does not seem like a constructive way to resolve concerns.

It is more than ok to disagree with the district or even individual staff members. It is not ok to manipulate the truth, and it is not ok to defame, bully, harass or otherwise mistreat members of the community because they will not bend to your political views. We are simply asking this parent to treat our staff with decency, dignity and respect. These are good educators who work hard every day for the good of other people’s children, and they deserve to be treated with respect. Thank you.”